
Administrative Memorandum

Regular Board Meeting

Date: June 09, 2021
Topic: School Naming Committee
Submitted by: Dr. Jordan Tinney, Superintendent of Schools/CEO

Background:

Our School Naming Committee recently publicized a broad consultation looking for names of potentially three future school sites. The sites are:

- 115 – Located at 5855 148th Street
- 208 – Located at 17950 26th Avenue
- 214 – Located at 17390 20th Avenue

Attached to this Administrative Memo is our communication that was distributed as part of our consultation process. In response, our social media posting reached more than 20,000 people and over 1000 people clicked on the links provided. We received 103 comments. It is from that feedback that we generate this update to the Board.

From the consultation, our committee met to debrief and there were several themes that have emerged. The themes were:

1. Indigenous Engagement
 - There were many comments that underscored the need for clear and intentional consultations with First Nations communities when it comes to naming a school.
 - There were many comments about finding names that were appropriate and honouring of Indigenous heritage and culture.
 - As one overarching theme for our consultation, this was the most commented upon and the most passionate.
 2. Names to Reflect South Asian Community
 - Some wanted to have names of schools that reflected Surrey's South Asian leaders or prominent community members. Specific individual names of community members were suggested.
 3. Recognition of Black Canadians
 - Similar to South Asian community comments, there were suggestions to name schools after prominent Black Canadians, some of which resided in Surrey at the time of settlement.
-

School Naming Committee

4. Recognition of teachers, principals, coaches, secretaries who had an impact on the community
 - Some suggestions were for people who are viewed as making a significant contribution to Surrey Schools in a variety of roles.
5. Recognition of Community Leaders
 - Some suggestions were of community leaders not just in Surrey but in BC and who could have a school named after them.
6. Other possible school names
 - Similar to situations in the past, there were many other names for schools suggested. Some of these were suggested by classes of students as we also worked to communicate with students in our consultation.

From this consultation we learned many things. As a committee, we attempted to put all the feedback we have received in context and to determine our next steps. We are enormously thankful for the engagement and feedback. In summary, as a committee, here is our feedback to the Board.

1. It is very clear, particularly in today's context that naming any school after a settler or historical public official is problematic. The district needs to be extremely sensitive to the potential impacts of naming any school after a person.
2. The district has worked very closely with local First Nations in the seeking of names for schools. Ta'talu is one example with the school yet to be under construction. This is the name given to us by Semiahmoo First Nation and is the Indigenous name for the Little Campbell River. We have deep collaboration underway including cultural analysis of sites and consultation with elders by the First Nations to determine appropriate recommendations for names to be considered by the Board of Education. This work is ongoing and we need to more clearly articulate our work together.
3. We should be seeking to have names of schools based on the land, plants, animals and physical features as opposed to names of individuals. Consistent with the First Peoples' Principles of Learning, the naming of educational sites should connect the site to the history and story of the land.
4. There may be other ways to honour heritage, individuals, or Surrey's history in smaller ways but still visible in the district rather than the naming of an entire facility or school. We will continue to explore adequate ways to honour our community.
5. We can do much more in both policy and in communications to educate the public in our processes to determine site names.

We went out to consultation seeking potential names for three sites. The Semiahmoo First Nation has been contracted to examine sites, to connect with elders and to make suggestions for names. This work is continuing and we look forward in the coming weeks to receive some options for the sites under consideration.
