



Washoe County School District School Naming Committee Meeting Minutes

February 7, 2018

1. Opening Items

1.01 Call to Order

The meeting of the School Naming Committee was called to order at 5:30 p.m. in the WCSD Central Administration Building, 425 E. Ninth Street, Board Room, Reno, Nevada.

1.02 Roll Call

Committee Members Joe Gabica, Elisabeth Genasci, Clyyne Cook, Frank Perez, Mercedes De La Garza, Carly Lott, Renee Martin were present at roll call. Sara Moreno, Alyson Castro and Stacy Gomez were absent at roll call. Jennifer Hampton was absent at roll call but arrived at 5:41p.m. Staff Liaison, Riley Sutton and WCSD general counsel, Neil Rombardo, were also present.

1.03 Public Comment

There was no public comment given.

1.04 Action to Adopt the Agenda

Motion from Renee Martin and second by Mercedes De La Garza to adopt the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Items for Discussion, Presentation and/or Action

2.01 Discussion and Possible Approval of the Minutes from the October 16, 2017 Naming Committee meeting

Motion from Mercedes De La Garza to approve the October meeting minutes. Second by Carly Lott. Motion carried unanimously.

2.02 Discussion and Possible Approval of the Minutes from the November 1, 2017 School Naming Committee meeting.

Motion from Carly Lott to approve the November meeting minutes. Second by Elisabeth Genasci. Motion carried unanimously.

2.03 Discussion and Possible Approval of the Minutes from the December 6, 2017 School Naming Committee meeting.

Motion from Carly Lott to approve the December meeting minutes. Second by Renee Martin. Motion carried unanimously.

2.04 Discussion and Possible Action on Semi-Finalist Name Submissions For The New Middle School In Sun Valley (see Attachment A to the Agenda for a list of those names), the community responses to those semi-finalists, and the creation of a finalist list of no more than three names based on individual rankings of committee members to be recommended to the Board of Trustees.

Committee Liaison Riley Sutton introduced a special guest, Katherine Loudon, whom he asked to appear at the meeting for the purpose of explaining memorials and the impacts of memorials as it pertains to a semi-finalist name for a future school name, Michael Landsberry.

Mr. Sutton reported to the committee that he has spoken, as requested, to the lawyer of the Landsberry family to see whether or not naming a school after Michael Landsberry would be welcome, and the lawyer verified that this idea was welcomed by the family.

Katherine Loudon, WCSD School Counseling Director, spoke to the committee regarding memorials. The Sparks Middle School incident was a very traumatic event for the entire community with a huge impact on many students, teachers, staff and the rest of the community, and has had residual impact. She spoke on how open symbols can be difficult for some yet aide in the recovery for others. She shared and discussed a handout of best-aligned practices provided by National Association of School Psychologists.

Mr. Sutton spoke to the committee about the process for the consideration of a memorial and the responsibilities and welcomed any and all comments from the committee members for concerns and/or questions.

Committee member Mercedes De La Garza asked Ms. Loudon to repeat the last practice listed and to clarify whether WCSD has any policies and/or procedures around memorials. Ms. Loudon clarified that they have a "best practices" guide but to her knowledge, there are not any current policies and/or procedures in place.

Committee member Joe Gabica commented on the heroism of Michael Landsberry but expressed concerns of how recently the event took place and how emotional wounds take time to heal and suggested that it might be too soon to name a school after him. He requested Ms. Loudon to speak to that issue. Ms. Loudon confirmed that for some individuals it could very well be too hurtful, yet for others it could assist in the recovery process. Because no two people are the same, healing will not be the same for everyone so it makes this decision a difficult one.

Committee Chairman Frank Perez requested each committee member take a moment to think about and discuss how naming a school after Michael Landsberry will affect others, and on the other side how not naming a school after him will have implications on the community.

- Committee member Elisabeth Genasci commented that she would like to see the school district's Board of Trustees provide a more structured policy to look at and address these permanent decisions.
- Committee member Mercedes De La Garza commented that with a few of the names that have been submitted, particularly those that are recognized for their heroism, that perhaps there be a more appropriate vehicle to honor those individuals than to name a school after them; as the criteria for submission has an educational component to it.
- Committee member Carly Lott reflected on the idea that maybe it was too soon to name a school after Michael Landsberry; however, that she was concerned that if they don't move his name forward now, that the chance to honor him will get lost with time. She also wanted to verify that they have heard back from the Landsberry family that they are in favor of the decision. Mr. Sutton confirmed that the family, through their lawyer, have expressed that they welcome the idea.
- Committee member Renee Martin inquired as to who does decides on school colors and symbols. Mr. Sutton referred to committee member Joe Gabica for his expertise on this subject. Mr. Gabica confirmed that there is not set policy though in years past the school principal, staff, students, and community have all worked together to select school symbols.

- Committee member Clynne Cook commented that the decision ultimately lies on the Board of Trustees, that the committee is there to make a “recommendation” on behalf of the community, but that they are not the final decision makers and all they can be responsible for is representing the wants and needs of the community based on the information they are given.
- Committee member Jennifer Hampton reiterated what the majority of the committee had already stated – that she wants to be mindful of the Landsberry family and of the community’s wishes and that the committee should be careful and tread lightly on moving forward with memorializing Michael Landsberry at this time.

Public Comment was made by Irene Payne, who spoke to express her apprehension of naming a school after Michael Landsberry at this time, being that the event is still too recent.

Public Comment was made by Greg Smith, who spoke to the committee to respectfully request that the name Debbie Smith not be considered at this time.

Committee members discussed and then gave their individual point rankings for their top three finalists: three points for their top pick, two points for their second place pick, and one point for their third place pick. Mr. Sutton tallied points. The top three choices in order were Desert Skies, Sun Valley and Michael Landsberry. This was a non-binding point total allowing discussion from the committee.

Motion by Carly Lott, second by Elisabeth Genasci, to forward the names Desert Skies, Sun Valley, and Michael Landsberry to a future meeting of the Board of Trustees for final consideration for the name of the new middle school in Sun Valley. Motion carried unanimously.

2.05 Presentation and Discussion of the time period for name submissions for the next new school to be named

Mr. Sutton presented to the committee that there would be a break in the committee meetings as there were no schools that were ready to be named at that time. The committee would be called to meet when a new school is ready to be named.

2.05 Public Comment

There was no public comment given.

3. Closing Items

3.01 Announcement of Next Meeting

Mr. Sutton announced that the committee will be taking a break for now since there are no solid plans at this point in time.

The next meeting will be scheduled later, once a new school site has been determined.

3.02 Public Comment

Laura Petersen spoke as the newly selected Principal of the future middle school in Sun Valley, she thanked the committee for the commitment they have given toward the thoughtful approach for selecting the names of the new schools.

3.03 Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business, Chair Frank Perez adjourned the meeting at 6:24 p.m.