

September 14, 2015  
Re: Lee Elementary

Dear AISD School Board Member:

Regarding the proposals to change the name of Robert E. Lee Elementary, we favor changing the name but not in such a manner that damages the institution that we all know and love.

We live within one block of the school and are active members of the Hancock Neighborhood Association. We have spent many hours on campus, and we are proud of its faculty, staff, and student body for their contributions to an extraordinary institution. It is a shining beacon among AISD schools. It has received numerous honors, and its alumni have made significant contributions to our community. The building itself is an outstanding example of 1930s art deco architecture. All of these attributes are connected to a name: Lee Elementary. The name and the place are identified as one.

We recognize that the original naming of the school was driven by a desire to honor a man whose name today is offensive to some members of our community. We respect their feelings and their opinions. It is their feelings that have convinced us that it is time to change the name.

We believe that the school should be renamed "Lee Elementary", thus naming it for the institution and not the man Robert E. Lee. Doing so would address the interests of those who want to disconnect the name with the past and also those who want to preserve the institution that is so much a part of the fabric of our community. To do otherwise would waste generations of community connectivity and good work. Don't throw out the baby with the bathwater.

It would be a simple matter for the School Board to pass a resolution formally disconnecting the school from the man Robert E Lee and renaming it for the institution that is known in the community as Lee Elementary. It can be done with words respectful of diverse opinions and in a manner that focuses on the ties that bind us all together.

Should the board decide that a name change is in the best interest of the school community, and if the name Lee Elementary is a mutually agreeable solution, care should be taken to remove from the façade of the building the letters "Robert E" and to move the letters "Lee Elementary" to a location centered over the main entrance. This will require the skills of restoration experts who can make the change appear seamless.

Very truly yours,



P. Michael Hebert  
512-476-2884



Mary Minor Hebert