

Governance

Policy 701.11-R

Naming of Schools and District Facilities

The Richmond Board of Education recognizes that schools and district facilities are an integral part of the community in which they are located. Community pride and involvement in the naming process serves to deepen the connection between the school district and community. As such, the naming of a school or district facility will be decided by the board following its commitment to robust consultation with students, parents/guardians, partner groups¹, and the community.

The Board of Education is committed to reconciliation and decolonization as outlined in [Policy 102](#).

Guiding Principles

1. The Board of Education reserves the right to name schools and district facilities.
2. The relationship between the school or district facility and the land on which it is located is significant in the naming process.
3. In selecting a place-based name that acknowledges and honours Indigenous history, it is essential to seek early engagement with the appropriate rights holder(s).
4. Generally, schools and district facilities will not be named after individuals.
5. If naming after an individual, consideration will be given to Indigenous Peoples and historically under-represented communities such as visible minorities and women.
6. Schools and district facilities will not be named after a living person.

The Board of Education reserves the right to remove a name in the event of an exceptional circumstance. **Exceptional circumstances** are defined for the purpose of this policy to mean, where any of the following applies:

- a. the existing name no longer aligns with the board's vision, mission, and values; or
 - b. the existing name no longer reflects the values, culture, and significance of the school population or community in which the facility is located
7. Existing or rebuilt schools and district facilities or parts of facilities will only be renamed in exceptional circumstances (see #6 above).
 8. A school or facility name that is in use in a neighbouring district is to be avoided.
 9. Following the selection of a school name, secondary schools will officially use the designation "Secondary School", while elementary schools will use the designation "Elementary School."

10. An education and communication plan will be developed and implemented to support understanding of the historic significance of a new school or district facility name and to teach the proper pronunciation of the name given.

A. Naming of New Schools and District Facilities

1. When the need to name a new school or district facility arises, a Naming Committee of the Board shall be formed, whose mandate it will be to recommend to the board a suitable name for the school or district facility. Prior to commencing the process, the district will share this information with the Indigenous rights holders and the district's Indigenous Education Council.
2. The Naming Committee will consist of:
 - Two Trustees - one will be the committee chairperson
 - Assistant Superintendent who will be responsible for the new school
 - Director of Facilities Services
 - Director of Communications and Marketing
 - One representative from each partner group (i.e., CUPE, RASA, RDPA, RMAPS, RTA)
 - Two student representatives who will be attending the school
3. The Naming Committee of the Board will:
 - (a) establish a communications strategy to seek input (i.e., naming suggestions and rationale) from the public. The designed communication strategy will advise the public of the following:
 - (i) that all submissions by members of the public will be held in confidence.
 - (ii) that there is no limitation as to the number or type of suggestions that will be received by the board.
 - (iii) that submissions include a rationale or explanation for the proposed name.
 - (iv) that submissions should be sent to the attention of the secretary-treasurer.
 - (v) that submissions will be received from members of the public for a period of three months. The communications strategy will state the closing date by which submissions must be received.
 - (vi) that a decision will be made by the board within twelve months of the initiation of the communications strategy, whenever possible.
 - (vii) that the decision of the board will be made by resolution at an in-camera meeting and that a public announcement will be made at the next public meeting of the board.

- (b) receive in confidence all submissions from members of the public and provide a summary of the submissions received, or previously received, regarding the naming and will provide such summary to the board at the next available in-camera meeting after the closing date for submissions.
 - (c) within one month of the closing date for submissions, establish a draft shortlist of names to be considered and forward all details of the shortlisted submission to the board along with a summary of all of the submissions that have been received.
 - (d) following board approval of a shortlist, the committee will undertake the research it deems necessary to provide the board with further background to the shortlisted names.
 - (e) provide the board at an in-camera meeting, within six months of the closing date for submissions, the background associated with each shortlisted submission along with its recommendation and a draft press release.
 - (f) The board is not bound by the recommendation of the committee.
4. After receiving, at an in-camera meeting, the background associated with each shortlisted submission, the board may, in accordance with [Policy 201](#) (section 7.7 Committee of the Whole), resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the consideration of the Naming Committee's recommendation.
 5. The board will, by resolution, vote in-camera on the naming of a new school or district facility.
 6. If approved, the board will announce the name of the new school or district facility at its next public meeting.

B. Naming of Parts of Board-Owned Facilities

The board may contemplate naming part of a board-owned facility on its own initiative or at the suggestion of a member of the public, at which point it will determine the necessity of asking for submissions of names from the public. If the board decides to seek submissions from the public, it may follow the same process as that listed for the naming of new schools or district facilities in section A of this policy.

C. Renaming of Schools and District Facilities

The district will consider proposals to rename schools and district facilities, only in **exceptional circumstances**. Any decision to rename a school or district facility must follow the guiding principles set out in this policy. Written proposals to rename a school or district facility can be initiated by the school administration, staff, students, the Parent Advisory Council, district staff, and community members.

Exceptional circumstances are defined for the purpose of this policy to mean, where any of the following applies:

- a. the existing name no longer aligns with the board's vision, mission, and values; or

- b. the existing name no longer reflects the values, culture, and significance of the school population or community in which the facility is located.
1. Proposals must be submitted to the Office of the Secretary-Treasurer.
 2. Upon receipt of a renaming proposal, the secretary-treasurer will inform the superintendent, who will convene a meeting with the board chairperson and vice-chairperson (or alternate), to determine if the renaming proposal is deemed to qualify as an exceptional circumstance.
 3.
 - (a) If it is determined that the renaming proposal does not qualify as an exceptional circumstance, the board chairperson will inform the board at the next in-camera meeting.
 - (b) If the board decides that the renaming proposal does not qualify as an exceptional circumstance, then the matter will be closed. The superintendent or designate will communicate with the individual or group contact who submitted the proposal regarding the process and rationale for the decision.
 - (c) If it is determined that the proposal does qualify as an exceptional circumstance, then the superintendent will bring the proposal to the next in-camera meeting of the board for consideration of activating a Renaming Committee for further consideration.
 4. If the board, by resolution, determines that a Renaming Committee will be formed, the processes set out in section A. Naming of a Schools and District Facility will be followed, with the exception (if the matter is school related) of the committee composition which will be modified with a focus on representation from the school that is being considered for renaming.
 - (a) The Renaming Committee when school related will consist of:
 - Two Trustees - one will be the committee chairperson
 - Assistant Superintendent who will be responsible for the school
 - Director of Facilities Services
 - Director of Communications and Marketing
 - One representative from each partner group with a school focus where appropriate (i.e., CUPE, RASA, RDPA, RMAPS, RTA)
 - Two student representatives from the school

¹ In the Richmond School District, the term "partner groups" includes our Indigenous rights holders and all officially recognized education partner representatives for Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) 716, Richmond Association of School Administrators (RASA), Richmond District Parents Association (RDPA), Richmond Management and Professional Staff (RMAPS), and the Richmond Teachers' Association (RTA). Official representatives from partner groups participate on behalf of their members in committee meetings, engagements, and other activities to provide valuable input, feedback, and advice to the district. The Richmond School District values input from partner groups and voice from all

members of the school community, including students, parents/guardians, and employees. Where appropriate, the Richmond School District will provide opportunities for public engagement to ensure all individuals can provide input to the district.