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August Wilson High School--We've waited too long: Email Council to approve the name change! Hearing on Wednesday.

Feedback on DC schools?

+Calendar Events

Please circulate. Contact me at ruth4schools@yahoo.com, [@ruth4schools](https://www.instagram.com/ruth4schools).

Calendar Events and Upcoming Meetings

**Parent Cafe, sponsored by Advocates for Justice and Education
Thursday, Oct. 7, 6PM**

AJE is focused on providing a strong educational experience to students with disabilities.

[To register, click here.](#)

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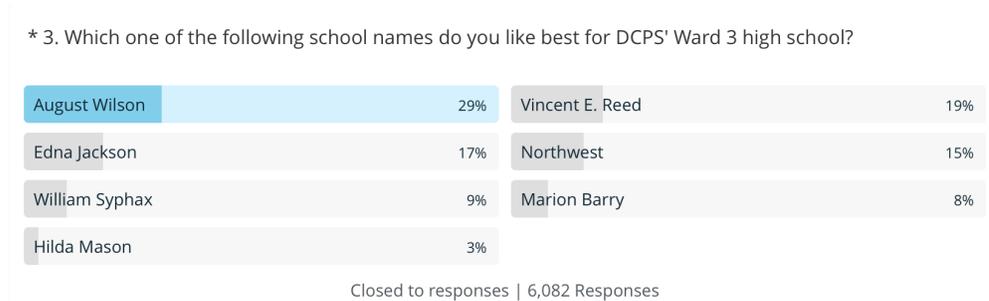
twhite@dccouncil.us

And, I would appreciate if you would cc or bc me, ruth4schools@yahoo.com.

Thanks!

Time to change the name!

Last December, by a margin of 10 percentage points among 7 choices, the community voted to change the name of Woodrow Wilson High School to August Wilson High School, after the great African-American playwright. In recognition of the vote, Mayor Bowser called last spring for the school to be renamed August Wilson as did Chancellor Ferebee.



The Wilson High School Community was excited by the long-sought name change and looked forward to a special graduation ceremony last June. Plans were in development to highlight the new name with a celebration of August Wilson and his plays; students would receive diplomas with the new name. But, first, the name had to be approved by the DC Council, and no approval was voted on. Graduates left their graduation ceremonies with diplomas that just said "Wilson"--no first name.

It's time to approve the August Wilson name! The DC Council is scheduling a hearing on the name change for this Wednesday, October 6, 10AM. Before that hearing, **email Chairman Mendelson, Councilmember Cheh, your own Councilmembers, and the rest of the DC Council to let them know that you hope they'll support a quick approval for the new name.**

There are many reasons why the August Wilson name is such a great name for our high school. Here are a few, adapted from my email to DC Council members.

- **As president, Woodrow Wilson was responsible for systematically segregating the federal workforce**, irreparably setting back the lives of our city's African American residents and their descendants, Further, his embrace of segregation strengthened the hand of those in DC who wanted the same and led to greater segregation and mistreatment of the

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changed.

- The community voted on a new name. **The winning name was August Wilson High School.**
- The name was chosen for good reason: **August Wilson is among the writers who has written most beautifully and persuasively about racial inequity and the realities of race in American history.**
- **It's a great name for a high school.** August Wilson -- whose work teaches us so much about American history and who, through his plays, **shows us why literature and the humanities are so important** --can inspire high schoolers to appreciate these aspects of their education.
- **The Wilson community was psyched about the change.** Plans were made to distribute the first ever diplomas with the name August Wilson. Graduation plans included talk of bringing in an August Wilson scholar. The theater group, even in the midst of a pandemic, began planning for a season that would highlight August Wilson plays. The stage was set for a great new name backed by lots of community and school energy.
- **But, the approval for the new name did not come, and the exciting graduation plans had to be put off.** Apparently, the delay is due to concern about the name, with some arguing that changing the name to August Wilson is too convenient and an insufficient break from the past. It that will allow the school to skip out on the hard work of adjusting to a new name and thus skirt the hard conversations about racial inequity. I could not disagree more.
- First, a school named August Wilson, committed to a theatrical program that highlighted him, would not be a place where the community would put issues of race aside, local or national. **With August Wilson, these issues would be alive in part because his plays are alive:** "Seven Guitars" is coming to the Arena Stage next month. Denzel Washington produced "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom" last year for Netflix, featuring the late Chadwick Boseman and Viola Davis, with more on their way. One of Wilson's theater groups is presenting August Wilson's "Piano Lesson" this winter. In each of these, the issue of race in America is the central theme.
- Second, a **high school--and its name--are important and meaningful parts of many people's lives, something they share through life with their former classmates and children.** Across DC I have talked with graduates of DC high schools who deeply lament the closing of their high schools and the loss of their high school name. I have talked to Wilson graduates of all races and ages who are very happy to lose the name Woodrow but feel it

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disparaging way. I see it as serendipitous. We don't always have the option of changing a school's name without hurting the connection of its graduates to an institution they care about. When we can, we should.

- **But most of all: Community residents heard the arguments and they have spoken through the survey in favor of the name August Wilson. It's time to change the name.**

I hope you'll consider weighing in:

Option 1: Email your Councilmembers: Here's the list!

pmendelson@dccouncil.us, chenderson@dccouncil.us, Robert White <rwhite@dccouncil.us>, abonds@dccouncil.us, esilverman@dccouncil.us, bnadeau@dccouncil.us, Brooke Pinto <bpinto@dccouncil.us>, MChéh@dccouncil.us, jlewisgeorge@dccouncil.us, kmcduffie@dccouncil.us, CAllen@dccouncil.us, Vincent Gray <vgray@dccouncil.us>, twhite@dccouncil.us

*And, I would appreciate if you would cc or bc me, ruth4schools@yahoo.com.
Thanks!*

Option 2: To testify on Wednesday, sign up here by 5pm today (Monday October 4).

Feedback on your school experience? On needed resources?

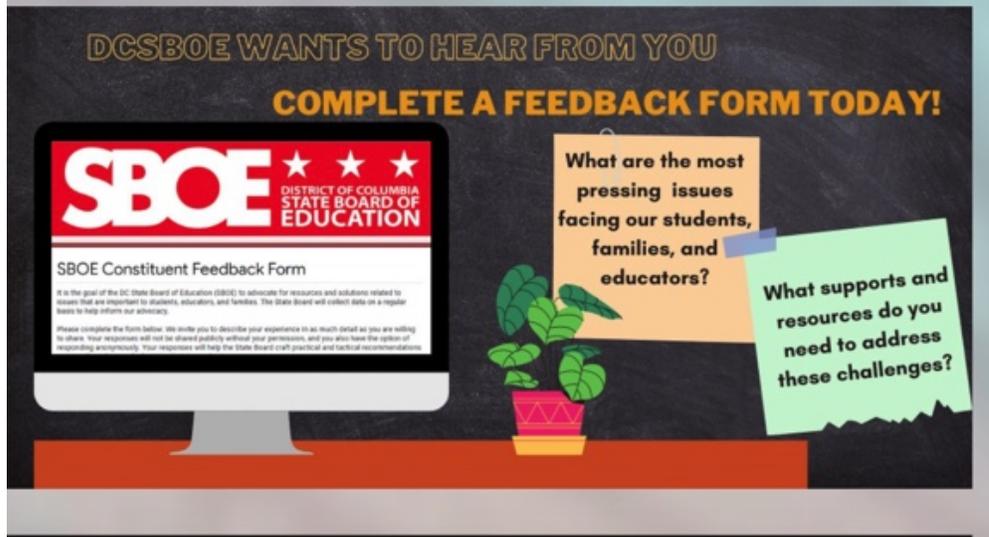
The State Board's Advocacy Committee has launched a feedback form that allows families to easily register their concerns and Congrats. **Visit** bit.ly/SBOEFeedback to share your thoughts. You can submit anonymously.

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(you can submit anonymously) We need to hear from you!



Keep in touch

As always, if you have thoughts on the above or other suggestions, feel free to email me, ruth4schools@yahoo.com.

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