To: Honorable School Board Members
From: Leigh Ann McKelway, Public Information Officer
Date: Feb. 7, 2018
Subject: Considering name changes for three elementary schools.

This is a new day in Petersburg City Public Schools. We must look to the future, not the past, to achieve our mission of developing 21st-century citizens able to effectively collaborate, communicate and innovate.

For the past month, as a way to symbolize this forward movement, we have been considering changing the names of the three schools that are named for Confederate generals:

- **A.P. Hill Elementary** — The original A.P. Hill Elementary was built in 1915 on Halifax Street. The current school was built in 1967 at 1450 Talley Ave.

- **Robert E. Lee Elementary** — The original Robert E. Lee Elementary was built in 1911 on West Washington Street. The current school was built in 1962 at 51 Gibbons Ave.

- **J.E.B. Stuart Elementary** — The original J.E.B. Stuart Elementary was built in 1924 at the intersection of Elm Street and Dupuy Road. The current school was built in 1966 at 100 Pleasants Lane.

The Petersburg School Board values community participation and has invested a great deal of time gathering information and ideas about renaming schools. From the beginning of this process, however, it has been made clear that it is the School Board’s responsibility to determine the names of schools.

The School Board sought input from Petersburg families, teachers, school employees, partners and members of the public by holding three meetings (Jan. 8-10) to hear from each school’s community and by holding a public hearing (Jan. 24) to hear from the entire community. At every meeting, the majority of speakers supported changing the names of A.P. Hill Elementary, Robert E. Lee Elementary and J.E.B. Stuart Elementary.

While most meeting participants supported changing the school names, a few objections were consistently raised. Here are the top three, along with replies that were also heard at the meetings:

- **Changing school names is the last thing we should spend money on.**
  The estimated cost if we were to rename all three schools is $18,135. The school system has already received two donations totaling $20,500 to cover the cost and an additional $700 has been pledged.

- **Schools should improve student achievement and get accredited instead of changing school names.**
  The district’s priority is improving academic achievement. Schools, teachers, principals, staff members and students are working every day to strengthen teaching and learning. That focus is in no way changed by our consideration of changing the names of schools.
• You can’t change history.
  There is no plan to change textbooks or the history curriculum that Petersburg students are
taught. What the School Board is considering tonight is renaming three schools, not
changing what is taught in our classrooms or changing events of the historical past.

Another way the School Board sought input was through a survey, which was available Jan. 4-24
online and in print. For each of the three schools, the survey asked “Should this school’s name be
changed?” and “If the name is changed, what should the new name be? Please state your reason for
this suggestion.”

Starting the morning of Jan. 9, the survey asked respondents to provide their address; that question
had not been asked earlier. Of the responses received from Petersburg residents via the survey, 70
percent were in favor of changing the names of the three schools and 30 percent were opposed to
changing the school names.

Many new names for the schools were suggested via the survey and in the meetings, including the
names of many people whose lives changed Petersburg for the better. There was a clear preference
for renaming the schools for neighborhoods or streets. Here are the top names suggested for each
of the three schools followed in parentheses by the number of people suggesting each new name via
the survey:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.P. Hill Elementary</th>
<th>Robert E. Lee Elementary</th>
<th>J.E.B. Stuart Elementary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cool Spring Elementary (61)</td>
<td>Lakemont Elementary (30)</td>
<td>Pleasants Lane Elementary (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talley Avenue Elementary (17)</td>
<td>Gibbons Avenue Elementary (20)</td>
<td>Kenilworth Elementary (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Luther King Jr. Elem. (7)</td>
<td>Barack Obama Elementary (9)</td>
<td>Western Hills Elementary (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halifax Elementary (6)</td>
<td>East End or East Side Elem. (7)</td>
<td>Hermanze Fauntleroy Elem. (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moses Malone Elementary (6)</td>
<td>Martin Luther King Jr. Elem. (5)</td>
<td>Magnolia Farms Elementary (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barack Obama Elementary (5)</td>
<td>PS # (5)</td>
<td>PS # (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wyatt Tee Walker Elementary (5)</td>
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</tbody>
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The process that the School Board undertook led to thoughtful and heartfelt communication from
throughout our community.

Taking all of this information into account, it is recommended that the Petersburg School Board
change the names of three schools effective July 1, 2018:
• A.P. Hill Elementary School to Cool Spring Elementary School
• Robert E. Lee Elementary School to Lakemont Elementary School
• J.E.B. Stuart Elementary School to Pleasants Lane Elementary School

As Petersburg City Public Schools moves forward, we plan to meaningfully celebrate the lives of
people whose names were put forward during this process and we plan to involve students and
school communities in the transition to the new names.