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**HISD Board of Education approves resolution beginning process of renaming certain schools**

*Jan. 14, 2016 —* The Houston Independent School District Board of Education on Thursday approved a resolution that formally begins the process of renaming four schools in order to represent the values and diversity of the school district, in accordance with the district’s non-discrimination policies.

The resolution affects Henry Grady, Richard Dowling and Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson middle schools, and Lee High School.

Under the resolution, each campus will be required to form a school-naming committee comprised of diverse staff, students, parents, and school stakeholders. That committee will be charged with exploring school renaming options that adhere to board guidelines and submitting recommendations to trustees by May.

In October, the board revised the district’s policy for naming and renaming school buildings and other district facilities. The updated policy outlined a process by which school board trustees may initiate the renaming of a facility, if they believe it to be in the best interest of the district.

HISD and the four schools will work together to ensure each school community has a voice in the decision-making process and recommends a name that represents the mission, spirit, culture and success of each campus.

Four other schools originally on the name change list — Albert Sidney Johnston and Sidney Lanier middle schools, and Jefferson Davis and John Reagan high schools — were pulled by the board Thursday night to allow trustees time to meet with their respective communities before moving forward.

Also on Thursday, the Board of Education considered several other proposals brought forward by outgoing Board President Rhonda Skillern-Jones:

* Approved the first reading of a policy revision banning suspensions and expulsions for students in second grade and below, except as required by law. The policy update includes provisions for a teacher mentoring system and annual classroom management and equity training for all campus-based faculty and staff. The training would focus on creating a positive school climate, preventing crisis and deescalating disciplinary issues.
* Approved a plan calling for the evaluation of attendance zone boundaries for all schools within HISD. The first phase of the plan will be to seek out an independent consultant who could help the district determine future needs based on current and anticipated population changes across the city.
* Approved new magnet programs at 10 HISD schools. Those programs include fine arts magnets at Atherton, Crockett, and Kashmere Gardens elementary schools; Dowling, Key, and Ortiz middle schools; and Kashmere and Westbury high schools. They also include STEM magnets at Hartsfield and Stevens elementary schools.
* Approved the development of magnet programs in four new areas: Careers; Business Development and Entrepreneurship; Public Interest Law and Advocacy; and Government Relations and Political Practice.
* Tabled consideration of a policy revision that would require schools to use their allocated funding to hire certain essential positions, such as counselors, librarians or nurses. The positions required for each school would be determined by district administration based on student population and grade levels at each campus. Trustees agreed to reconsider the issue in 30 days to give district administration time to study the issue and gather feedback from principals.

