

Greater Essex County District School Board

Regulation: Naming of Board Facilities

Reference No: R-PL-01

When selecting a name for a new school (or while renaming a currently operating school or board facility) the objective is to reflect excellence in public education, the diversity of our region, and a safe, positive and welcoming school environment – while highlighting the expressed values of the GECDSB and its character education principles.

The primary interest in the name of any school or Board facility is retained by the Board. A name is a primary branding element and allows the Board to promote its objectives in the community and communicate its mission, vision and values. Appropriate branding also assists the Board in the development of a strong identity for the school community.

A school name should be distinctive and readily identifiable as a public school within the Greater Essex County District School Board.

Generationally, the nature and identity of communities in which any school exists, changes. Schools are built to overlap generations. Naming schools based on the character of a community as it is currently constituted, or once was, will not always be relevant to the present residents or users.

Ideas (concepts) – based on the Board's ongoing, foundational, operational and philosophical criteria are encouraged to be the fundamental consideration of a new, or revised, school name.

Names to be considered should be thoroughly examined so as not to perpetuate or represent a legacy of discrimination, oppression or harm to members of this or any GECDSB school community.

A school will be named or renamed when:

- a) A new school is built;
- b) Two or more schools close and are consolidated into a new build; or
- c) Board approval has been given to change the name of an existing school or facility.

1. **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Board of Trustees:

- Approve the appointment of the members to the Naming Advisory Committee.
- By majority vote, approve one of the proposed names, provide an alternative name or refer the matter back to the Naming Advisory Committee with a rationale.

Director of Education:

- Authorize the initiative to name or rename a school or facility.
- Along with the area trustee(s) and the Chair of the Board, determine the makeup of committee members and make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees for approval.

Superintendent responsible for School Design:

- Provide interpretation of this policy and regulation.
- Support understanding and implementation of this policy and regulation across the Board and GECDSB schools.
- In collaboration with board staff as appropriate, is responsible for overseeing the process for naming a school.
- Establish the agendas for meetings, ensure that properly prepared agenda materials are circulated to the members with sufficient time for review prior to the meeting, chair the committee meetings, and be responsible for reporting to the Board of Trustees.
- Present a report to the Board of Trustees on the Naming Advisory Committee's discussions and recommendations, including a shortlist of suggested names (2 to 4 suggestions) with rationale for trustees to consider.

Communications Department:

- Appeal for applicants for the committee through media release, social media and communication to the school community.
- Develop, issue and review survey to the broader community.
- Research and collect historical/cultural information on the area, community and neighbourhood in which the building or facility will be/is located. The report will help establish suggestions or concepts, names and/or themes for the committee to discuss.
- Be a resource to the committee.
- Facilitate focus group discussions with students and/or staff and/or community members.
- Facilitate consultation with Equity groups.

Committee Members:

- The committee will evaluate suggestions and the information provided based on the naming criteria provided.
- The committee will vote using a system outlined at the first meeting by the Committee Chair to determine a short list of school names to recommend to the Board. The Committee will recommend 2 to 4 names, with a rationale for each, to the Board of Trustees for approval.

2. PROCESS

- 2.1 The Director of Education will bring forward to the Board of Trustees a report requesting a Naming Advisory Committee be established once land has been purchased and the design and budget have been approved by the Ministry
- 2.2 Through a media release, social media and communication to the school community, an appeal for applicants for the committee will be solicited. Once the applications are received, the area Trustee(s), Director of Education and the Chair of the Board will determine the makeup of the committee and make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees for approval. (See Appendix A for application.)

The Naming Advisory Committee shall, where applicable, consist of at least:

VOTING MEMBERS:

- One school administrator or manager
- Two staff members
- One school council member
- Two student representatives (elementary student accompanied by parent/guardian)
- Two community representatives who are public school supporters

In the case of a school consolidation, the listed membership would include individuals from each school involved in the consolidation.

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

- Two members of the Board of Trustees, including the area Trustee(s) whenever possible
- The Director of Education
- The Superintendent responsible for School Design (serving as Chair)
- The area Superintendent
- Member of the Communications Department (advisor to the committee)

* A staff appointed recording secretary will be provided to the committee

NOTE: In the case of a non-school facility the membership may vary.

2.3 Prior to the first naming committee meeting:

- a) A Member of the Communications Department will collect historical/cultural information on the area, community and neighbourhood in which the building or facility will be/is located. The report will help establish suggestions of concepts, names and/or themes for the committee to discuss.
- b) Following the guidelines set out in this regulation for the selection of a school/facility name, community input will be sought through an open survey, which will be promoted through a variety of mediums (i.e. News Release, on social media platforms, websites, etc).

3. COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

The purpose of the Naming Advisory Committee is to assist the Board of Trustees in the naming of a school.

The committee will hold a minimum of two (2) meetings, which will be open to the public to attend, but not to provide any direct input at that time.

Quorum, for the purpose of convening an official meeting, shall be defined as the majority of voting members. The decision-making process will be considered and determined by voting members who are present. Ideally, the committee will use consensus when voting. Majority voting will be used if the committee cannot reach consensus.

Prior to the first meeting committee members will be provided with the following documents:

- Board Policy and Regulation: Naming and Renaming of Board Facilities
- Board's Strategic Priorities
- Complete list of suggested names gathered through the community survey
- Communications Department report

- 3.1 The purpose of the first meeting will be for the committee to review the information provided and, if desired, ask questions of the member of the Communications Department for clarification. Members will then assess any ideas/suggestions which have already come forward or provide one of their own. A list of potential names will be created.

Naming Criteria:

Must be distinctive and appropriate with an emphasis on, but not limited to:

- Local historical events;
- Geography;
- Culture;
- Traditions of the community; or
- Representations of diversity.

Careful consideration should be given before naming a school or board facility after an individual. No school or facility names will cause harm to any member of the GECDsb community based on grounds protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code. No school or facility will be named after a living person (persons).

- 3.2 The list will then be reviewed through an equity lens and for propriety and adherence to the GECDsb name selection criteria. Consultation will take place with, but not limited to, various GECDsb advisory committees. All appropriate names will then be submitted to focus groups of students and/or staff and/or community members for their impressions and preferences. The results of these sessions will be summarized and provided to the committee prior to their second meeting.
- 3.3 At its second meeting, the committee will consider the feedback from focus groups and select a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 4 possible names that will be forwarded to the Board of Trustees for their consideration.
- 3.4 At a public meeting of the Board of Trustees, the Superintendent responsible for School Design will present a report on the deliberations and actions of the Naming Advisory Committee. This will also include the short list of suggested names. The Board of Trustees will then vote to choose one of the suggestions, provide an alternative name or refer the matter back to the Naming Advisory Committee with a rationale. If the Trustees vote to refer back to the Advisory Committee, the Committee shall reconvene to select up to three new names for consideration.
- 3.5 Following the selection of a name, the school community will then be engaged in a process to determine its branding elements (colours, logo, mascot and motto). A member of the Communications Department and the area Superintendent responsible for School Design will supervise the proceedings to ensure that they

conform to the GECDsb standards for justice, equity, inclusion and diversity as well as for distinctiveness and marketability.

- 3.6 All meeting notes on the determination of a school name or renaming of a school are to be kept in the school archives.

4. RENAMING OF EXISTING SCHOOLS AND/OR FACILITIES

A name change of an existing school is necessary when the current name reflects a documented history of harm, discrimination, or inequity, or is not in line with GECDsb's commitment to creating a welcoming and inclusive learning and working environment.

In consultation with equity groups, school names across the district are to be reviewed every 5 years to allow for evolving and enlightened understanding of justice, inclusion, equity and diversity to be considered.

If there is a concern of a school name prior to the review date, concerned members of the school community or general community should complete the School Naming Request Form (see Appendix D).

Director's Council will review submissions. If deemed appropriate, the Director of Education will prepare a report for the Board of Trustees' consideration.

See Appendix B for a list of current and former school names and themes in the GECDsb.

Should the Board pass a motion to proceed, a Naming Advisory Committee will be established, in accordance with this policy and regulation.

The naming of internal facilities is the responsibility of the school community. The school will consider the Naming Criteria as listed in 3.1.

- Appendix A: Application to Serve on the Greater Essex County District School Board's Naming Advisory Committee
- Appendix B: List of current and former school names and themes in the GECDsb
- Appendix C: Script/Guide for Chair of the Naming Committee
- Appendix D: School Renaming Request Form