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Fairfax County School Board Public Hearing, Tuesday, October 24, 2023

Date	Tuesday, October 24, 2023
Place	Fairfax County School Board, Virginia
Length	11m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SdVRmYAHS8Y
- Official School Board page (FCPS): https://www.fcps.edu/about-fcps/leadership/school-board

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-11-02. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:05] Good evening and welcome to the public hearing on choosing the name for W.T. Woodson High School. On behalf of the, oh sorry, thank you. Actually we're going to start over because I have to start with the call to order and announcements. So the October 24th public hearing on choosing the name for W.T. Woodson High School is now called to order. Good evening and welcome to the public hearing on choosing the name for W.T. Woodson High School. On behalf of the

[00:00:44] entire school board, I would like to thank you for sharing your comments this evening with us. The hearing is being broadcast on Channel 99 and live streamed at FCPS.edu/TV/CH99. We have five registered speakers who will address the board at this public hearing. Speakers are allotted two minutes and we ask that you stay within that time limit. The timer will start when you begin to speak and the timer will sound after two minutes. Please ensure that your remarks are limited to choosing to move forward with the

[00:01:20] renaming of W.T. Woodson High School. If you've not registered to speak but would like to address the board, please see the clerk or the deputy clerk to sign up for one of the five extra reserved speaker slots. Madam Clerk, I call on our first speaker kate springer thank you my name is kate springer and i am a senior at woodson high

[00:01:53] school this year i just wanted to say i'm really grateful that this opportunity has been presented and in 2021 i attended a meeting we had about community issues at our school and things we wanted to address and i had been doing some research about what wt woodson and i brought up the name change as an issue that I was interested in and Miss Heiser contact me put me in contact with Miss McLaughlin and I met with her and she provided time for us to talk about that and why that was important and provided

[00:02:30] me with some more research that I could do on my own to further my education about why this was important I understand that there have been I mean of course this is beside the point now but just in terms of representing the students of Woodson I was aware that not a lot of people were familiar with the history of it and I've noticed that in talking to my peers and classmates when I kind of told them about the history behind that they were definitely very kind of excited to move forward with this and very interested in helping out I do believe that Carter G. Woodson is a great name for this because it honors

[00:03:07] someone who made an extremely positive impact on the world through his writing additionally he was born in Virginia and he was the first African American sorry second African American to receive a doctorate from Harvard overall I fully support this and I'm just excited to move forward and I'm really glad that this is going to happen thank you Killian Kelly hi I know that most of you are

[00:03:43] looking at me and trying not to roll your eyes thinking geez here she goes again talking about the Woodson baseball field and if FCPS doesn't have the money to fix and upgrade the field how do they have money to change the school name well that yes it is important it's essential to the 40 to 50 baseball players families and coaches we also know FCPS doesn't care about the coaches because they'd rather spend money to rename schools than give the coaches a much-needed stipend increase however I'm not going to talk about those things at this time through all my research at FCPS facilities in the last few weeks because you guys all know how upset I've been about

[00:04:18] it i found something more substantial i found out that in from 2005 to 2009 when woodson was being remodeled they did not replace the roof the four million dollar cost was too much money currently half of the roof hatches are original original to 1962 and according to fairfax county the county wide infrastructure replacement requirements are 20 to 25 years for replacing roofs instead of adding the four million dollars to a budget in future years to replace the roof is yet to be addressed now it leaks it actually started leaking a few years ago it ruined the carpet in the library last year and there was a significant debate on who was paying for the carpet the school or

[00:04:57] facilities people have informed me that there have been mold claims at woodson students are in that building for seven hours a day teachers and staff are in that building even longer i told my son not to go to the school library and avoid that area imagine being in a high school where kids are advised to avoid the library is there mold in the classrooms which rooms since facilities is never forthcoming how do we trust them the cost of our new roof is even more than 4 million now but tell me what is the cost when students get sick have respiratory problems or get cancer from the mold when these lawsuits happen nobody will care about wt woodson's legacy it'll be the legacy of the

[00:05:35] school board and the superintendent who spent money on signs at a school to change its name versus a new roof our children deserve better our community deserves better ahmed ferrozi vanessa hall shucks okay sorry my name is vanessa hall i have uh two children at woodson high school and i strongly support renaming our high school as carter g woodson high school because it's both

[00:06:12] practical and radical uh practical because we know it will be there's in ms mclaughlin has shared the immense cost savings associated with the fact that woodson over the years has been how things have been renamed without the WT so that has saved a lot of money but also I wanted to mention and I'm not doing a good job right now so I want to keep the name merely as Woodson but parents at last night's community meeting made some good points such as one mom said if we keep the school merely as Woodson it's as if the name wasn't changed at all and she really wasn't happy

[00:06:50] about that and a dad shared that Woodson is fine if you don't have any better ideas but then he and he went on to share that we do have better ideas. We have Carter G. Woodson, a Virginian educator, famed historian, and a man who made long-lasting change for everyone.

[00:07:05] Using his name as a way of keeping our ties to the Woodson community, yet it's also a radical change by choosing a man who worked towards inclusion of all Virginians in both our history and our public schools versus a man who promoted segregation. If he were here today, Dr. Woodson might remind us history is a means of transformation and change and that we could use the high school renaming to encourage students to learn more about local history and also discover who fought for justice and equality in education. For example, education was so important to the black community that they reached into their pockets to pay for teachers, buildings, and materials while white public schools

[00:07:44] were funded nearly entirely by the local government for about a hundred years. Overwhelmingly, students support this name change. They are the face of our high school they are the future of our high school please rename their high school for a man who changed our country for the better who felt that history belongs not to the historians but to all of us thanks so much Jason Davis hi my name is Jason Davis I'm alumni of Woodson High School from the Bicentennial class of 1976 and I had a great high school experience when I first heard

[00:08:23] about the name change I said what the heck and actually I didn't use the word heck it's an emotional issue for most people who are alumni I'm a proud member the Woodson community who's involved to this day with my classmates my relationship with the facility is really part of my my being it's part of my identity following many of the classmates comments on Facebook pages that I've been following for for Woodson High many of their reactions were similar emotional and what the heck what's going on however after reviewing

[00:09:02] the information it is regarding this issue I'm in complete agreement with the name change. With respect to the two choices dropping the WT and just leaving the name Woodson I totally disagree with the approach will still retain the original namesake and does not address the original issue does not separate the man from the facility and in my mind is unacceptable.

[00:09:29] Carter G. Woodson I'm in actually in favor of greatly his accomplishments are significant. The name is a historical nature and I believe would fit within the naming criteria of Fairfax County Public Schools as written in the regulations. The existing cache of the Wood name, the Woodson name, would be retained and I think that cache is really very important to the alumni and very important to the outside community that is not directly related to Woodson and probably don't know of the man, WT.

[00:09:59] The name change would change, hopefully change, the narrative from a negative to a positive. With this name change, we should take the opportunity as a teaching moment to have the school's history, Virginia history, and maybe the nation's history.

[00:10:23] Ahmed Ferozzi. Ms. McLaughlin, that's the last public speaker. I want to first thank everyone here this evening who has come to share your comments with the board.

[00:10:40] We are scheduled to vote on the new name of W.T. Woodson High School at a regular meeting on Thursday, November 9th. For those in the community who would like to provide feedback on the new naming options but were unable to attend this evening, you may submit feedback by going to www.fcps.edu/renaming-woodson. Public comments on this feedback form will continue to be accepted until November 9th. Again, we want to thank everyone who has come out this evening

[00:11:18] to share your thoughts. Your engagement is deeply appreciated. I hope everyone has a good evening and this public hearing is adjourned.

