

March 15, 2016

TO: MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF PINELLAS COUNTY

FROM: MICHAEL A. GREGO, Ed.D. SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: Request Approval for Name Change of Hamilton Disston School to Disston Academy

BACKGROUND:

A focus of our District Strategic Plan is to create learning environments uniquely personal, rigorous, relevant, and engaging for all students. Hamilton Disston School, as a facility, was repurposed and issued a new Master School Identification (MSID) number, and all related programming as a center serving students with severe emotional disabilities were terminated.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION: Student Achievement

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the name change.
2. Do not approve the name change.

RECOMMENDATION:

Alternative No. 1 is recommended.

RATIONALE:

The process to terminate Hamilton Disston School's MSID number and related programming as a center serving student populations with severe emotional disabilities was completed in 2015, with a new MSID number assigned to the alternative high school. The school community has taken pride in the evolution of our culture and environment. Our internal name, Disston Academy, our mascot, the Phoenix, and our logo emphasize transformation and progression. All prerequisites of School Board policy, including families input, have been completed in anticipation of this recommendation. Survey results show unanimous support for the name change by students (100%) and parents (83%) and agreement by staff (68%). In preparation for graduation, our priority is to finalize the school name on diplomas, medallions, and ceremonial regalia.

Historically, Hamilton Disston School has had exempt status in reporting for ACT, SAT, and PERT scores. During ACT or SAT registration, students struggle to identify where results should be sent as neither Disston Academy nor Hamilton Disston School are an option. This has impacted post-assessment monitoring and reporting for graduation tracking. The most significant operational effect is miscommunication within the district. Currently, the school is monitored by six variations of the name within the departments such as personnel, auditing, accounting, budgeting, testing and purchasing.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is minimal association with the cost of signage.

DATA SOURCES:

Barbara Hires, Ed. D., Area 2 Superintendent
Michelle Topping, Director, Educational Alternative Services
Tamika Hughes-Leeks, Ed. S., Principal, Hamilton Disston School

SUBMITTED BY:

William P. Corbett, Ed.D., Deputy Superintendent