
Charlottesville City Schools Naming of Facilities Update

— December 5, 2024 —

School Naming- History Overview

In Fall 2020, as Charlottesville City Schools continued public conversations around bringing racial equity into our division, then-Superintendent Dr. Rosa Atkins convened a School Naming Committee to evaluate whether our school names aligned with our division values. **Elementary schools were reviewed based on the order in which they opened.**

Through a process of community input that informed this committee's recommendations, the outcomes so far have been:

- In January 2023, the School Board voted to **rename Venable Elementary as Trailblazer Elementary** and **Clark Elementary as Summit Elementary**. Similarly, CCS purchase of CATEC required a slight name change to **Charlottesville Area Technical Education Center**. The schools officially began using these names in August 2024.
- In April 2023, the School Board **affirmed that Burnley-Moran Elementary and Johnson Elementary should also have new names**, but voted to pause on choosing specific new names “to allow the staff and the school communities time to explore other names that are better reflective of the schools’ purpose and place.”
- In June 2023, the School Board voted that **Buford Middle School will be called Charlottesville Middle School** starting in Fall 2025 when students begin using the newly constructed part of the middle school.

Note: The Board and superintendents never determined that all school names must or would change.

Why Did the Committee Recommend the Changes to Burnley-Moran and Johnson?

From charlottesvilleschools.org/schoolnames, dated February 2023:

The task of the Naming of Facilities Committee is to make a recommendation to the Charlottesville City School Board for each school on the question of whether its name is in alignment with the division's current values, particularly racial equity. In the case of Burnley-Moran and Johnson, the three namesakes of these schools—Carrie Burnley, Sarepta Moran, and James G. Johnson—all served Charlottesville's racially segregated white schools as teacher, principal, or superintendent. The public feedback and the committee's decision recognized that, **regardless of the accomplishment or merit of these individuals, these schools' names commemorate an era of segregated education that no longer reflects the division's values.**

School Naming Policy

In August 2024, the School Board voted to update the School and School Facilities Naming Policy.

The Board shall name schools in recognition of:

1. Any entity, quality, or ideal that the School Board deems worthy of recognition (purpose).
2. The local history or geographic area of the school (place).

School Naming- Process Overview

There are procedures in place that outline the school name review process.

Step 1: Advisory Committee

Step 2: Notify Relatives of the Individual (if applicable)

Step 3: Meetings & Recommendation

Step 4: Recommendation to School Board

Step 5: Debrief the Committee's Review Process

Step 6: Finance Transfer

Step 7: Facility-related Adjustments

School Naming - Procedures

Step 1: Advisory Committee

Upon direction from the School Board, the Superintendent (or designee) shall form an advisory committee to conduct a name change review.

The committee should include various representatives:

- Committee Chair, division-level representative
 - School board members
 - Current school principal
 - Teachers/support staff
 - Student representatives if it's a high school
 - Community members who do not currently have children attending the school
 - Community member who currently has a child attending the reviewed school
- *When practicable, alumni are encouraged to serve as members of the committee.

School Naming - Procedures

Step 2: Notify Relatives of the Individual (if applicable)

If a school named after an individual is subject to review, the division shall make reasonable effort to inform relatives of that individual and provide them with an opportunity to express opinions about the possible renaming of the school.

Reasonable Efforts Include:

- External push : Publish notices / press release asking for help in reaching relatives (website, newspaper)
- Internal push for relative search

School Naming - Procedures

Step 3: Meetings & Recommendation

- The committee will facilitate relevant meetings and activities (i.e., community meetings, surveys, and research) culminating with a recommendation to the Superintendent.
 - Superintendent ask: We are STRONGLY encouraged to reach a consensus on one or two names that reflect the purpose and/or place values.

Based on the recommendation, the Superintendent can:

- Honor the recommendation of the committee
- Not honor the recommendation and make a recommendation of their own

School Naming - Procedures

Step 4: Recommendation to School Board

- Based on the committee's findings and any additional information deemed appropriate, the Superintendent shall present a recommendation to the School Board.

Based on the recommendation, the School Board can:

- Honor the recommendation of the Superintendent
- Not honor the recommendation and make a recommendation of their own

School Naming - Elementary Name Review Process Resumed in Fall 2024

- 4 elementary schools required their name review process to be either completed or initiated.
 - Burnley-Moran (1954) and Johnson (1954) began at selecting a name for the school. Again, the decision to change these schools' names was made in 2023 but the Board requested a pause to reconsider the new name recommendations.
 - Greenbrier (1962) and Jackson-Via (1969) began reviewing the current school name. If a name change was to be recommended, the committee would then undertake the process of identifying a new name.
- In August and September- Committee member solicitation
- October- Committees began meeting. Each committee worked as its own entity

Burnley-Moran Elementary School

Key Points:

The committee discussed:

- The Board's 2023 decision to affirm the name change is final and was in keeping with public feedback.
- Considered previously suggested name options from 2023
- Reviewed new survey feedback and write-in data
- Suggested committee-provided options

Top 3 were:

- Sunrise- "Sunrise evokes all the positives of a fresh beginning and/or new day. Every student receives that new perspective and chance to grow each day as part of today's BME community. Also, if you have ever attended a BME School Wide Morning Meeting, you know that the sunrise is prevalent and physically interconnected with the (current) school processes."
- Sunrise Vista- the idea of honoring the school's beautiful vistas emerged from feedback
- River Den- interest in a name honoring the nearby river and with a nod to the school's bobcat mascot

[Meeting Presentation #1](#)

[Meeting Presentation #2](#)

[Meeting Presentation #3](#)

Burnley-Moran Elementary School

The committee has recommended the name Sunrise Elementary School.



From the committee:

- This is the easternmost school in our city (with lovely sunrise views)
- Sunrise conveys a sense of hope, warmth, and new beginnings.
- It shows the power of students rising through their years in our school.

Greenbrier Elementary School

Key Points:

The committee discussed:

- The original decision in 1962 to name Greenbrier Elementary after surrounding neighborhood
- Survey data showing that 92% of respondents were either neutral or in favor of keeping the name
- The Board's updated policy that determines that any new names should focus on the school's purpose or place; the committee determined that Greenbrier's current name was in alignment with this already.

[Meeting Presentation #1](#)

[Meeting Presentation #2](#)

Greenbrier Elementary School

The committee has recommended to keep the name Greenbrier Elementary School.



GREENBRIER
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

From the committee:

- Greenbrier is named for its surrounding neighborhood
- The name does not derive from an area plantation

Jackson-Via Elementary School

Key Points:

The Committee

- Reviewed and discussed community feedback and survey results (86% were neutral or in favor of keeping Jackson, 78% were neutral or in favor of keeping Via).
- Sought clarity on Superintendent's ask (was it the intent for all schools to change names?)
- Considered and evaluated additional information on namesakes including conversations with the family of Nannie Cox Jackson and accounts of Betty Via from the trailblazers who desegregated Johnson School while she was principal there.
- Researched Via's writing found in the University of Virginia archives.

[Meeting #1](#)

[Meeting #2](#)

Jackson-Via Elementary School

The committee has recommended to keep the name Jackson-Via Elementary School.



JACKSON-VIA
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

From the committee:

- In 1969, Jackson and Via were purposefully chosen to reflect Jackson-Via's historical significance as Charlottesville's first intentionally desegregated school.
- This recommendation is supported by committee research as well as accounts from (1) Jackson family members and (2) the desegregation trailblazers that Via supported.

Johnson Elementary School

Key Points:

The committee discussed:

- The Board's 2023 decision to affirm the name change is final and was in keeping with public feedback.
- Considered previously suggested name options, including Cherry Avenue.
- Reviewed new survey feedback and write-in data

Top 4 were:

- Forest Grove
- Rock Creek
- Tall Oaks
- Oakleaf

[Meeting #1](#) [Meeting #2](#) [Meeting #3](#)

Johnson Elementary School

The committee has recommended the name Tall Oaks Elementary School.



From the committee:

- The school has a beloved wooded landscape with trails and outdoor learning spaces.
- “From little acorns come mighty oaks.”
- The name and this saying capture the growth and empowerment that occurs within the school community.

Superintendent's Recommendation

The superintendent supports the recommendations of all four committees and recommends Board approval at the January 9, 2025 Board meeting:

- Burnley-Moran Elementary would become Sunrise Elementary School
- Greenbrier Elementary would retain its name
- Jackson-Via Elementary would retain its name
- Johnson Elementary would become Tall Oaks Elementary School

Further history and documentation of the committees' work (as well as the previous committee's work dating to 2020) can be found at charlottesvilleschools.org/schoolnames

Thank you.