

## **PRESS RELEASE**

6<sup>th</sup> November 2020

### **Colston's Girls' School reveals new name**

129 years after its foundation in 1891, the name Colston's Girls' School will soon be replaced by a new name selected by current students and staff. Last month the school announced its decision to rebrand and this week students and staff have been voting to select a new name. This afternoon, principal Kerry McCullagh announced the result of the vote during a whole-school virtual assembly, revealing that the new name of the school will be Montpelier High School.

Kerry McCullagh told students that they had "navigated a complex and emotional issue with skill and maturity" and that they had "shown respect for others throughout the process, acknowledging that there are many views and opinions that reach far beyond the city".

She said that the school is proud to be part of the Montpelier community and that the new name would allow the school to forge a new identity that represents its diverse and inclusive community.

After the decision to change the name of the school was announced on 6<sup>th</sup> October, a working party of students developed a list of potential new names, drawing on the feedback gathered during the public consultation and the in-school debates and workshops.

The working party presented ten potential new names to the Venturers Trust Board who shortlisted three, which students and staff have voted on this week.

The choices were split into nouns and suffixes with voters able to rank their preferences in each category.

From a choice of Montpelier, Liberty and Concordia; and College, High School and School, 62% of votes favoured Montpelier High School.

Four students who have played a pivotal role in shaping and delivering the consultation are Hemlata Pant, Heidi Szykaruk and Sophia Bailey, all in Year 11; and Betsy Maguire, Year 13.

Responding to today's announcement, Hemlata said: "The entire student body has been a part of this process and I'm excited by the result today. But this isn't just a moment, it's the beginning of something much bigger and as a community, we are helping to shape the future of the school."

Heidi Szykaruk said: "Change isn't something that comes naturally, as we learnt from the public survey. It can be emotional and difficult but also joyful and welcomed. This is the start of a new chapter for our school, with a more inclusive name being the first step."

Sophia Bailey said: "This process has taught me how to be brave and strong; also how to really listen. Experiencing democracy and the outcome of our collective effort is inspiring. I hope that this important moment in time is remembered for years to come."

Head student, Betsy Maguire said: "It's been incredible to be part of this process and to work alongside others on such a monumental project. I am certain that there are students in this school who will change the world. Be it through challenging opinions or championing ideals for the future, every single person here should feel proud of what they have achieved."

Chair of Governors, Chris Patterson said: “Inviting the students to shape and deliver the consultation and to have the final say on what the new name should be was certainly the right decision. The students have conducted themselves with integrity throughout the entire process and they have been fantastic ambassadors for the school, displaying our core values of respect, responsibility, curiosity and resilience. They will remember this experience for the rest of their lives and they have learnt valuable life skills that will help them in the future.”

CEO of Venturers Trust, David Watson said: “CGS became an integral part of the debate over how to contextualise the past so that we learn lessons to create a better future. Students have made history today by choosing a new name to reflect their diverse and inclusive school community. These are compelling and inspirational young people who have successfully used the power of their own voices to influence change and amongst them are many future leaders.”

Chair of Trustees, Gail Bragg said: “This process has provided a unique opportunity for students to experience democracy first-hand and to learn how to bring together many different views in a safe and structured environment. They welcomed opinions that were different to their own, they didn’t judge others who presented opposing views and they have emerged with a result that will be a catalyst for many positive changes within the school.”

Gail Bragg made it clear that the school will not be erasing its history but it will now develop a new identity that reflects the vision and values of the school. She said that across Venturers Trust “the curriculum must deliver a full and honest account of Bristol’s past”.

Kerry McCullagh concluded by saying that there would be a transition period, with a full rebrand expected in September 2021. “We are conscious of the cost implication for our community of a school-wide rebrand. Updating uniforms mid-way through a school year is not something we would ask parents to do. We will now begin to work with a designer to develop our new visual identity and we would like to enjoy the experience, rather than rush it. It will be a proud moment for us all when we begin our next academic year as Montpelier High School.”

ENDS

**Notes to editors:**

[Colston’s Girls’ School](#) is a non-selective academy located in Montpelier, Bristol, educating 940 students. It is the top performing state school in the region and in March 2020 received the SSAT (Schools, Students and Teachers Network) Educational Outcomes Award for being in the top 10% of non-selective schools nationally for attainment and for being in the Department for Education Band 1 for student progress at Key Stage 4. In 2019, BAME Year 11 students outperformed the whole school average achieving a Progress 8 score of 0.58, against a national average Progress 8 score of 0.

The sixth-form provision of Colston’s Girls’ School, [V6](#), is co-educational.

CGS and V6 are both part of [Venturers Trust](#), which is sponsored by the [Society of Merchant Venturers](#) and the [University of Bristol](#) and regulated by the Regional Schools Commissioner and Ofsted.

For further information about the background to the consultation, how the process was developed, the timeline of activities and next steps, please visit the [CGS website](#).

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