

September 21, 2018

To: Austin ISD Renaming Taskforce

From: Lanier ECHS CAC

Dear Trustees:

Our Campus Advisory Council writes this to present our recommendations of three rank-order choices with succinct explanation of our choices for the renaming of Sidney Lanier Early College High School. We are extremely grateful for the guidance we have received over the last year from the Re-naming Taskforce, Brian Hill, and Laura DeGrush. Of special note is our appreciation of the criteria with which we were supplied by the Taskforce for this year's work. These criteria helped the Lanier CAC tremendously in considering the over 50 nominations submitted.

**Our process:**

The Lanier CAC met last fall with Mr. Hill and other representatives from Superintendent Cruz's office who opened a dialogue about the process. They informed us about the procedures, as they were developed, in our CAC meetings and with the campus faculty and staff in late starts/PD and other meetings. Students were engaged through their advisory classes, in announced lunch seminars, an after school seminar, and discussions were also held in the student council.

Community input was immediately offered and considered, from the first mention of the suggestion of re-naming the campus, and it continued through our final vote on September 19th. This input was heard/read, collected, and documented at CAC meetings, PTA meetings, Principal Coffee's, in our advisory classes, through the district input survey, through a survey designed by the school for the community and campus, student engagement activities designed for this issue (eg. lunchtime seminars), parent night, and at other community events. The survey results were considered during the final process of vetting the nominations down to the final three.

This issue has been at the forefront of our committee meetings, and a consistent topic of campus conversations, since October of 2017. Our CAC met three times in the month of September 2018 in order to discuss the criteria and nominations, hear from those in the community who wished to offer still more input, define our committee's voting protocol, and finally to take a series of four votes over two meetings. These votes were made on September 17 and September 19 with continued review and discussion of criteria in between each vote. Our fourth vote was our final, and it yielded our top three suggestions to the Taskforce.

**Our Recommendations:**

1. North Central Early College High School

2. Diana H. Castañeda Early College High School
3. Lanier Early College High School

**Our Rationale:**

**1. North Central Early College High School**

North Central Early College High School is an outstanding name for our campus as it honors the district identity that the community holds as a reference to the school's origin as the northern outpost of Austin ISD. North Central also represents our current geographic location as a central urban school. As our city becomes evermore culturally and economically dynamic, this name will anchor the campus as an educational centerpiece of the city's urban core.

**2. Diana H. Castañeda Early College High School**

Diana H. Castañeda was chosen, in part, because her many roles throughout her career represent the complexity of education. These roles included serving on the PTA in multiple schools, as a classroom educator, as the first elected minority woman on the Austin ISD school board, and as a member of national organizations which fought to advance the rights of historically marginalized people. As an advocate for social justice, and as an individual who valued public education for all Diana H. Castañeda is an excellent name for our school.

**3. Lanier Early College High School**

The name Lanier ECHS maintains the support of the majority of students, alumni, the community, and a large portion of current staff. The connotation of "Lanier" has been one disassociated with its namesake, and it has become a symbol of empowerment and inclusion across our city and state. Lanier ECHS is an exceptional name for our campus. It demonstrates that despite any ill intent in the original naming of the campus, the school has become a highly successful and ethnically diverse school which upholds a commitment to high expectations for along with the belief in the sanctity of individual expression.

Sincerely,

Lanier Early College High School CAC