Dear Jeannie, thank you for your letter to the renaming committee, in which you detail your views of Jordan and his involvement in Eugenics. Please find my clarifications to your key points below:

- Jordan’s interest in Eugenics are not comparable to those of Hitler (who was much later) or the eugenics proponents of his time
  - Jordan’s interest in eugenics is not comparable to the eugenics proponents of his time. That is correct, but Jordan’s interest was clearly ahead of his contemporaries, as summarized in this article. Among other ‘firsts’ Jordan wrote the first significant US book about eugenics in 1902; Jordan chaired the first US eugenics organization in 1906; Jordan used his influence as President of Stanford to convince the widow of railroad magnate Harriman to fund the Eugenics Record Office in Cold spring harbor in 1906/7 (which made Charles Davenport infamous); Jordan inspired the first forced-sterilization eugenics law in the US in Indiana in 1907; Jordan was a founding board member of the Human Betterment Foundation, etc. There were very few eugenicists of his time that could rival his early impact and leadership of the US eugenics movement
  - Hitler’s eugenics. There is strong and compelling evidence that Nazi Eugenics were heavily influenced, and initially funded from the American Eugenics movement. Hitler himself specifically refers to “The Passing of the Great race” by Madison Grant as his inspiration. You can find more in this article. And while there is no direct link between Jordan and Hitler, it is hard not to recognize how the US eugenics movement shaped the Nazi eugenics thinking, and as outlined above, Jordan shaped much of the early US eugenics thinking

- Jordan is being blacklisted for being interested in the ideas of his time, without taking the context of the era into account
  - Jordan was a thought-leader of the eugenics movement, his actions are not taken out of context, they are being put into the context of what they represent, race hatred.

- Jordan was not interested in eugenics to improve the race through breeding ‘superman’
  - That is correct, Jordan was not a believer/proponent of what is often called ‘positive eugenics’. Positive eugenics got its start in the UK when Darwin’s cousin Francis Galton coined the term, and his aim was to selectively marry off the desirable members of the population so that poor heredity would be eliminated.
  - Jordan instead is given credit for popularizing the concept of ‘negative eugenics’, which aims to preserve the superior race by preventing the unfit and the inferior races from reproducing, by means of forced sterilization. He has described his approach and reasoning in great detail in his 1902 book “The Blood of the Nation: a study of the decay of races through the survival of the unfit”. In that book he explains how the fit die during war, leaving room for the unfit to reproduce and decay the Anglo-Saxon/Nordic race. This conviction, not grounds of morality or rejection of the use of force, was behind Jordan’s pacifism (“Eugenics and American Social History” by Garland E. Allen, 1989).

- Jordan’s sense of race superiority was not based on color but on traits such as stability, resolution, self-restraint and initiative
The lack of initiative, self-restraint, thrift, hard-work, discipline of the other races are at the core of his conviction that only the Anglo-Saxon/Nordic race is truly capable and deserving, thereby diminishing all other races. McNall Burns, whom you quote in defense’, dedicates chapter 3.1, "Superior and Inferior Races," to Jordan's pervasive racism, highlighted by this Jordan assertion: "To say that one race is superior to another is merely to confirm the common observation of every intelligent citizen." McNall Burns further clarifies that Jordan also "summarily dismissed the argument that differences in intellectual capacity are the result of opportunity and education". His being a leading proponent of forced sterilization may not be much to worry about, but his firm belief that intelligence is limited by birth, and that education and environment can do nothing to change that is clearly offensive and completely out of touch with the vision, mission and values of a 21st century public school district like PAUSD. How can we honor such a man by naming one of our schools after him, a school that is supposed to provide a welcoming and inspiring environment for its entire school population, ~50% of which are ‘minorities’ (the races that are lacking stability, resolution, self-restraint and initiative), and ~12% are students with special needs (those Jordan considered ‘unfit’, a key reason that the Palo Alto CAC as an organization and on behalf of its entire membership has fully endorsed the drive to rename Jordan Middle School)

Jordan’s mindset of racial superiority, paired with his firm believe that intelligence is inherited, are a complete contradiction of PAUSD’s mission to "empower every child to attain his or her highest intellectual, creative, and social potential," and PAUSD’s vision to “offer a rich and challenging academic experience to all students within a supportive community”.

Allow me to close with Jordan’s own words, published in his 1899 newspaper article, "Anti-Imperialism," six months after victory in the Spanish war. The US was ‘drunk from victory’ and about to annex the Philippines, to which Jordan forcefully objected: "Wherever degenerate, dependent or alien races are within our borders today they are not part of the United States. They constitute a social problem, a menace to peace and welfare." These ‘warnings’ foreshadow his soon to follow active leadership of the negative eugenics movement in America, a movement so disgraceful that the California State legislature unanimously "expressed its profound regret over the state's past role in the eugenics movement," which ultimately caused more than 65,000 forced sterilizations in 33 states, >20,000 in California alone. This regret was caused in no small part by the eugenics leadership and actions of David Starr Jordan.

Now that we know all this, how can we explain to our minority students that, according to their school’s namesake, “they constitute a social problem, a menace to peace and welfare." If the school retains Jordan’s name doesn’t the community and school district positively reaffirm Jordan’s values and beliefs? In my mind and that of all the renaming supporters, once you know the full legacy of Jordan, the best option is to reach out to the entire community, and to send a positive signal of inclusiveness and inspiration by renaming the school. It presents such a wonderful opportunity for all of us to come together and celebrate all of OUR students.

Sincerely, Lars Johnsson – RSAC committee member