

Atlanta Board of Education Announces School Renaming in Honor of Thomas W. Dortch Jr.

B.E.S.T. Academy at The Thomas W. Dortch Jr. Institute honors the Atlanta business icon and civic leader

ATLANTA, GEORGIA, UNITED STATES, April 29, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Atlanta Board of Education](#) (ABOE) is proud to announce the renaming of B.E.S.T. Academy (Business Engineering Science Technology) to B.E.S.T. Academy at The Thomas W. Dortch Jr. Institute. This change honors the late Thomas W. Dortch Jr., an esteemed Atlanta business leader, civic icon and former Chairman of the 100 Black Men of America National's Board of Directors.

Dortch, who passed away in 2023, was a trailblazer in many fields, including becoming the first Black man to serve as a U.S. Senator's chief administrator. His contributions to the Georgia Democratic Party, the Atlanta Business League, and his founding of the National Black College Alumni Hall of Fame are celebrated through this dedication.



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ABOE Board Chair Erika Mitchell

The school, a STEM-certified institution serving sixth through 12th-grade boys in the Carey Park area, has partnered with [100 Black Men of Atlanta](#). This organization is dedicated to enhancing educational and economic opportunities for African-American youth, aligning closely with Dortch's lifelong mission.

In April 2023, ABOE Board Member, now Chair, Erika Mitchell announced the formation of a renaming

committee for B.E.S.T. Academy in an effort to honor the late Thomas W. Dortch Jr. B.E.S.T. Academy Principal Dr. Timothy Jones led the community survey results. A majority of faculty members (85.7 percent) supported the renaming to B.E.S.T. Academy at Thomas W. Dortch Jr. Institute with 48.5 percent of students in favor. In response to these results, the committee adopted the proposed name to include “Institute,” reflecting Dortch's legacy's educational and

aspirational aspects. The final recommendation, B.E.S.T Academy at the Thomas W. Dortch Jr. Institute, will be presented for approval to the Atlanta Board of Education on May 6.

Members of the BEST Academy Renaming Committee include:

- Erika Mitchell, Chair of the Atlanta Board of Education and District Five Representative
- Dustin Hillis, Atlanta City Council District Three Representative
- Dr. Timothy Jones, Principal of The B.E.S.T. Academy
- Andrew Anderson, Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU-G) Representative
- John Hope Bryant, from Operation Hope (Community Partner)
- Jewell Grubbs, Community Stakeholder
- Kenneth Hill, from LaunchPad Foundation (Community Partner)



"The renaming of B.E.S.T. Academy celebrates a man who profoundly impacted his community and the nation, and it promises to inspire future generations of leaders," Mitchell said. "The academy has such a great legacy, and Mr. Dortch is the perfect individual and trailblazer to bestow this honor."

Dortch was a husband, father, businessman, and civic leader who believed in uplifting our communities all across the world. He was willing to set aside any differences if it was of benefit to the greater good. He often said he wanted to leave this earth empty, and he did just that. Leaving a blueprint to strengthen our youth and community, says Carol Dortch, his widow, and Thomas (Trey) W. Dortch III, his son.

"The renaming committee's dedicated efforts culminated in a meaningful transformation as B.E.S.T. Academy proudly emerges as B.E.S.T. Academy at The Thomas W. Dortch Jr. Institute, continuing an era of educational excellence while honoring the illustrious legacy of a true visionary," Jones said.

"Tommy W. Dortch Jr. was a life changer. Now, an institution in his name will be changing lives for the foreseeable future," Hope Bryant said. "This name change will also be life-changing, just like Tommy."

"Dortch's legacy includes his work supporting education and mentorship in Atlanta and beyond. His leadership will be recognized for generations to come with the B.E.S.T Academy at the

Thomas W. Dortch Jr. Institute," 100 Black Men of America Mentor of the Year Award Recipient Hill said.

Established in 2007 by Atlanta Public Schools, the B.E.S.T Academy was founded on research highlighting distinct learning techniques between males and females. The school utilizes teaching strategies specifically tailored to align with the general learning styles of male students, ensuring an educational environment that fosters effective learning and engagement.

To learn more about The Atlanta Board of Education, please visit Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram or visit www.atlantapublicschools.us/Page/17672. For more information about the 100 Black Men of Atlanta and 100 Black Men of America, please visit www.100blackmen-atlanta.org and www.100blackmen.org.

Amy W Parrish
Rhythm Communications
aparrish@rhythmcommunications.com

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