

June 1, 2017

Dear Jefferson County School Board Members,

Please accept this communication as an official request to change the name of Western Middle School to *Western Middle School for the Arts*. Since, 2010, Western Middle has operated as a school under the magnet application guidelines. The majority of students at Western Middle attend because they have been accepted into one of the following majors: Art, Band, Choir, Dance, Drama or Orchestra. These students hone their craft by working each day in this major for their entire middle school career. Because we offer these performing arts, our students are afforded the opportunity to apply for admission to YPAS through an early review process. Since beginning this endeavor, the number of students who have applied for, and, are admitted to YPAS has tripled.

A collaborative partnership (Arts Advisory Council) has also been formed with Lincoln Performing Arts School (LPAS) and YPAS in which we align our arts curriculum and offerings, share resources, and provide opportunities for students to interact with each other in a variety of arts experiences focused on project based learning. Included in the work of this advisory council is representatives from the local arts community. For the past two years, since beginning this endeavor, this advisory council and its members have met each of these schools to discuss and develop plans that will ultimately enhance the arts program offerings at all three schools. These meetings continue each quarter at one of the designated schools.

The staff at Western Middle have worked tirelessly to provide an environment in which students are exposed to the arts on a daily basis. This has created an environment that is conducive and productive for all students as evidenced by current student achievement data

Please consider this request to rename a JCPS facility, Western Middle School for the Arts.

Respectfully submitted,

Kymberly M. Rice, Principal

March 8, 2017

School Board Members:

Please accept this letter as a formal request to change the name of Western Middle School to Western Middle School for the Arts, the first step in the official designation of magnet school. Western has been considered a magnet program since the 2009-2010 school year. Prior to this change, Western was a neighborhood school. We have maintained the benefits of being a racially and socially economic diverse school since becoming a magnet. In addition, Western has seen improvement in academic performance, attendance and experienced state and national recognition for its arts programs.

Currently WMS has 12% of non-magnet students for whom this is their home school. We also have 8% of English as a Second Language students. Western has no "school within a school." All students are included in the magnet program, which creates a unified school.

Students' academic scores have increased dramatically since becoming a performing arts program. Prior to 2009, WMS scores were in the bottom five percent of the state and we were designated "a school in crisis." In 2016, Western Middle School was identified as "Proficient/Progressing," however; our scores were one point from distinguished.

Western has seen a tremendous growth in enrollment since beginning the magnet program. In 2009, there were 329 students. As a result of the success experienced both in academics and in the performing arts, the enrollment has nearly doubled to 615 students. Students' population is representative of most zip codes across Jefferson County. Western is a model for economic and ethnic integration. Seventy-six percent of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch. The racial make-up is 29.7 percent Caucasian, 55.4 percent African American, and 9.3 percent Hispanic. Students are excited to attend Western Middle School for the Arts as reflected by the average daily attendance of 95%, the second highest in the district.

The magnet program provides an in-depth experience in the arts for students with different interests, talents and aptitudes. We have experienced success in state and national competitions in the arts. Since the implementation of the arts magnet in 2010, Western Middle School for the Arts has become synonymous with high achievement in music, visual art, dance, and drama. About 25% of 8th graders choose the elite path of auditioning for YPAS/Manuel; however, nearly all WMS students go on to be leaders in the arts program at their high school of choice.

The school administration has created an environment of safety and diversity with an emphasis on excellence in academics as well as the performance in the arts. It is imperative that we be formally recognized as a magnet program and maintain the diversity of students from all socioeconomic

backgrounds to continue to expand students' artistic and academic experiences. Without magnet designation, WMS would eventually become a neighborhood school, isolated by economic segregation.

As school board members, you have dedicated your time to the success of Jefferson County students. Please consider changing the name of Western Middle School to Western Middle School for the Arts, the first step in converting to a full magnet program.

Sincerely,

SBDM Advisory members

Cathy Strange
Peter Muhl
MaryEllen

Robin Lynn Smith
Glorious Bates
Glorious Bates

Dear JCPS School Board,

We are writing to ask that you please consider a request being made on behalf of the students, faculty, and staff of Western Middle School. We propose changing our name from Western Middle School to Western Middle School For The Arts because our school is focused not only on academics, but also on the visual and performing arts. At our school, students are allowed to audition for different arts majors based on their talents and interests. Students audition for and, if admitted, major in a variety of arts, including Drama, Vocal Music, Dance, Band, Orchestra, and Visual Art. The artistic abilities of the students at Western Middle are on display in some way everyday.

The Principal's Advisory Council at Western Middle School has decided to send this petition so that we can make our name cover and include all aspects of the school and the amazing students

that attend. We ask that you consider our request and contact us with your decision. If it would be helpful, we invite you to our school to see the students' artistic abilities up close.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kymerberly Rice and The Principal's Advisory Council (Logan

Edwards, Demi Handley, Meredith Thomas, Ike Harrell, Sylvia

Cassidy, and Karenn Longton)

Sylvia Cassidy

Logan Edwards

Demi Handley

Karenn Longton

Meredith Thomas



March 6, 2017

Kym Rice
Western Middle School
2201 W. Main Street
Louisville, KY 40212

Reference: Proposed school name change

Dear Mrs. Rice,

Western Middle School has been a pillar for the Louisville, KY West End community since 1929. Our community has seen many changes in those years. As with all change, it is important to continue on the path of growth.

In prior years, the community has seen a loss of creativity and an increase of violence. However, in 2011-2012, a major change happened to our school. Due to an extremely low performance, the state took over the school and brought in a performance arts based program. It has been historically proven, students who study with an arts based curriculum will statistically perform better in their education. When this transformation happened to our school, our students benefited, our school began to succeed and the community is beginning to see growth as well.

It is now time for our school to reflect the basis of our success. This will allow the school to reflect the uniqueness of our educational curriculum. We support the school administration in the process of changing the school name from Western Middle School to Western Middle School for the Arts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Callie Slone', written in dark ink.

Callie Slone
President
Western Middle School PTSA



April 21, 2017

Dear Jefferson County Board of Education:

On behalf of the Western Middle School Youth Services Center (FRYSC), we are requesting that the official name of our school be changed to Western Middle School for the Arts. Since we have converted to a magnet school in 2011-2012, we have believed that this should be the official name of our school.

We are an Arts Magnet School and believe our school name should reflect that. Our name does not currently reflect our magnet status, therefore by granting the official change of our name would allow us to continue our reputation of being one of two, Arts Magnet Middle Schools.

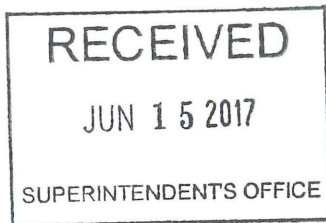
The Western Middle School Youth Services Center (FRYSC) is in agreement with the SBDM Council regarding the request to change the name to Western Middle School for the Arts.

Your consideration is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Tasha King, MSW

Western Middle School Youth Services Center



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June 13, 2017

Jefferson County Public Schools
VanHoose Education Center
3332 Newburg Road
Louisville, KY 40218

JCPS School Board Members,

Please consider this letter in support of a name change at Western Middle School to "Western Middle School for the Arts." It is my understanding that this desired change would reflect and therefore project the mission of the school, which is a district wide magnet school for the visual and performing arts.

Unlike other magnet programs, the Reach of this VPA program at Western Middle is inclusive of ALL of its students. Most of the over 600 students enrolled this year applied to and were accepted into the magnet program. These students were able to choose from the six arts disciplines or "majors": Band, Orchestra, Choir, Drama, Dance and Visual Art. The less than 10% of students that attend due to address are also given the opportunity to choose a major. Students remain in this major all of their years at Western Middle, allowing them to build on their skills and hone their crafts.

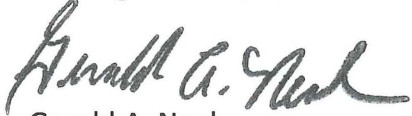
Western Middle is the stepping stone between Lincoln Performing Arts School and the Youth Performing Arts School, and works in partnership with both to ensure that students receive a quality arts education alongside rigorous academic curriculum. The requested name change, if approved, further underscores this unique partnership.

Western Middle School is located in a community that is ready for notice as a productive and integral part of the city. Its name change is reaffirmation of the schools commitment to its mission, leadership, and positive contributor to the community. As well, the cultural and economic diversity of the school is a model for other schools in the district. In less than 10 years, the school has already forged an identity that is embraced by students, parents, teachers and staff alike. It IS Western Middle School for the Arts, as the school slogan states, where performance is everything.

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I respectfully request that the current name, Western Middle School, be changed to "Western Middle School for the Arts."

Looking forward,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Gerald A. Neal". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gerald" being more prominent.

Gerald A. Neal

Kentucky Senator, 33rd District"