



Renaming Tallahassee Community School

Submitted by:
TCS Renaming Committee
February 18, 2021

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Committee Composition:

Susan White Hill – SAC Member
Michelle Myers – SAC Chairperson
Jessica Harper – PTO Member
Lisa Doyle – Community Member/Community Centre Rep
Nancy Liberatore – TCS Principal

School Representative and Contact Information:

Nancy Liberatore, Principal
nliberatore@hrce.ca
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Rationale for Renaming the School:

Background:

In the spring of 2020, a concern was brought to our attention that the origins of our school name, Tallahassee, has connections to slavery and anti-Black racism, as it was named after a Confederate States Ship from the American Civil War. After careful research, the School Advisory Council passed a unanimous vote to form a *TCS School Renaming* subcommittee; with a mission to develop a new, inclusive identity, where all students, staff and community members feel affirmed and valued.

The committee adhered to policy A.001 *Naming or Renaming Schools Policy (Appendix A)* to begin a consultation process to determine a new name for the school. An overview of the process and supporting details are attached.

Public Communication Plan (timeline):

DECEMBER 2, 2020 – School Advisory Council voted unanimously to form a *School Renaming* subcommittee.

JANUARY 25, 2021 – Committee released initial announcement (*Appendix B*), official statement (*Appendix C*), historical references (*Appendix D*), process/timeline, and Google Form link for name suggestions (*Appendix E*). A separate Google Form was created specifically for current students to submit name suggestions.

- Communicated via SwiftK12 (email communication to families of students who attend Tallahassee Community School).
- Public posts via Facebook community and school groups, The Beacon (online format), 105.9 Seaside FM.

The Halifax Regional Centre for Education stands against anti-Black racism. We strive to create inclusive learning and working environments where all students and staff feel affirmed, validated, and nurtured. But the work won't be complete until all issues around equity and racism are addressed. In this moment, we have an opportunity to make real change. Education is the most powerful tool the world has ever known, and as educators, it is our responsibility to use it to teach antiracism in our classrooms, in our schools and in our communities.

If you see it, name it.

We will listen.

We will learn.

We will act.

Elwin LeRoux, HRCE
Regional Executive Director

JANUARY 26, 2021 – Email sent to principals of the Island View family of schools with the information detailed above (January 25, 2021), to invite the participation of staff and students in the renaming process.

JANUARY 29, 2021 – *The Beacon*, the Eastern Passage community newspaper, was published online on. All committee links were communicated in this electronic paper.

FEBRUARY 1, 2021 – Reminder email message to TCS families via SwiftK12, regarding deadline for submission of school names (via Google Form).

FEBRUARY 1, 2021 – Hard copies of *The Beacon* were distributed throughout the community. All committee links were communicated in this paper.

FEBRUARY 3, 2021 – Public reminders via social media.

FEBRUARY 5, 2021 – Email message via SwiftK12 to TCS families, offering to provide hard copies of the renaming the school documents.

FEBRUARY 8, 2021 – Reminder email message to TCS families via SwiftK12, regarding deadline of submission of school names (via Google Form).

FEBRUARY 10, 2021 – Name suggestion deadline. Summary of names sent to committee members. (*Appendix F*)

FEBRUARY 16, 2021 – The TCS Renaming Committee met to review shortlist of submissions and vote on top three committee recommendations. Many of the submissions included names of people which did not meet our criteria in the decision making process.

FEBRUARY 18, 2021 – Final documents and list of three recommended names for the school, forwarded to Regional Executive Director, Mr. Elwin LeRoux, and Supervisor, Ms. Crystal Pelly.

Additional Communication Notes:

- Multiple reminders/announcements to TCS students & staff
- Reminders to staff via the internal weekly memo at Tallahassee
- Information posted on school website (tlc.hrce.ca)
- Provide students a simplified version of the Google Form to complete in class or at home.

Name Suggestion Submission Procedures:

- Be submitted in written or electronic form.
- Be submitted to the principal or on the Google Form.
- Include the contributor's name and identify whether the contributor is a student, staff member, parent, or community member.
- Clearly identify the suggested school name, including a short rationale for suggestion.

TCS Renaming Committee Links:

Email address for communications between the committee and the community:

NewNameTCS@gmail.com

Official Statement of the TCS Renaming Committee:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1D3lwThCo8GcXIExObEq5tRe6WjlyFvNQ/view?usp=sharing>

Name Submission Google Form:

<https://forms.gle/eN4Ctm1JLfSXuG4L7>

Statement from Joe Flemming:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NaShqrVizv6yxc9l0x8C28BF0AYekTKZ/view?usp=sharing>

Timeline of Key Dates in History:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IOF1RY-7fwhIT2usKp9RrUg8EDvKfT1x/view?usp=sharing>

Decision Making Process:

After a great deal of research and discussion, the committee agreed upon the following selection criteria:

- To select a name that is reflective of all three communities in the catchment area - Eastern Passage, Cow Bay and Shearwater.
- To select a name that would be viewed in a positive context.
- To select a name that was unique to the HRCE, and schools across Nova Scotia.
- To select a name that would be welcoming and inclusive of all students.
- To select a name that is reflective of the geography of the catchment area.
- To refrain from selecting the name of an individual, or a family surname.

Following the February 10 name submission deadline:

- The committee eliminated all submissions that did not meet the selection criteria.
- Individual committee members reviewed all remaining submissions and selected up to 5 names to bring forward for consideration.
- The five top names submitted did not meet the criteria outlined above.
- *(Appendix H)*
- There were 199 community submissions and 39 student submissions for a total of **238** submissions during the Jan 25th- Feb 10th timeframe. See Appendix F.

On February 16, 2021, the TCS Renaming Committee met to review the selection process and vote on the top 3 (ranked) name suggestions.

Committee Recommendation for HRCE Approval (ranked):

- 1. Horizon Elementary School (The name is reflective of the geography of the catchment and does not conflict with names of other schools in the area. From the second floor of the school is a beautiful view of the horizon.)**
2. Coastal Elementary School
3. Mariners Way Elementary School

Appendix A

HRCE Naming or Renaming Schools Policy – Criteria:

1.3 The following criteria shall be considered when naming or renaming a school:

1.3.1 Schools may be given a name that reflects the geographic location or the local community in which the school is located;

1.3.2 Schools may be given a name symbolic of the unique program focus of the school in the case of specialized or alternative schools;

1.3.3 Schools may be named after a person;

1.3.3.1 In the event a person's name is forwarded, the Governing Board will request the Superintendent provide a report that will vet this name.

1.3.4 Schools may be given names which reflect the cultural and racial diversity of HRCE;

1.3.5 Possible abbreviations and nicknames associated with proposed names shall be considered in deciding the school name.

Appendix B

Copy of School Website Post
(January 25 to February 10, 2021)

tlc.hrce.ca

We Want Your Input

January 25, 2021

**Tallahassee
Community School**
is getting a makeover -
in the form of a
New Name

The TCS Renaming Committee invites all local residents to submit a name for consideration.

Access form via: tlc.hrce.ca

Deadline: Wed, Feb 10th
NewNameTCS@gmail.com

Appendix C

Official Statement of the Tallahassee Community School Renaming Committee

The TCS School Advisory Council and Renaming Committee, in partnership with the HRM Tallahassee Recreation Centre, affirm the June 3rd, 2020 statement of the Halifax Regional Director of Education, Elwin Leroux, that:

"Racism exists everywhere. It happens in our society and it happens in our schools. The Halifax Regional Centre for Education stands against anti-Black racism. We strive to create inclusive learning and working environments where all students and staff feel affirmed, validated, and nurtured. But the work won't be complete until all issues around equity and racism are addressed. In this moment, we have an opportunity to make real change. Education is the most powerful tool the world has ever known, and as educators, it is our responsibility to use it to teach anti-racism in our classrooms, in our schools and in our communities. If you see it, name it. We will listen. We will learn. We will act. #BlackLivesMatter"

TCS, staff, and volunteers, take great pride in providing our students with a learning and social environment, that is dedicated to celebrating our differences, expanding our knowledge, and encouraging everyone who walks through our doors to feel comfortable and proud to be the best version of themselves. We strive every day to be inclusive and welcoming, and believe we are all better because of it.

We join fellow residents of Eastern Passage, Cow Bay and Shearwater, in taking great pride in the history, development, evolving demographics, and traditions of the community, and are proud to be part of the community's legacy in this critical moment in history.

Through research and personal experiences, we understand and appreciate the intended reference in naming our school Tallahassee, in commemoration of a historical nautical feat that took place just outside the windows of our school, in the early morning hours of August 20th, 1864.

We understand that the original intended use of the name Tallahassee, the ship that was skillfully guided through the "Eastern Passage," was aimed to celebrate the skill and success of legendary harbour pilot, John "Jock" Flemming, and the role he played in the legacy of Eastern Passage.

We also acknowledge that we have come to a point in time when history is being examined, through a widely diverse set of lenses, in a way that was not readily available when the school first opened, in 1992.

Advances in technology have since allowed us immediate access to anywhere in the world and has provided us with tremendous opportunities for exposure to different cultures, perspectives - and personal experiences.

We kept our minds open and did our best to empathize with those who, without additional context as to why the name was chosen, would take the name at face value for the legacy of the Tallahassee, as a Confederate ship during the Civil War.

We took great care in researching and discussing the name of our school, through as many historical lenses we could, and ultimately voted unanimously to change the name.

With that, our committee would like to invite all community members (with or without direct affiliation to our school) to submit a new name suggestion, with the opportunity to provide additional feedback and request more information on the research done throughout the process. The committee will review and evaluate your submissions and will then forward our top 3 choices to the HRCE for final approval. We are requesting that the date for the official change to the new name coincide with the beginning of the 2021-22 school year.

We thank you for your participation.

In unity,

TCS Renaming Committee

Appendix D

Key Dates in History, as researched by the TCS Renaming Committee:

1604 - The first recorded Black person recorded in Canada was Mathieu da Costa. He arrived in Nova Scotia as a translator for the French explorer Pierre Dugua, Sieur de Monts. He was recorded among the founders of Port Royal.

Mid 1700s - Less than 1% of all Blacks in Nova Scotia were free from slavery.

1782 through 1785 - The first large group of immigrants to NS were the Black Loyalists who came as refugees after the American Revolution.

1798 - Eastern Passage was founded.

Early 1800s - the provincial governments of Ontario and Nova Scotia were the only provinces to create legally segregated common schools, also known as public schools.

1834 - Slavery abolished everywhere in the British Empire (i.e., Nova Scotia).

April 12, 1861 - Civil War started because of uncompromising differences between the free and slave states over the power of the national government to prohibit slavery in the territories that had not yet become states.

January 1, 1863 - US President Lincoln issues Emancipation Proclamation, declaring "that all persons held as slaves" within the rebellious states "are, and henceforth shall be free."

August 6, 1864 - CSS Tallahassee leaves Wilmington, North Carolina, the start of a 19-day raid under Commander John Taylor Wood of the Confederate States Navy. He was the nephew of Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States. Wood's raid stretched to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and involved the destruction of 26 vessels plus 7 bonded vessels.

August 18, 1864 - CSS Tallahassee arrives at Halifax, NS, where his exploits led to the effective Union closure of the port, the Confederacy's last important link to British sources of supply. There was a strong sympathy for the cause of the Confederacy among businessmen who profited from commercial dealings with the Confederate states. The Halifax Journal urged its readers to remember "the treatment of defenceless Southern women and children by Yankee ruffians," while Halifax's Sun newspaper dismissed the Confederates as "thieves, felons and freebooters." The majority of the 11 newspapers in Halifax, at the time, voiced strong opposition to the ideologies and actions of the Confederates, while others, as noted above, voiced their support.

August 20, 1864 (1:00am) - CSS Tallahassee escapes through the Eastern Passage, a 1-hour quest in the pitch black, guided by skilled pilot boat captain John "Jock" Flemming. Jock was a neutral party; whose knowledge and navigational expertise were second to none. This quest has not since been replicated. With minimal coal supply and no neutral or allied ports available to resupply, Wood was forced to return home to Wilmington. Haligonians flocked to the waterfront later that morning, to witness what they anticipated and hoped to be the destruction of the CSS Tallahassee, by the USS Nansemond and USS Huron, headed towards the mouth of the Harbour to await its departure. Much to everyone's surprise, Wood had been hours ahead of them.

August 26, 1864 (10:30pm) - Tallahassee reaches port in Wilmington, NC, where and when the name was changed to CSS Olustee, to avoid being recognized for its origin and actions. The steamer had operated under the name Tallahassee for a total period of 19 days.

September 1-9, 1864 - Delegates from NS, NB, PEI, and the Province of Canada, gather for the Charlottetown Conference, with elevated fears of the South invading and claiming their territory.

May 1865 - John Taylor Wood was captured with his uncle, President of the Confederate states, Jefferson Davis. He escaped to Cuba, then on to Halifax, where he lived out the rest of his life.

December 6, 1865 - The 13th Amendment, of the US Constitution, abolished slavery in the United States.

December 1866 through March 1867 - 16 delegates from New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and the Province of Canada met with British government officials in London, England, to draft a bill recommending Canadian Confederation.

July 1, 1867 - The British North America Act (today known as the Constitution Act, 1867) created Canada.

July 19, 1904 - John Taylor Wood dies, in Halifax, NS, and buried in (what is now known as) Camp Hill Cemetery.

1948 - Canada's human rights laws stem from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The first two articles are about equality and freedom from discrimination (which are the foundation of the Canadian Human Rights Act of 1977).

1958 - Newly built elementary school named "Tallahassee," in recognition of the historic feat of navigating through "the Eastern Passage," between Lawlor's Island and the mainland. Guided by pilot boat captain, John "Jock" Flemming. A feat that has not been recreated since.

1977 - Adoption of the Canadian Human Rights Act.

1982 - The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is adopted and included as part of Canada's Constitution. The Charter protects every Canadian's right to be treated equally under the law. The Charter guarantees broad equality rights and other fundamental rights such as the freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and freedom of religion.

1983 - The last segregated school in Canada, located in Guysborough County, NS, was closed.

Mid 1980s - Tallahassee Elementary School was closed.

1992 - Newly built elementary school named "Tallahassee Community School." The name was carried forward in honour of the originally intended historical reference.

1990's through Present Day - recurring discussions and attempts to have the name "Tallahassee" removed from the school.

Appendix E

Name Suggestion – Google Form Questions

Your name:

Your answer

Your email address:

Your answer

What is your affiliation to Tallahassee Community School? (select all that apply) *

Student (former or current)

Staff member

Community member

Other:

What is your school name suggestion? *

Your answer

Reason for your name suggestion, if you wish to provide the committee with additional context:

Your answer

Postal code: *

Your answer

Would you like to provide additional feedback and/or receive more details on the sources used during our research process?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide your email address:

Your answer

Submit

Appendix F

Top 5 Name Submissions (Community):

Kerri Lea Dixon Centre/Elementary/Memorial School – submitted **29** times.

Eastern Passage Elementary/Composite School – submitted **14** times.

Tallahassee Community School – submitted **12** times.

Tyler Keizer Memorial School – submitted **9** times.

John/Jock Flemming Memorial/Elementary School – submitted **8** times.

Abbigail Cowbrough Community/Memorial/Public/Elementary School – submitted **8** times.

Full List of Name Suggestions (Community):

A'lulatl Elementary School (pronounced: aa-lu-la-dêl)	1
Abbigail Cowbrough Community/Memorial/Elementary/Public School	8
Alien UFO School	1
Atlantic Breeze Elementary/Community School	1
Atlantic Coast Elementary School	1
Coastal Tides Community School	1
Eastern Passage Elementary/Composite School	14
Ecole Horizon Elementary School	1
Elsie Johnston Memorial Elementary school	1
Fisherman's Cove Elementary School	1
Fisherman's Memorial Elementary School	1
Flemming Elementary School	1
Harbourside Elementary School	2
Harbourview Elementary School	1
Hartlen Elementary School	1
Hazel Joyce Community School	1
Henneberry Elementary School	1
Henneberry-Hazel Elementary School	1
Hewitt Elementary School	1
High Tides Community School	1

Honey Land Elementary School	1
Horizon Elementary School	1
Horizon View Academy/Elementary School	1
Jeep Deveaux Elementary School	1
John/Jock Flemming Memoria/Elementary School	8
Judith Horne Elementary	1
Kerri Lea Dixon Centre/Elementary/Memorial School	29
Lake View Community School	1
Lawlor's Island Community School	2
Leo Joseph Beazley Elementary School	1
Little Passage Community School	1
Mariner Elementary School	1
Mariner's Horizon Community/Elementary School	1
Mariner's Memorial Elementary/Community School	1
Mariners Way Community/Elementary School	1
McCormacks Elementary School	1
Moses Island Elementary School	1
Ocean Breeze Elementary School	3
Ocean Spray Elementary School	1
Ocean Vista Elementary School	1
Oceanlea (Drive) Elementary School	4
Oceanside Community School	1
Osprey Academy	1
Osprey Heights Elementary School	1
Parsons Elementary School	1
Prince William Elementary School	1
Redoubt Ridge Community/Elementary School	1
Redoubt Way Community School	1
Richmond Elementary School	1
Robert Strang Elementary School	2
Rocky Johnson Elementary School	1
Saltwater Bay Elementary School	1
Sandpiper Elementary School	1

Sandscale Elementary School	1
Sea Breeze/Seabreeze Elementary School	2
Sea King Community School	1
Sea View/Seaview Elementary School	4
Seascape Elementary School	1
Shining Seas Elementary School	4
Shore Elementary School	1
Shore View/Shoreview Community School	6
Shoreline Elementary School and Rec Centre	1
Shoreward Elementary School	1
Silver Sands Elementary School	1
Southeast Passage Elementary School	2
Stalker 22 Memorial School	3
Starboard Community School	1
Stoney Beach Community School and Recreation Centre	1
Tall Ship Community School	1
Tallahassee Community School	12
The Community School	1
The Passage Community School	1
Tidal View Elementary School	1
Tidal Wave(s) Community School	1
Tuitnuik Community/Elementary School	1
Tuitnuk Elementary School	2
Tyler Keizer Memorial School	9
Viola Desmond Elementary/Community School	2
Waters Edge Elementary School	1
William Hall Community/Elementary School	2

Student Submissions:

Atlantic Coast Elementary School	3
Blue nose (:	2
Blue Side	1
Blue Wave Elamentry	1
bluenose school	1
Bright Wave elementary	1
Canada Good School	1
crystal waters	1
elementary seashore community shcool.	1
Empathy	1
Golden Waves Elementary School	1
Lake View	1
Marine View	2
martin luther king jr	1
Mountain View	1
Nova	2
Nova Scotia Eielementary School.	1
ocean commuily school	1
ocean side	1
peacelind elementary	1
sea drive	1
sea view	1
The Passage Community School	1
Violet	1
Wave Side School	1
Wavy ocean.	1
Wiltering	1

Appendix G

Statement from Joe Flemming re: renaming of Tallahassee Community School

Joe is the 3-times great-grandson of John "Jock" Flemming - legendary Halifax Harbour pilot boat captain.

"Thank you for reaching out. I appreciate the opportunity to offer my opinion. I appreciate your keeping it clear that Jock was a neutral party. There has never been anything said, written or indicative of otherwise. He was a professional Mariner who would have helped any captain get his ship and crew to safety, regardless of affiliation. It was his calling to the sea. We can't forget that during that time period, Halifax was a port city that depended on ships, trade, and mariners for businesses to thrive. There were several organizations thriving from business, conducted with both Confederate and Union connections, despite being a neutral port.

It's my opinion, that society as a whole rightly finds itself understanding, as time marched on, that the cause of the Union was the better side of history. One that was better for the treatment of all in society. Even businesses and people who supported the Confederacy at one point or another, learned as time went by, and found themselves doing better by their fellow man. We need to allow people, and organizations, the opportunity to learn and grow over time. Not to judge them by a snapshot in history.

If Jock Flemming were alive today, and still took that ship and its crew to safety, I'd be proud. Because he'd be doing it in the spirit of kindness, neutrality, and humanity - coupled with the law of the sea. Even in war, if you sink a ship, you rescue its survivors and make them face justice for the cause in which they stand. Jock was neutral and professional and would likely have helped a Union ship into the Harbour, as quickly as he helped a Confederate ship out of the Harbour. That was the calling of a harbour pilot. It still is.

Halifax was not in a position to make a stand for either side. My opinion on the Tallahassee name is this: If it truly hurts people to hear that name, even knowing its intended context, then it warrants the change. But we all must remember that from our regional context, Tallahassee was an event. Things that carry that name are not in the spirit of the Confederacy or its cause. They are named in the spirit of a marine nautical feat in our Harbour, known as the Tallahassee Affair. It was the name of a physical ship. I believe in making change if it hurts. But I also believe in educating people about context, as much as teaching people about racism, slavery, and many other issues that tarnish our past.

If the name Tallahassee hurts someone, even after learning the perspective of the name being that of a nautical event, as opposed to a person or political cause, then so be it. But if it does not hurt, with that knowledge in hand, then it's also ok for a community to be proud of the circumstances, and the role one of your local legendary Harbour pilots played in the legacy of your community.

Describe the technical aspects of the event. The equipment involved, the techniques of sounding for water depth. Ship technology, the harbour pilotage of that era, and the people involved. The real story simply needs to be told. We don't align with the Confederacy today. But at the time, many did. If the truth is told, and we own it, I'm happy. We didn't know who would win the war, and at the time, many didn't know who was right or wrong. Propaganda was as big then, as it is today.

Thank you for all the time and efforts you've put into this endeavor. You certainly have my support. Change isn't easy, but it is sometimes necessary. Change the name, celebrate the event, tell the truth. It's clear you have done your homework and very much intend to hold people to doing the right thing. I have tremendous respect for your efforts."

Appendix H

Committee Top 5:

Coastal Elementary School

Mariner's Way Elementary School

Eastern Passage Elementary

Horizon Elementary School

Tidal View Elementary School

Committee Top 3:

Horizon Elementary School

Coastal Elementary School

Mariner's Way Elementary School