

**SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEE 2 OF THE AD HOC
COMMITTEE FOR POTENTIAL RE-NAMING OF J.E.B. STUART HIGH
SCHOOL**

To: Fairfax County School Board

From: Hugh B. Stuart, member of Subcommittee 2 of the Ad Hoc Committee for J.E.B. Stuart High School

Date: May 24, 2017

Re: Supplemental Report of Subcommittee 2 of the Ad Hoc Committee

Note: At the time of writing, it appears there will not be a single Subcommittee 2 report so I decided to submit my own brief report that will hopefully prove useful to the Board. I may yet join with one of the final subcommittee reports as the opportunity arises later today.

Subcommittee 2 (“SC2”) of the Ad Hoc Committee was formed to “continue to ensure public engagement and determine the extent of support for change.” While SC2 was able to undertake a limited amount of public engagement in the form of two public meetings held at J.E.B. Stuart High School and an informational bus tour of the Munson Hill area, **the subcommittee utterly failed to develop any meaningful and impactful data regarding the extent of support for a name change in Fairfax County.**

The details of the struggle to develop data regarding the extent of support for a name change will likely be recounted in the other SC2 reports and I will not rehash them in detail here. Suffice it to say the process for SC2’s activities was fatally flawed as a result of poor advance planning and ill-defined processes. For example, SC2 could not proceed in a meaningful manner until subcommittees 1 and 3 had completed their assigned tasks, and it should be noted those subcommittees (and SC2) did not receive serious engagement and support from FCPS until after the second Ad Hoc committee meeting. The most glaring problem for SC2 was the Board’s failure to clearly define the community whose opinion SC2 was assigned to measure. The SC2 members all recognized the J.E.B. Stuart HS students and parents were clearly part of that community but were unsure how far to expand beyond that limited data set. Did the community include the neighborhood surrounding the school? The Stuart HS pyramid? Mason District? All of Fairfax County? It was not until the third and final meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee (two months prior to filing this report) that SC2 learned it should be examining the extent of support for a name change within Fairfax County as a whole. Obviously SC2 could not provide meaningful opinion data for the whole county by the report deadline without expending tremendous (and expensive) resources for polling and community engagement.¹

¹ In my personal opinion, the only reliable method for determining the extent of county-wide support for changing the name of J.E.B. Stuart High School is to put the issue on the ballot and let the voters decide.

Given the lack of time and resources for a survey of Fairfax County residents, the Board will not receive new data of any significance regarding support for a name change. Instead, the Board has little choice but to rely on the opinion data the Board had in its possession prior to the appointment of the Ad Hoc committee as well as any citizen comments generated since that time. It should be noted the only opinion data available to the Board that was generated solely from Fairfax County residents consists of the surveys of the J.E.B. Stuart High School students and community taken last year and direct constituent communications to the individual Board members regarding the name change. The change.org petition has no probative value for Fairfax County because it is an internet-based petition open to any internet user in the world who registers with the site. Similarly, comments provided by audience members following the public engagement events may or may not be from Fairfax County residents and should be valued accordingly. Finally, as regards constituent communications to individual Board members it may be worthwhile to compile all of those communications from persons who can be identified as Fairfax County residents. Such information was not made available to SC2 and was not considered by the subcommittee as part of its findings.

In closing, I want to express my personal gratitude to Marty Smith and his staff who conducted themselves with great professionalism in a difficult setting. Sadly, Marty was not brought into the process in a meaningful role at the beginning of the committee's activities but I wish to commend him for making a sincere effort once he was engaged.