



ASHEVILLE CITY SCHOOLS'

RENAMING OF VANCE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

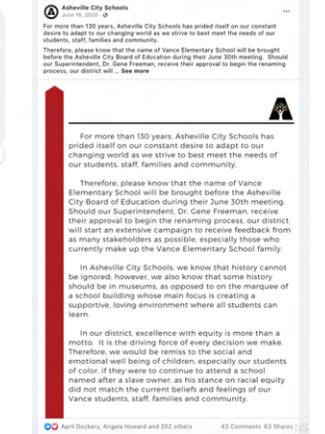
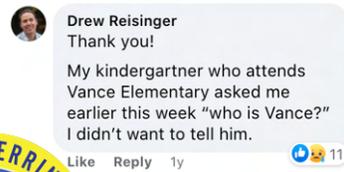
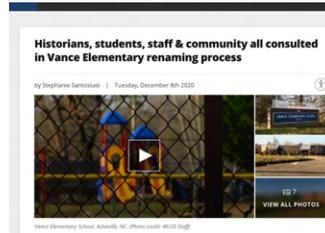
NSPRA - Public Engagement/Parental Involvement Campaign

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- Pre-K thru 12th Grade District Comprised of 10 Schools and 4,400 Students
- Two Public Relations Staff Members
 - Executive Director of Communications
 - Communications Liaison

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Situational Analysis:

For more than 130 years, Asheville City Schools has prided itself on our constant desire to adapt to our changing world as we strive to best meet the needs of our students, staff, families and community.

In our district, excellence with equity is more than a motto. It is the driving force of every decision we make.

In the summer of 2020 - as the dual crisis of COVID-19 and social justice protests shined a spotlight on inequities both within our country and school district — the name of Vance Elementary School was brought before the Asheville City Board of Education during their June 30, 2020 meeting.

Dr. Gene Freeman, Superintendent of Asheville City Schools, explained “we would be remiss to the social and emotional well being of children, especially our students of color, if they were to continue to attend a school named after a slave owner, as his stance on racial equity does not match the current beliefs and feelings of our students, staff, families and community.” He received the Board’s approval to begin the renaming process; therefore, our district started an extensive campaign to receive feedback from as many stakeholders as possible, especially those who currently make up the Vance Elementary School family.

With that feedback, the Vance Elementary School Renaming Taskforce presented the Board with five final recommendations, and the Board selects its new name - Lucy S. Herring Elementary School - on February 1, 2021.

This submission maps out how Asheville City Schools and our greater school community worked together to ensure students, their families and our staff felt seen, heard and empowered to rename a school from a former slaveholder to the district’s first Black administrator, a woman who dedicated 52 years, 35 in Asheville City Schools, faithfully serving students.

Problem Statement:

The problem our public engagement plan addresses is: *In Asheville City Schools, we know that history cannot be ignored; however, we also know that some history should be in museums, as opposed to on the marquee of a school building whose main focus is creating a supportive, loving environment where all students can learn, discover and thrive.*

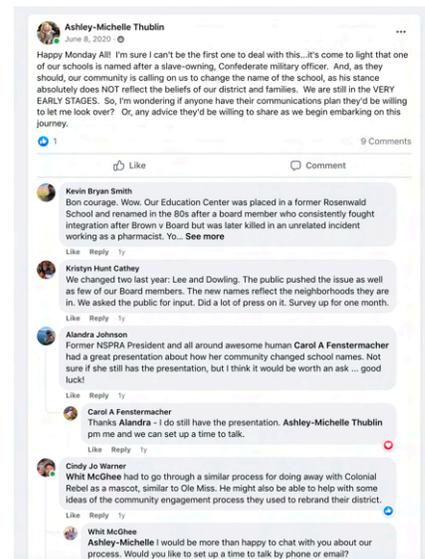
RESEARCH

Research is the foundation for effective, strategic Public Relations planning. Therefore, I reviewed the following data when establishing the goal and objectives for Vance Elementary School’s Renaming Process:

- Historical Research (**Formal; Primary; Qualitative/Quantitative**)
 - I examined the district’s communications [archives](#) as well as [North Carolina Historic Sites](#) and media files ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#)) to learn more about Zebulon Vance. The prior namesake of the school was North Carolina's Governor during the Civil War and U.S. Senator during Reconstruction until his death in 1894. In both positions, he fought

vehemently against civil rights for Black Americans. Prior to the war, he and his family enslaved people.

- Once the Renaming Taskforce narrowed down their recommendations to five names, extensive [historical research](#) and background checks were conducted.
- As part of our strategic [Crisis Communications Plan](#), Asheville City Schools continues to research, update and evaluate our responses to support our schools and community when a normal day is interrupted. Specifically, confederate flag communications, communications about removing a commemorative plaque featuring a slaveholder and communications about Mr. George Flody's tragic death were useful in shaping our initial communications.
- Fact-Finding (**Informal; Secondary; Qualitative**)
 - I searched the NSPRA Gold Mine and the School Communications Pros Facebook Discussion Page to determine how similarly sized and geographically relevant school districts had communicated and engaged with their students, staff, families and community throughout their renaming process.
 - Charlotte Mecklenburg ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#))
 - UNC Asheville ([1](#))
 - I interviewed fellow School PR colleagues who have gone through their own renaming process to “admire and acquire” the communications strategies they utilized as well as learn from their missteps.
 - Whit McGhee, the Director of Public Relations for Vestavia Hills City Schools, was especially supportive in explaining how they engaged the public when deciding whether their [high school's mascot](#) would remain the Rebels.
 - In addition to Asheville City Schools conducting its own renaming process, the City of Asheville and Buncombe County is considering the renaming and/or removal of Downtown Asheville's Vance Monument. Therefore, I was able to collaborate with their Communications staff to determine successful (and not so successful) techniques.
 - Sample of Media Coverage Regarding Vance Monument ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#))
- Survey (**Formal; Primary; Qualitative/Quantitative**)
 - I [surveyed](#) Asheville City Schools staff, families, alumni, community members and those that lived within the Vance Elementary School neighborhood to determine what qualities they deem as most important when considering a new name for Vance Elementary School.
 - Asheville City Schools also spoke with Vance students about their most desired characteristics by using age-appropriate questions.
- Virtual Public Input Forums (**Informal; Primary; Qualitative**)
 - The renaming of Vance Elementary School would not be a decision solely made by one or two people; instead, we wanted it to be a collaborative effort that includes feedback from as many stakeholders as possible while balancing the mass gathering mandates in place at the time. Therefore, four [Virtual Public Input Forums](#) were held to not only determine guiding principles and preferred categories but also solicit name ideas.



PLAN

Goal Statement:

Asheville City Schools students, staff, families and community stakeholders will feel informed, valued and heard throughout the Vance Elementary School Renaming Process.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- Executive Director of Communications: The Executive Director of Communications' role was to execute the campaign as outlined by the Superintendent and Taskforce.
- Vance Elementary School Principal: The school principal served as our boots-on-the-ground expert and voiced all messaging specifically for her school community. She also served as the school's Taskforce point person and engaged educators to gather additional student feedback.
- Vance Elementary School Renaming Taskforce: Representing a wide array of perspectives that make Vance Elementary School such a unique place to work, learn and grow, the task force was comprised of representatives from current Vance students, Vance alumni, teachers, staff members, district administrators, families, future families as well as community members. They determined our timeline, guided our communications strategies, determined qualities and characteristics needed in a new name, attended Virtual Public Input Forums, examined data and ultimately presented the Board with recommendations.

Identifying Our Publics:

- Vance Elementary School Staff: As explained in *Effective Public Relations, 11th International Edition*, "an organization's most important relationships are those with employees at all levels." Staff members needed to be informed in order for the process to be successful and trusted by the community.
- Current & Prospective Vance Elementary School Families: Asheville is home to two public school districts, ten private schools and six charter schools. Therefore, in addition to reassuring our current families and reinforcing their choice of Asheville City Schools, the way we handled our public engagement efforts could increase our enrollment numbers.
- Asheville City Schools Students: We would be remiss to the social and emotional well being of children, especially our students of color, if they were to continue to attend a school named after a slave owner. Therefore, it was imperative that our students not only had a seat at the table but understood we were making this change to reflect their future.
- Asheville City Board of Education: As the ultimate decision makers, we wanted to ensure the Board was well informed throughout the renaming process.

Objectives:

The Asheville City Board of Education will unanimously approve a new name for Vance Elementary School by June 1, 2021. (Outcome Objective)

200 students, staff, family and community members will ensure their input is heard regarding the qualities that are most important to them when considering a new name for Vance Elementary School. (Outcome Objective)

Asheville City Schools will ensure consistent correspondence throughout the Vance Elementary School Renaming Process by providing 25 communications to key publics throughout our campaign. (Output Objective)

75% of Vance Elementary School students, staff and families will understand its history and be able to identify the school's new name by November 1, 2021. (Outcome Objective)

Our Messaging:

In an effort to streamline communication to our key publics, three key messages were created using data from historical research, survey analytics, community input sessions and public forums. They include:



Our Timeline:

From start to finish, the campaign was carried out over a 16 month time period.

- June 16, 2020: [Press Release](#) is shared with Vance Staff and Families/The Local Media
- June 30, 2020: Asheville City Board of Education [approves moving forward with renaming](#)
- August 3, 2020: Meeting between Executive Director of Communications, Assistant Superintendent and Vance Elementary School Principal to determine next steps & who should make up Vance Elementary School Renaming Taskforce
- August 17, 2020: [Invitations](#) go out to serve on Vance Elementary School Renaming Taskforce
- August 18, 2020: Vance's principal shares surveys with staff and families
- August 25, 2020: [First Meeting](#) of the Vance Elementary School Renaming Taskforce
- September 9, 2020: [Meeting](#) of the Vance Elementary School Renaming Taskforce
- September 16, 2020: [Update](#) goes out to our community about upcoming Virtual Public Input Forums
- September 23, 2020: [Meeting](#) of the Vance Elementary School Renaming Taskforce

- September 24, October 1, October 6 @ 10:00 AM and October 6 @ 5:30 PM: [Virtual Public Input Forums](#)
- October 21, 2020: [Meeting](#) of the Vance Elementary School Renaming Taskforce
- October 28, 2020: [Meeting](#) of the Vance Elementary School Renaming Taskforce
- November 2, 2020: Executive Director of Communications [provides Board Members with update](#)
- November 3, 2020: Election Day 2020; added opportunity to engage with Vance Elementary neighborhood
- November 9, 2020: Vance Elementary School Renaming Taskforce [narrows down future name suggestion](#) from more than 20 to just five
- November 18, 2020: [Meeting](#) of the Vance Elementary School Renaming Taskforce
- December 7, 2020: Executive Director of Communications [provides Board Members with update](#)
- February 1, 2021: Asheville City Board of Education unanimously [votes to rename the school](#) from Vance Elementary School to Lucy S. Herring Elementary School
- February 15, 2021: Creation of a [new recruitment video](#)
- Summer 2021: Design of a new school logo, sign, rugs, business cards, banners, buttons and t-shirts
- August 23, 2021: The first day all students and staff members are back for in-person learning since the school was renamed
- October 26, 2021: With students and staff back in the classroom, the school hosts its inaugural Lucy S. Herring Day

Our Budget:

The overall cost of the Vance Elementary School Renaming Process was \$3,800. \$299.99 was earmarked for Mentimeter, an online software used to solicit anonymous results during community forums. Additionally, \$3,500 was spent to support the school with updated supplies, such as a new logo, sign, business cards for school administrators, staff shirts, banners and rugs.

IMPLEMENTATION

Strategies/Tactics:

- **Strategy # 1: Ensure the widest dissemination possible across the City of Asheville.**
 - Tactic # 1: Create separate student, staff & community stakeholder [surveys](#).
 - Tactic # 2: Utilize social media ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#)) to ensure stakeholders are aware that all are welcome & encouraged to share their feedback.
 - Tactic # 3: Ensure the media knows surveys are open and when [virtual public input sessions](#) are occurring.
 - Tactic # 4: Place [flyers](#) in daily lunch bags picked up by students and families because school is only occurring virtually. At this time, we're unable to send home paper flyers, so it's imperative to think outside the box.
 - Tactic # 5: Create posters announcing virtual community forums that are placed on local bus stops throughout our community.

- Tactic # 6: Utilize Mentimeter, an interactive presentation software, to elevate the [voices of all attendees](#). Because mass gathering limitations make it impossible to host an in-person forum, differentiated times for virtual public input forums will be key to ensure a wide array of perspectives.
 - Tactic # 7: Utilize social media ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#)) and the [district website](#) to share contact information for Executive Director of Communications if community members are unable to attend a forum but would [still like to share feedback](#).
 - Tactic # 8: Because Vance Elementary is a polling place, have table/posters up for voters to learn more about the renaming process on Election Day 2020.
 - Tactic # 8: Collaborate with Vance Elementary School's principal to ensure accurate, timely information is included in Sunday messages to families.
- **Strategy #2: Educate the community and Board of Education on the purpose behind the renaming process.**
 - Tactic # 1: Each meeting is opened up with the following statement, which first appeared in the initial communications: "In Asheville City Schools, we know that history cannot be ignored; however, we also know that some history should be in museums, as opposed to on the marquee of a school building whose main focus is creating a supportive, loving environment where all students can learn, discover and thrive."
 - Tactic # 2: Begin each forum with an explanation of why we are here:
 - School names are a way of honoring and communicating our values.
 - Current school name does not align with the values we want to elevate.
 - It is time for a name that is more reflective of our current beliefs.
 - Racial Equity/Justice will be at the forefront of our decision making process; it's the reason we're coming together.
 - Tactic # 3: With input from the Vance staff and families survey, the Taskforce determines its [renaming guiding principles](#). These guiding principles are shared in updates as well as during each forum.
 - Tactic # 4: From the narrowed down list of names, create [spreadsheet](#) based on guiding principles, knowledge of local historians and Board attorney findings.
 - Tactic # 5: Present Board of Education with monthly updates regarding the Taskforce's progress and [history of finalists](#).
 - **Strategy #3: Highlight the unique perspective offered by Vance Elementary School students.**
 - Tactic # 1: Invite [Vance alumni as well as current Vance Elementary School students](#) to serve on the [Renaming Taskforce](#).
 - Tactic # 2: Collaborate with Vance Elementary School principal and 5th Grade teachers to [create a project](#) in which students learned about five finalists.
 - Tactic # 3: Invite Vance 5th Graders to share their projects with the Asheville City Board of Education during both a Work Session and televised [Monthly Meeting](#).
 - **Strategy # 4: Create opportunities to share that Vance Elementary School has been renamed Lucy S. Herring Elementary School.**
 - Tactic # 1: Share final name update via social media, email, phone call, website post and press release once the Asheville City Board of Education approves recommendation.

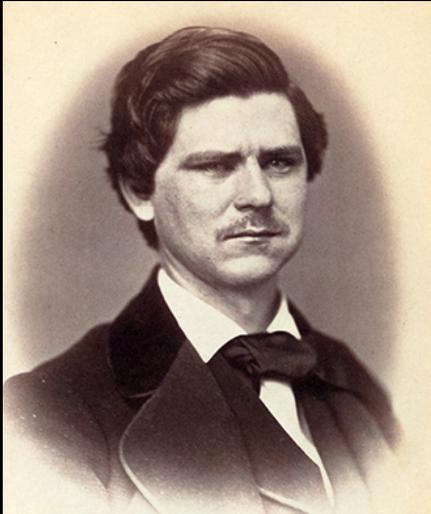
- Tactic # 2: Once students and staff are [learning in-person](#), host [Lucy S. Herring Day](#).
- Tactic # 3: Update school-based [website](#).
- Tactic # 4: [Create new recruitment video](#).
- Tactic # 5: [Create new school logo](#).
- Tactic # 6: [Create new recruitment brochure](#).
- Tactic # 5: Order new supplies and materials with updated name and logo; ie. signs, banners, business cards, staff t-shirts, rugs, etc.

EVALUATION

Objective	Method	Checkpoint	Final Results
The Asheville City Board of Education will unanimously approve a new name for Vance Elementary School by June 1, 2021.	Renaming Taskforce Recommendations; Monthly BOE Meeting Updates; Emails from Community Members; Virtual Public Input Forums Feedback	Baseline - June. 16, 2020 APPROVED DR. FREEMAN'S RECOMMENDATION TO SOLICIT INPUT & BEGIN THE RENAMING PROCESS	Conclusion - February 1, 2021 APPROVED NEW NAME 
200 students, staff, family and community members will ensure their input is heard regarding the qualities that are most important to them when considering a new name for Vance Elementary School.	Renaming Taskforce; Survey Results; Staff Meetings; Board Meeting; Emails from Community Members; Virtual Public Input Forums	Baseline - June 1, 2020 ZERO	Conclusion - February 1, 2021 261 ADDITIONALLY, WE RECEIVED 2,124 RESPONSES ON SOCIAL MEDIA 
Asheville City Schools will ensure consistent correspondence throughout the Vance Elementary School Renaming Process by providing 25 communications to key publics throughout our campaign.	District Emails Phone Calls and Texts; Social Media Analytics; Community Forums; Surveys; Media Interviews; Webpage; Lunch Bags; Flyers	Baseline - June 1, 2020 ZERO	Conclusion - February 2, 2021 98 
75% of Vance Elementary School students, staff and families will be able to understand its history and identify the school's new name by November 1, 2021.	District Emails Phone Calls and Texts; Social Media Analytics; Community Forums; Surveys; Media Interviews; New Logo; Lucy S. Herring Day	Baseline - February 1, 2021 ZERO	Conclusion- November 1, 2021 100%. 

Naming of Vance Elementary School

Born to an enslaved mother, Isaac Dickson was an American civic and community leader as well as a champion of education, primarily in his adopted community of Asheville. He was the first person of color to serve on our School Board and instrumental in the creation of our district, which first opened its doors in 1887 to support to education of students of color. With this as its origin story, it's perplexing that a school in our district was named after the Grand Dragon for North Carolina's Ku Klux Klan in 1922.



“What, then, is best and right to be done with our slaves? Plainly and unequivocally, common sense says keep the slave where he is now—in servitude. The interest of the slave himself imperatively demands it. The interest of the master, of the United States, of the world, nay, of humanity itself, says, keep the slave in his bondage...”

For some, Vance legacy as slaveowner clouds monument

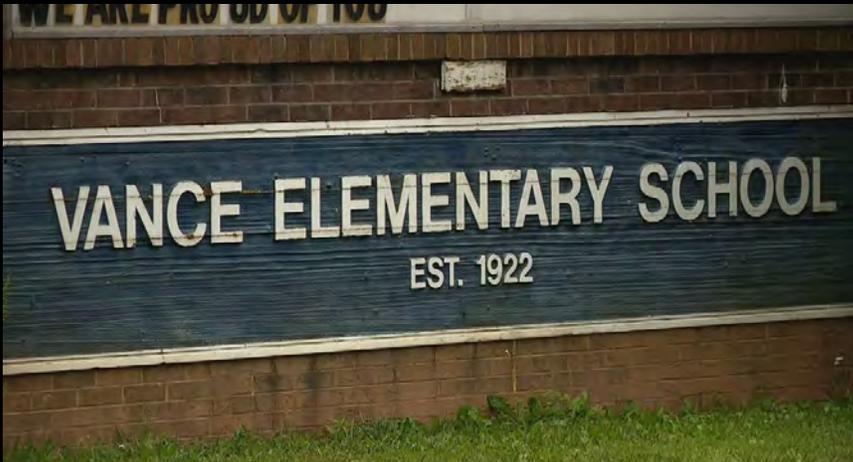
Beth Walton bwalton@citizen-times.com
 Published 4:44 p.m. ET March 12, 2015 | Updated 9:29 a.m. ET March 13, 2015

[View Comments](#) [f](#) [t](#) [e](#) [r](#)

ASHEVILLE – For more than a century, the Vance Monument has marked the center of town. Buildings in Pack Square Park have come and gone. Roadways have changed. The square itself has become bigger.

When it was built in 1896, before high-rise businesses dominated the cityscape, the 50-foot obelisk was a towering structure, meant to be seen from the distance, something to reflect the far-reaching influence of Zebulon Vance, a former governor and U.S. congressman.

1860 Slave Schedule from Asheville.



Entwined with slavery: A brief local history
 WRITTEN BY ADMIN WEDNESDAY, JULY 08, 2020

Nicholas W. Woodfin (left) and John Haywood.

By Peter H. Lewis • [AVL Watchdog](#) | By 1860, about 15 percent of the population of Western North Carolina was enslaved. Only a small percentage of the White settlers, who had pushed out Indigenous Native Americans, owned slaves — about 2 percent of households, according to Katherine Calhoun Cutshall, collections manager, North Carolina Room, Pack Memorial Library — and of those, most owned one or two. The majority were owned by a handful of elite families, whose names are commemorated throughout the region.

Initial Announcement Shared on Social Media & Feedback from our Staff, Families & Community

IMPLEMENTATION

Asheville City Schools
June 16, 2020

For more than 130 years, Asheville City Schools has prided itself on our constant desire to adapt to our changing world as we strive to best meet the needs of our students, staff, families and community.

Therefore, please know that the name of Vance Elementary School will be brought before the Asheville City Board of Education during their June 30th meeting. Should our Superintendent, Dr. Gene Freeman, receive their approval to begin the renaming process, our district will ... [See more](#)

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In Asheville City Schools, we know that history cannot be ignored; however, we also know that some history should be in museums, as opposed to on the marquee of a school building whose main focus is creating a supportive, loving environment where all students can learn.

In our district, excellence with equity is more than a motto. It is the driving force of every decision we make. Therefore, we would be remiss to the social and emotional well being of children, especially our students of color, if they were to continue to attend a school named after a slave owner, as his stance on racial equity did not match the current beliefs and feelings of our Vance students, staff, families and community.

43 Comments 63 Shares

April Bell DeLac
Both my girls went to Vance, they loved Vance, I loved Vance, and I fully support renaming Vance. It will not detract from those memories, for the memories are about the community, the love and support the school gave to our family. Just voicing my support to move on in our community w a gesture like this (in case the Board or Dr Gene reads this 😊)

Like Reply 1y Edited 20

Asheville City Schools
Thank you for your feedback. I will make sure Dr. Gene sees this!

Like Reply 1y 3

Cynde Allen
Thank you ACS. We're a former Vance family as well, with nothing but positive memories from our time there, we still deeply value the community & friendships built through the connections made at the school. We are grateful to y'all for acknowledging the painful history our community has lived through & perpetuates by glorifying & defending racism & our problematic past. Thank you for exemplifying that we can all do better as we learn and grow, and for being willing to face these challenges head on with transparency.

Like Reply 1y Edited 4

Laura Boffa
I've loved being a part of this school's community, and I support this renaming! Education is all about growing.

Like Reply 1y

Drew Reisinger
Thank you!
My kindergartner who attends Vance Elementary asked me earlier this week "who is Vance?" I didn't want to tell him.

Like Reply 1y 11

Emily Danae Whitmire
June 16, 2020
This is one step that MUST be taken.

Show Attachment

5

Gpe Ready Red
June 16, 2020
Yall said we march for nothing huh? Can't be surprised when its all part of the plan

Show Attachment

21 1 Share

Autumn Pittman
Perhaps consider renaming it after this woman?

Woman Of The Year
Earl R. Berridge
Adds the Name to the Earl R. Berridge

Share to Share Earl R. Berridge

Ona Courtright
I was a parent of students at Vance for nine years and loved the school dearly. Rename it. Such a wonderful place ought not bear the moniker of such an ugly man.
I vote E. W. Pearson elementary, myself, after the "Mayor of West Asheville."
https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_W._Pearson_Sr.

EN.M WIKIPEDIA.ORG
Edward W. Pearson Sr - Wikipedia

Like Reply 1y 3

AVCITYSCHOOLS
Posts

avcityschools

FROM THE DESK OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

The current anger, fear, and racial divide in this country resulting from the tragic death of Mr. George Floyd is having a significant negative impact on many children, as well as adults, in Asheville City Schools and our community. We live in a nation that espouses certain values and ideals, but we are not living up to them. We know that these are not shared experiences for everyone who lives here.

Asheville City Schools is actively working to eliminate bigotry and inequities caused by individual and institutional racism. As your Superintendent, my highest priority is to provide a safe, caring environment for all students, staff and faculty members. We recognize our parents, the students, and the staff are members of our community. Our children are watching and learning. Excellence with equity must be more than our motto. It must be in the DNA of how our district operates.

I am particularly concerned about what our Black and Brown children experience in our schools, neighborhoods and city. I am committed to listening and learning as we continue to create a more equitable and just environment for all. Your children may have heard about or even seen the appalling video of Mr. Floyd's murder. They may also have questions about the events and what has followed. If you would like to talk with someone, please know that you are able to contact your child's teacher or any school administrator. Additionally, please reach out to our Student Services Department for school suspension, school expulsions, school social workers by calling 828.250.6133 for additional support.

Reforms of this magnitude is a reminder that while our students and families may live next door to one another, they experience different worlds due to history and present day racism. Our challenge as a school system is to end racism in our schools by centering the experience of our students of color. As I reflect on recent events and see the injustice, please understand that Asheville City Schools pledges to join leaders in our community and country in calling for a more equitable and just society. We are committed to identifying and carrying out actions that actually move the needle and have a positive impact on our students of color. Our actions must speak louder than our words.

In Collaboration,
Dr. Gene Freeman

Like by claxtonpto and 103 others

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Like by claxtonpto and 140 others

avcityschools For more than 130 years, Asheville City Schools has prided itself on our constant desire to adapt to our changing world as we strive to best... more

Public Engagement Forums

Because mass gathering limitations made it impossible to host an in-person forum, differentiated times for virtual public input forums were key to ensure a wide array of perspectives. Additionally, the first public engagement forum was reserved for just Vance staff and families.

IMPLEMENTATION

Task force created to assist in renaming of Vance Elementary; meeting schedule here

by Kristy Kepley-Steward | Wednesday, September 16th 2020



Asheville City Schools Board of Education voted unanimously Tuesday to h... talks about renaming Vance Elementary School. (Photo credit: WLOS staff)

abc 13 NEWS
NEWS WEATHER CORONAVIRUS NEWS 13 INVESTIGATES CHIME IN

VANCE ELEMENTARY WILL BE GETTING A NEW NAME

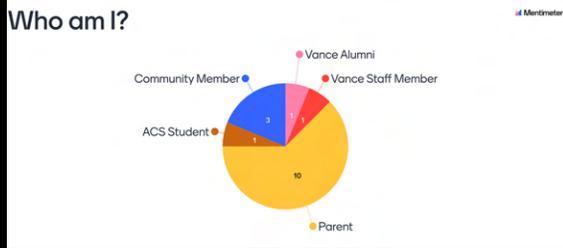
School families and staff are encouraged to take part in the process by joining the task force at one of their upcoming virtual town halls. Each town hall will take place over Zoom. Please note, the meeting on Sept. 24 is specifically geared toward Vance staff and families.

- Thursday, September 24th @ 5:30 PM ([Meeting details can be found here.](#))
- Thursday, October 1st @ 5:30 PM ([Meeting details can be found here.](#))
- Tuesday, October 6th @ 10:00 AM ([Meeting details can be found here.](#))
- Tuesday, October 6th @ 5:30 PM ([Meeting details can be found here.](#))

During the meeting, participants will hear more from the task force about its operations, their projected timeline and why they believe racial equity/justice must be at the forefront of the decision-making process.

Edu

o A **task force for renaming Vance Elementary School has been created + four virtual town halls** have been set for **Sept. 24, Oct. 1,** and two on **Oct. 6**. Made up of current students, teachers, staff members, families, alumni + community members, it's met twice and created a timeline for a **final decision in Feb. 2021**. *Wanna weigh in?* Check the meeting details [here](#) and note the *Sept. 24 meeting is geared toward Vance staff + families.* (WLOS)



Why We Are Here

- School names are a way of honoring and communicating our values
- Current school name does not align with the values we want to elevate
- It is time for a name that is more reflective of our current beliefs
- Racial Equity/Justice will be at the forefront of our decision making process; it's the reason we're coming together

Specific Name Ideas That Have Been Shared

- John Lewis Elementary School
- George Washington Carver Elementary School
- Sally Graves Elementary School
- Stephens Lee Elementary School
- Burton Street Elementary School
- Shiloh Elementary School
- West Asheville Elementary School
- Sulphur Springs Elementary School
- Peaceful Garden Elementary School
- Savi Home Elementary School
- Charles Henry Turner Elementary School

Why was it important for you to be here tonight?

I support the renaming of our wonderful school and I want all students and families to feel welcome at our school.

To gain insight into the changes made to Vance

As a parent and community member who cares about doing the right thing and making a positive change.

I want to show my support for our school and the efforts the community is making for all of our students.

I am so proud of our community for making this change

This is an important issue in our community and I want all of our kids to attend a school whose name reflects a spirit of inclusion and acceptance

I am concerned that this naming process may have left out the voices

I am a student at Vance, and I want to support our community.

Guiding Principles of Renaming Process

When the Board of Education initially approved our Superintendent's recommendation to rename Vance Elementary School, we instantly began receiving suggestions from our target audiences. Therefore, an important first step of the Taskforce was determining its guiding principles. These principles served as the initial litmus test to immediately eliminate names that did not have long-term potential. The last thing we wanted to do was be forced to rename the school five or ten years down the line. However, in order to ensure the process was as inclusive as possible, we asked stakeholders to rank the importance of each principle during our four public forums.

Guiding Principles When Selecting a New Name

- Locally Relevant
- If we choose to name it after a person, it should be a Person of Color
- Reflects the values of our current community
- If we choose a theme, it should be something that's already unique and relevant to the school, like ecology
- Has long term potential
- Something that makes people want to go there
- Inclusivity

Which of these guiding principles resonates the most with you?



Which of the following qualities is most important to you when considering a new name for Vance Elementary School? *

	Most Important	Important	Less Important	Least Important	Not Sure
Reflects the values of our current community	<input type="radio"/>				
Has ties to Asheville	<input type="radio"/>				
Is an equity champion	<input type="radio"/>				
Is a Person of Color	<input type="radio"/>				
Has ties to ecology	<input type="radio"/>				
Promotes social change	<input type="radio"/>				
Is memorable	<input type="radio"/>				
Has implemented major change	<input type="radio"/>				
Has public service experiences	<input type="radio"/>				
Known to have valued public education	<input type="radio"/>				
Promotes Women Empowerment	<input type="radio"/>				
Has long term potential	<input type="radio"/>				
Inclusive	<input type="radio"/>				

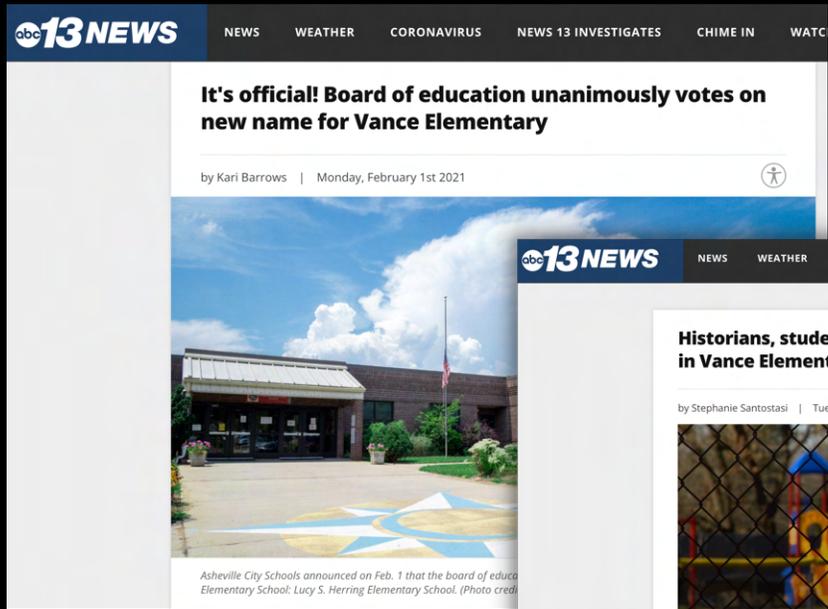
Qualities and Characteristics in a New Name

IDEAS:

- Connection to Asheville --> history from here
- Memorialize former schools of ACS
 - Stephens Lee Elementary School
 - Educators that taught at Stephens Lee → you still don't know a lot of the history; booklet in Pack Square that's about Stephens Lee educators
 - Burton Street Elementary School
 - Shiloh Elementary School
- First Black Vice Mayor or Mayor of Asheville
- Female educator that was in one of our former schools
- If it's a person, it needs to be a person of color; however, naming it after a person, is not our only option
- Parks Elementary School for Rosa Parks
- Theme that represents the school's mission would also be a great idea
 - Ecology or Community
- Racial Equity/Justice at the forefront; it's the reason we're coming together

Media Engagement

Although internal communications were key, we also relied on local media partners to share our story because our community was also considering the removal of the Vance Monument. In total, our campaign was covered 26 times, with the most stories (12) coming from WLOS-ABC13 News.



Edu

AVL TODAY

The Vance Elementary School Renaming Task Force has recommended that the Asheville City Board of Education **rename Vance Elementary School to Lucy S. Herring Elementary School**. A Black woman who dedicated 52 years of teaching — 35 of which took place in Asheville City + Buncombe Co. Schools — Herring was one of the districts' first administrators + oversaw segregated elementary schools for the both school districts. The name change will honor her legacy.

theurbannews.com/our-town/2020/year-in-review-2020/

Farewell to Vance

Following the nationwide uprisings over the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and numerous other African Americans at the hands of police (active duty or retired), Asheville and Buncombe County finally took action. The bodies appointed a joint commission to help determine the fate of the Vance Monument, erected more than a century ago to honor NC's Civil War governor, post-war Senator, and avowed racist and white supremacist. After several months of deliberation, which included reaching out to the Vance Birthplace Historic Site in Reems Creek Valley—which had no interest in taking the obelisk—the committee recommended that the monument be demolished.

A parallel group, meanwhile, studied possibly renaming the Vance Elementary School, and recommended that Asheville City Schools rename the campus for renowned Black educator Lucy Herring.

NEWS abc13 WLOS

[June 30, 2020](#) (1) [June 30, 2020](#) (2)

[July 1, 2020](#) [September 16, 2020](#)

[September 23, 2020](#) [September 25, 2020](#)

[October 6, 2020](#) [November 9, 2020](#)

[November 10, 2020](#) [December 8, 2020](#) (1)

[December 8, 2020](#) (2) [February 1, 2021](#)

MOUNTAIN Xpress www.mountainx.com

[June 16, 2020](#) [September 16, 2020](#)

[December 8, 2020](#) [February 2, 2021](#)

Citizen Times

[June 16, 2020](#) [June 30, 2020](#)

[November 12, 2020](#)

URBAN NEWS

[December 15, 2020](#) (1) [December 15, 2020](#) (2)

BLUE RIDGE PUBLIC RADIO NEWS CLASSIC FOR WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

[July 1, 2020](#) [February 2, 2021](#)

7 NEWS WSPA.COM

[February 1, 2021](#)

Branding

Below you will find graphics created as part of the Renaming Process as well as the new logo designed by Asheville Primary Schools' Art Teacher Shawn Winebreender.

IMPLEMENTATION

Asheville City Schools
November 9, 2020

After hearing the thoughts and feelings of our students, staff, families and greater school community through four virtual town halls and dozens of emails, the Vance Elementary School Renaming Task Force has narrowed down its future name suggestions from more than 20 to just five.

They are:

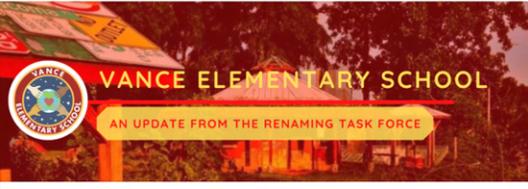
- Christine Avery
- Gladys Pierce Forney
- Elynora M. Foster
- Florence Green
- Lucy Herring

All five were Black, female educators right here in Asheville City Schools.

The Renaming Task Force is now completing additional research and meeting with local historians, as the Task Force is coming closer to meeting its goal of recommending a new name that honors and communicates our current values and beliefs. Additionally, Vance Elementary School 5th Graders are delving deeper into the lives of these five great women as part of their North Carolina studies.

The Task Force will bring their final suggestion before the Asheville City Board of Education during its December 7th meeting. It hopes the Board will approve a new school name in February 2021.

Read more at: <https://www.ashevillecityschools.net/site/default.aspx...>



Tracey Rehder Jenkins and 50 others 10 Comments 8 Shares

Asheville City Schools
December 8, 2020

The Vance Elementary School Renaming Task Force presented its final name recommendation to the Asheville City Board of Education during their December 7th meeting.

After conducting their own research, meeting with local historians and hearing the thoughts and feelings of our students, staff, families and greater school community, they suggested Vance Elementary School be renamed Lucy S. Herring Elementary School.

Herring dedicated 52 years of her life to teaching, 35 in Asheville City and Buncombe County Schools. A Black female educator, she began her career at just 16 in a one-room Swannanoa school house before moving to Hill Street School in 1920 and later Stephens-Lee High School. In 1941, Herring became the principal at Mountain Street - a school that was later named after her - and was one of the district's first Black administrators, eventually overseeing segregated elementary schools for both districts. In 1961, Mountain Street School was rebuilt and named Lucy S. Herring School. For six years, the school served local Students of Color before closing in 1967 following court-ordered integration.

Read more about Mrs. Herring and the renaming process @ <https://www.ashevillecityschools.net/site/default.aspx...>



Tracey Rehder Jenkins, Stephanie Reagan and 89 others 10 Shares

Asheville City Schools
February 1, 2021

Vance Elementary School officially has a new name! During the February 1, 2021, meeting, in a unanimous vote, the Asheville City Board of Education voted on a new name, Lucy S. Herring Elementary School.

For fifty-two years Lucy Herring dedicated her life to teaching; thirty-five of these years were spent in Asheville City and Buncombe County Schools. She served as a teacher in Swannanoa, and at Asheville's Hill Street Elementary and Stephens Lee High School. Later Ms. Herring became principal at Mountain Street Elementary, a school that was later named in her honor. She was founder and director of a summer reading clinic for teachers at NC College at Durham and was Associate Professor and Director of Reading at Livingstone College in Salisbury. Ms. Herring was also a member of the Asheville Chapter of the American Association of University Women, Gamma Gamma Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and a lifelong member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The names of the five women originally recommended to the Board of Education were: Lucy S. Herring, Christine Avery, Gladys Pierce Forney, Elynora M. Foster, and Florence Green. All five were Black, female educators in Asheville City Schools. The task force believes it is important to honor all five nominees. Conversations will continue about the best way to do that.

We are excited to begin the work of officially transitioning to Lucy S. Herring Elementary School and are grateful for all the efforts of the staff, administration, and Vance Renaming Task Force. #TheACSWay



Sarah Cain, Niki Kendall Cush and 201 others 12 Comments 30 Shares

WE WELCOME YOUR **FEEDBACK**



JOIN THE **VANCE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL RENAMING TASK FORCE**

DURING A VIRTUAL *town hall*

SCAN ME FOR MORE INFORMATION



- SEPTEMBER 24TH @ 5:30 PM
- OCTOBER 1ST @ 5:30 PM
- OCTOBER 6TH @ 10:00 AM
- OCTOBER 6TH @ 5:30 PM




Additional Promotional Items

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Mission

Lucy S. Herring Elementary School is a collaborative community that values diversity and fosters responsibility, individual excellence and environmental stewardship.

Students at LSHE explore all subject areas through hands-on activities and discover the importance of civic responsibility to make a difference in the community and the world.



- Instruction is based on the North Carolina Standard Course of Study
- Students engage in art, music, Spanish, media, and physical education classes which integrate with classroom subject areas.
- Our media and digital learning programs serve students and teachers through flexible scheduling that supports student achievement and collaboration with classroom teachers.
- Students at LSHE have access to technology in every classroom
- We have a very active and supportive Parent Team at Vance.
- We are also fortunate to have several community outreach partnerships including FEAST, Roots Foundation, Let Me Run, Girls on the Run and Youth Transformed for Life.
- LSHE Elementary promotes a positive school climate and increased academic performance through Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS).
- Opening a 21st Century Community Learning Center After-School Program

Lucy S. Herring Parent Team

The mission of the Parent Team is to support and advocate for the success of our students through developing community partnerships, ensuring educational excellence and promoting positive learning styles.

Parent Team learning in to ensure appreciating assisting have am classroom

Lucy S. Herring

Mrs. Herring was born in Union, SC in 1900 in poverty. Her father was a butcher and a wealthy man. He would travel all over the world with this man and would tell Herring and her siblings about his travels. This led Herring to a thirst for knowledge. She went on to spend over 50 years in education, many of those years were spent here in Asheville City Schools! She was a teacher and principal for both Elementary and High Schools. She has had 2 schools named after her, one in 1961 and our own school!



Principal: Ruletta Hughes

ruletta.hughes@acsgmail.net



Data Manager: Elliot Hardy
elliott.hardy@acsgmail.net

Bookkeeper: Connie Rice
connie.rice@acsgmail.net



Lucy S. Herring Elementary School

A Place Where Everyone Learns and Grows



98 Sulphur Springs Rd
Asheville, NC 28806
Phone: (828)350-6600

Watch Home Live Music Shows Saved Videos Your Watchlist

Lucy S. Herring Elementary School

"School of Ecology"

Lucy S. Herring Elementary

Like Comment Share

2.3K Views



JERZEES 2 BLEND 5050 T-SHIRT - MEN'S - COLORS - FULL COLOR

4imprint

LEFT CHEST: 4" H x 4" W

Order: 21447615-2 To: 827.646.1746

Date: 07-29-21 By: Katie Braithwaite 88667

Art Proof



Lucy S. Herring Elementary School

JERZEES 2 BLEND 5050 T-SHIRT - MEN'S - COLOR - FULL COLOR

4imprint

FULL BACK: 14" H x 12" W

Order: 21447615-2 To: 827.646.1746

Date: 07-29-21 By: Katie Braithwaite 88667

Art Proof



Lucy S. Herring Elementary School



Lucy S. Herring Elementary School

Lucy S. Herring Day

This August marked the first time all Lucy S. Herring students and staff were back in the classroom since the school's renaming. To ensure they each had a shared lens, the inaugural Lucy S. Herring Day was held on October 26th, 2021 to coincide with what would have been Mrs. Herring's 121st Birthday. Due to COVID constraints, a whole school assembly was not able to occur. However, students reviewed several digital media pieces, including firsthand records of Mrs. Herring and interviews with local historians, then participated in classroom-based, age appropriate activities.



Lucy S. Herring Unanimously Approved

During their February 1, 2021 meeting, the Asheville City Board Education unanimously approved a new name for Vance Elementary School --- Lucy S. Herring Elementary School. Overwhelmingly, the community's response was a positive one.



Roy Harris
What a Day! 👍
Like 1y

Noel Nickle
Great news!
Like 1y

Micah Pulleyn
Wonderful news!
Like 1y

Cooper Ampersand
Hooray!
Like 1y

Alex Fisher
Fantastic! This is my alma (can you claim an alma for elementary?) and I'm proud of it!
I graduated from Lucy S. Herring Elementary School 🎓
Like Reply 1y 4

Carolina Day School
Congratulations on the new name!
Like Reply 1y

Rosalyn Kelly Galloway
Wonderful news!
Like Reply 1y

James Cassara
An excellent choice.
Like Reply 1y

Steve Riedesel
An excellent choice. A great way to begin Black History Month.
Like 1y

Gay Reilly
Love this!
1y

Elizabeth Schell
My son went there and I'm so glad to hear of the name change. It's a great school and now even greater for its name change!
Like 1y

Jordan Diamond ▸ Lucy S. Herring Elementary School Peace Garden
February 1, 2021 · 🌐
It's official! Vance Elementary will be renamed Lucy S Herring Elementary, and the garden will become the Herring Peace Garden!
[Show Attachment](#)
Carrie Wooten Buchanan and 54 others 3 Shares



32
People Attended our
Virtual Community
Forums, with the
most being Vance
Parents



66 Community Members
Responded to our Survey



30 People Shared Their Renaming
Suggestions Via Email



20 People Served on the Renaming
Task Force, Including 10 Vance Alumni
and 3 Current Vance Students



60 Vance 5th Graders Selected
one of the Five Finalists and
Completed a Projects to Learn More



53 Vance Staff Members Made
Their Feelings Known



@AVLCitySchools Social Media
Posts About the Renaming
Process Received

1,352 Likes
616 Comments
156 Shares/Retweets

Continued Updates

Our original objective was "Asheville City Schools will ensure consistent correspondence throughout the Vance Elementary School Renaming Process by providing 25 communications to key publics." Through district emails, phone calls, text messages, press releases, lunch bag notifications and website updates, we exceeded our goal with 98.

ASHEVILLE CITY SCHOOLS NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: November 9, 2020
 Contact: Ashley-Michelle Thublin, Executive Director of Communications, at (828) 273-2123 or ashley.thublin@acs.net



Vance Renaming Task Force Narrows Down Future Name Suggestions to Five

After hearing the thoughts and feelings of our students, staff, families and greater school community through four virtual town halls and dozens of emails, the Vance Elementary School Renaming Task Force has narrowed down its future name suggestions from more than 20 to just five.

They are:

- **Christine Avery:** Christine Avery served the Asheville community for over 30 years as an elementary and special education school teacher in Asheville City Schools. She was also one of the founders of the Hill Street Daycare Center (now the Christine W. Avery Learning Center), Asheville's oldest and only Black-owned daycare facility still in operation. Avery was a charter member of the Asheville Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. She believed that every person was special in their own way and deserving of love and care. Her message to everyone was to say and believe that, "I Am Lovable And Capable."
- **Gladys Pierce Fornery:** A graduate of both Shaw University and the University of Illinois, where she earned a master's degree in the Teaching of Social Studies, Gladys Pierce Fornery came to Asheville in 1953 to teach history and sociology at Stephens-Lee High School. She is known for being a key figure during the civil rights era, leading the charge during the years of integration when Asheville City's two high schools were combined. Throughout her life, she continued to work for community peace through the Asheville-Buncombe Community Relations Council.
- **Elynora M. Foster:** A graduate of Howard University and Columbia University, where she received a Master's Degree in Education, Elynora Foster began her teaching career at Stephens-Lee High School in 1932. An ACS educator for 20 years, she retired from Asheville High School in 1972. Foster's obituary states that "she was the first African-American woman in Asheville to receive a master's degree."
- **Florence Green:** Florence Green was a graduate of Stephens Lee High School's class of 1932 and a 1959 graduate of Benedict College in Columbia, SC. An

educator across Asheville City Schools, she taught at Hill Street School, Ira B. Jones Elementary, Newton Elementary and Claxton Elementary before retiring.

- **Lucy Herring:** For 32 years Lucy Herring dedicated her life to teaching; 13 of these years were spent in Asheville City and Buncombe County Schools. She served as a teacher at Swannanoa, Hill Street and Stephens Lee and as principal at Mountain Street, a school that was later named in her honor. She was founder and director of a summer reading clinic for teachers at NC College at Durham and was Associate Professor, Director of Reading at Livingstone College in Salisbury. She was also a member of the Asheville Chapter of the American Association of University Women, Gamma Gamma Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and a lifelong member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

All five were Black, female educators right here in Asheville City Schools.

When narrowing down its list, the Task Force considered its original seven guiding principles as well as four themes that were common additions suggested by those who attended the virtual town halls (distinguished by an *). The 31 markers considered include:

- Reflects the values of our current community
- Inclusive
- Has long term potential
- If we choose to name it after a person, it should be a Person of Color
- If we choose a theme, it should be something that's already unique and relevant to the school
- Locally Relevant
- Something that makes people want to go there
- Someone who is known to support public education*
- Promotes Female Empowerment*
- Commitment to racial justice*
- Name should be empowering to the disenfranchised*

The Renaming Task Force is now completing additional research and meeting with local historians, as the Task Force is coming closer to meeting its goal of recommending a new name that honors and communicates our current values and beliefs. Additionally, Vance Elementary School's founders are delving deeper into the lives of these five great women as part of their North Carolina studies.

The Task Force will bring their final suggestion before the Asheville City Board of Education during its December 7th meeting. It hopes the Board will approve a new school name in February 2021.

Good Afternoon Students, Staff and Families. This is Ashley-Michelle Thublin with an update about your school community.

The Vance Elementary School Renaming Task Force presented its final name recommendation to the Asheville City Board of Education during their December 7th meeting.

After conducting their own research, meeting with local historians and hearing the thoughts and feelings of our students, staff, families and greater school community, they suggested Vance Elementary School be renamed Lucy S. Herring Elementary School.

Herring dedicated 52 years of her life to teaching, 35 in Asheville City and Buncombe County Schools. A Black female educator, she began her career at just 16 in a one-room Swannanoa schoolhouse before moving to Hill Street School in 1920 and later Stephens-Lee High School. In 1941, Herring became the principal at Mountain Street - a school that was later named after her - and was one of the district's first Black administrators, eventually overseeing segregated elementary schools for both districts. In 1961, Mountain Street School was rebuilt and named Lucy S. Herring School. For six years, the school served local Students of Color before closing in 1967 following court-ordered integration.

Per previous communication, the Renaming Task Force narrowed down its list of suggestions from more than twenty to just five in early November:

Although all five were incredible Black female educators who faithfully served the students and families of Asheville City Schools, they ultimately decided on Lucy S. Herring believing the work of Christine Avery, Gladys Pierce Fornery, Elynora M. Foster and Florence Green was capable because of Herring's lasting legacy.

You can learn more about Herring through [this virtual presentation](#) by Vance Elementary School 5th Grader Mackenzie Bulfer. |

Whereas the task force recommends naming the school after Lucy S. Herring, they also believe it's important to honor all five educators and suggest a plaque could hang in a prominent place within the school explaining not only the purpose behind its remaining but also serve as a marker celebrating the contributions all five women made.

The Asheville City Board of Education first approved beginning the school's renaming process in June 2020. Representing a wide array of perspectives that make Vance Elementary School such a unique place to work, learn and grow, a task force was created. Made up of representatives from current Vance students, Vance parents,

teachers, staff members, families, future families as were charged with seeking input. You can read more

Following today's recommendation, the task force will recommend the school's new school name during its February 2021

Good Morning Vance Students, Staff and Families. This is Dr. Gene with an update about your school community.

As we move forward in Vance's renaming process, I think it's important that we agree from the very start that there's a big difference between a museum's purpose and that of a school's. A museum is a place to remember, reflect and learn; whereas, I believe the name of a school is an important place of honor. Our purpose in renaming Vance Elementary School is not about erasing history but instead about finding a way to express a new image for the building that reflects the current values of Vance's students, staff, families and greater community.

This process is not one I take lightly.

Please know that renaming Vance Elementary School will not be a decision solely made by one or two people; instead, I want it to be a collaborative effort that includes feedback from as many stakeholders as possible. That's why a task force has been created. Representing a wide array of perspectives that make Vance Elementary School such a unique place to work, learn and grow, the task force is made up of representatives from current Vance students, Vance alumni, teachers, staff members, families, future families as well as community members.

At this point, the task force has held two meetings. They have come up with a projected timeline, which is estimated to conclude with the Asheville City Board of Education making their final decision in February 2021, as well as discussed ways to engage with additional members of the Vance community. In order to do just that, please join the task force at one of their upcoming virtual town halls. Each one will take place over Zoom. Although you are more than welcome to attend any meeting, please know that their meeting on September 24th is specifically geared toward Vance staff and families.

- Thursday, September 24th @ 5:30 PM ([Meeting details can be found here.](#))
- Thursday, October 1st @ 5:30 PM ([Meeting details can be found here.](#))
- Tuesday, October 6th @ 10:00 AM ([Meeting details can be found here.](#))
- Tuesday, October 6th @ 5:30 PM ([Meeting details can be found here.](#))

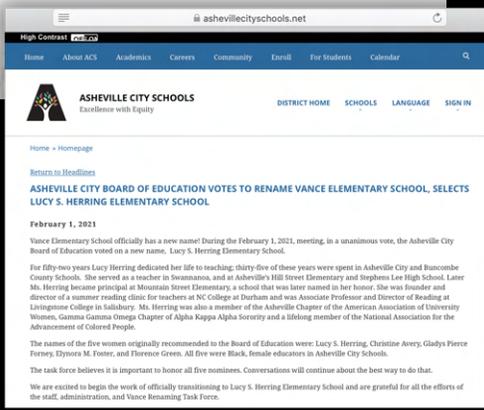
For more than 130 years, Asheville City Schools has prided itself on our constant desire to adapt to our changing world as we strive to best meet the needs of our students, staff, families and community.

Therefore, please know that the name of Vance Elementary School will be brought before the Asheville City Board of Education during their June 30th meeting. Should our Superintendent, Dr. Gene Freeman, receive their approval to begin the renaming process, our district will start an extensive campaign to receive feedback from as many stakeholders as possible, especially those who currently make up the Vance Elementary School family.

In Asheville City Schools, we know that history cannot be ignored; however, we also know that some history should be in museums, as opposed to on the marquee of a school building whose main focus is creating a supportive, loving environment where all students can learn.

In our district, excellence with equity is more than a motto. It is the driving force of every decision we make. Therefore, we would be remiss to the social and emotional well being of children, especially our students of color, if they were to continue to attend a school named after a slave owner, as his stance on racial equity did not match the current beliefs and feelings of our Vance students, staff, families and community.

ent, their e forefront of principles by s well as bring entary l town halls.



As Asheville City Schools continues to evaluate the ever-changing climate of our community and country and how it impacts our response to equity, we are utilizing lessons learned through the renaming process to serve as a jumping off point for our [communications plan](#) for 2022 - 2025 Strategic Plan, especially since it too will be rooted in creating equitable learning environments for all our students.



Asheville City Schools was one of 37 school districts statewide to receive Blue Ribbon Awards during the North Carolina School Public Relations Associations' 2022 ceremony. Blue Ribbon Awards are the highest honor a school district can receive from NCSPPRA, which is the state's leading organization for school communications and public relations professionals. In fact, our Communications Department received North Carolina's Best of the Best Award in marketing for its "Renaming of Vance Elementary School Communications Plan."

By sharing lessons learned through our renaming process, we hope school districts who are facing similar situations can not only "admire and acquire" our successes but grow from our missteps —namely, that mass gathering restrictions hampered our ability to engage with our target audiences in tried and true fashions.