

POLICY

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Related Entries: ABA, FFA-RA
Responsible Office: Office of the Chief of School Support and Well-being;

Naming School Facilities

A. PURPOSE

To establish the Board of Education's responsibility for naming Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) schools and facilities, and to set forth the criteria by which names are evaluated

B. ISSUE

Naming a school or facility is a commitment of public resources and a high honor that should be reserved for ideals, core values, and commitments expressed in Board policies, including Policy ACA, *Nondiscrimination, Equity, and Cultural Proficiency*, and equitably represent the diversity of Montgomery County.

C. POSITION

1. It is the responsibility of the Board to adopt official names for schools and operations facilities owned by the Board.
2. Naming a school, facility, or portion of a school or facility, to generate financial gain is prohibited, unless expressly approved by the Board.
3. Naming a portion of a school or facility is the responsibility of the superintendent of schools/designee, after careful consideration of community input, in alignment with Board Policy ABA, *Community Involvement*, and Policy ACA, *Nondiscrimination, Equity, and Cultural Proficiency*.
4. In fulfilling its responsibility for naming schools and facilities, the Board establishes the following categories and criteria for selecting appropriate names:
 - a) Ideals or concepts that affirm current Board policies, core values, or curricular objectives
 - b) Geographic features of Montgomery County

- 1) Geographic names should be widely recognized; and
 - 2) Geographic features named after historical persons must meet requirements, as set forth in section C.4.c.
- c) Names of persons who meet the following criteria:
- 1) The person must be deceased.
 - 2) The person must have made a demonstrated contribution to the community, county, state, or nation and/or exemplify the core values of the Board and Board Policy ACA.
 - 3) The Board will give strong consideration to persons who represent the diversity of Montgomery County and/or prompted advancements in equity.
5. Examples of names that may be rejected are those that –
- a) denigrate people on the basis of personal characteristics, as set forth in Policy ACA;
 - b) use language that is obscene, libelous, slanderous, profane, vulgar, or lewd, or has the intent to harass, threaten, or intimidate, which detracts from a positive learning and working environment, and which is inconsistent with the goal of maintaining an atmosphere of mutual respect;
 - c) relate to events, activities, or behaviors that are criminal;
 - d) refer to a business or commercial enterprise; or
 - e) represent fictional characters or contain words or phrases that are reasonably deemed by the Board to **lack dignity or to** be harmful, trivial, or otherwise developmentally inappropriate for the purpose of communication with or public display to children.

D. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. The Board will develop and maintain a list of potential school or facility names and welcomes suggestions for additional names on an ongoing basis. The Board will receive a regular review of such names for alignment with naming criteria and relevant Board policies.

2. Naming new schools or facilities
 - a) When a new school or facility site is purchased, or a planning project for a new school or facility is initiated, the superintendent of schools/designee will establish a temporary, generic name to designate the site or building for planning purposes.
 - b) When a new school or facility planning project is initiated, the Board selects up to four names from the Board's listing for community consideration.
 - c) The superintendent of schools/designee shall use the community engagement process set forth in Policy ABA, *Community Involvement*, to consult with the community that a new school is intended to serve, with a primary focus on the students and parents/guardians of that community. The purpose of the community engagement process shall be to create a prioritized list of names from among the up to four names provided by the Board and up to two additional names nominated by participants in the engagement process.
 - d) The Board shall be provided with the following information:
 - 1) An analysis that demonstrates that the name meets criteria, as set forth in C.2.c
 - 2) How the school's educational mission and values will be served by the name
 - 3) A summary of public engagement activities conducted, as set forth on Policy ABA, *Community Involvement*
 - e) The Board selects a school name from the prioritized list received from the community. Although the Board will consider carefully community recommendations for school or facility names, the final responsibility for officially naming a school building or facility rests with the Board.
3. Renaming a school or facility
 - a) The Board will consider petitions to rename an existing school/facility from students or parents/guardians of that school community. The Board does not vote to rename a school solely on the basis of receiving a petition. It will assess the petition, and if it meets stated criteria, the Board may request community engagement as described below.
 - 1) Petitions to rename a school/facility must contain the following information:

- (a) Analysis that demonstrates how the existing name does not align with criteria for acceptable names in this policy, or otherwise demonstrates a reason to change the name in a manner that aligns with categories and criteria established in section C.4.
 - (b) A petition from students and/or parents/guardians of that school community that demonstrates significant support, as determined by the Board in the context of the community.
 - 2) If the Board determines that the petitioners should provide elements required in section D.3.a, the Board may direct the superintendent of schools to conduct community engagement, as set forth in Policy ABA, *Community Involvement*, to –
 - (1) inform the school community about the renaming request, and
 - (2) consult with students and parents/guardians about the meaning the name holds for the current school community and, for schools named after individuals, the degree to which the individual’s life affirms the school’s educational mission, the school community’s values, Board core values, and/or Policy ACA.
 - 3) The purpose of community engagement at this step is not to identify new names.
- b) The Board may also seek independent historical analysis that is sufficient to re-evaluate school names.
 - c) When re-evaluating the lives of individuals for whom schools are named, the Board will consider the following:
 - (1) Known dissonance between the context of the individual’s life and Board core values and Policy ACA.
 - (2) Alignment of institutional and societal values with those of the individual’s life or legacy at the time the individual lived and within the current context is relevant.
 - (a) Consideration shall be given to an individual’s legacy and significant contributions as well as the balance of the individual’s life, public and private, and should not isolate singular actions or behaviors.

- (b) Consideration may be given to acknowledging the past to move toward healing and reconciliation.
 - d) If the Board determines that the analysis demonstrates the need to rename the school/facility to bring it into alignment with Board policies, the Board will direct the superintendent of schools/designee to consult with the community to create a prioritized list of names using the process for new names, as set forth in section D.2 above.
 - e) A cost analysis by the superintendent of schools/designee is required for the Board’s consideration, as part of the renaming process.
5. When surplus Board property is repurposed to serve as an MCPS school, the Board may consider renaming that facility, in which case there shall be community engagement to recommend a name, as set forth in section D.2.
- E. The superintendent of schools/designee will publish regulations and guidelines needed to implement this policy.

F. DESIRED OUTCOME

The process for naming and renaming Board-owned schools or facilities appropriately bestows such high honor to ideals, core values, and commitments expressed in Board policies, including Board Policy *ACA, Nondiscrimination, Equity, and Cultural Proficiency*, and equitably represents the diversity of Montgomery County.

G. REVIEW AND REPORTING

This policy will be reviewed, in accordance with the Board of Education policy review process.

Policy History: Adopted by Resolution No. 526-84, October 9, 1984; (reformatted in accordance with Resolution No. 333-86, June 12, 1986, and Resolution No. 458-86, August 12, 1986); amended by Resolution No. 419-90, June 25, 1990; amended by Resolution No. 256-90, April 17, 1990 (Codicil to School Naming Policy from April 18, 1990 through April 17, 1994.); amended by Resolution No. 97-96, February 13, 1996; amended by Resolution No. 22-00, January 11, 2000; amended by Resolution No. 132-04, February 23, 2004; amended by Resolution No. 124-07, March 13, 2007; amended by Resolution No. 285-22, June 7, 2022.