

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

May 8, 2012

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Joshua P. Starr, Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Naming of Downcounty Consortium Elementary School #29

Executive Summary

On February 27, 2012, the Montgomery County Board of Education (Board) approved a resolution requesting that four names—Mary McLeod Bethune, Charles Gilchrist, Josiah Henson, and Flora Singer—be considered for Downcounty Consortium Elementary School #29. In accordance with Regulation FFA-RA, *Naming School Facilities*, the School Naming Advisory Committee was convened by Mr. Kyle J. Heatwole, principal, Downcounty Consortium Elementary School #29. The committee added more names during its discussion and reached consensus to recommend Flora M. Singer as the preferred name.

Committee members had an opportunity to advocate for each name and to share feedback from the community members they polled. The committee makeup was 19 percent Black or African American, 6 percent Hispanic/Latino, and 75 percent White and included 10 females and 5 males. During the meetings, members narrowed the list from 13 to 9 names. A final opportunity for advocacy was given to participants using the list that included the four names provided by the Board and the names added by the committee.

Attached is a memorandum to me, dated April 24, 2012, from Dr. Frieda K. Lacey, deputy superintendent of schools, which summarizes the School Naming Advisory Committee's deliberations and provides background on the process and ranking of the school names.

Present at the Board table are Ms. Bronda L. Mills, community superintendent, Office of School Support and Improvement, and Mr. Kyle J. Heatwole, principal, Downcounty Consortium Elementary School #29.

The following resolution is submitted for your consideration:

WHEREAS, The School Naming Advisory Committee has submitted a report, dated Tuesday, April 24, 2012, ranking the following names for Downcounty Consortium Elementary School #29, in order of preference:

1. Flora M. Singer Elementary School
2. Forest Glen Elementary School
3. Josiah Henson Elementary School
4. Susan Niebur Elementary School
5. Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary School
6. Charles Gilchrist Elementary School

WHEREAS, The School Naming Committee reached consensus on the recommendation to name the facility Flora M. Singer Elementary School; and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to Regulation FFA-RA, *Naming School Facilities*, the final responsibility for officially naming a school building rests with the Montgomery County Board of Education; now therefore be it

Resolved, That the Montgomery County Board of Education names the school building heretofore known as Downcounty Consortium Elementary School #29 as follows:

Flora M. Singer Elementary School

Office of the Deputy Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

April 24, 2012

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Joshua P. Starr, Superintendent of Schools

From: Frieda K. Lacey, Deputy Superintendent of Schools *FKL/arsb*

Subject: School Naming Process Report for Downcounty Consortium Elementary School #29

Background

In accordance with Regulation FFA-RA, *Naming School Facilities*, the School Naming Committee was convened by Mr. Kyle J. Heatwole, principal, Downcounty Consortium Elementary School #29. The naming committee consisted of a diverse group of 15 persons. The Board of Education (Board) passed a resolution on Monday, February 27, 2012, requesting the committee consider four names—Mary McLeod Bethune, Charles Gilchrist, Josiah Henson, and Flora Singer.

The School Naming Committee met four times. The committee's first meeting was held on Thursday, March 8, 2012. During the meeting, the committee reviewed Regulation FFA-RA, biographical sketches of persons recommended by the Board, and brainstormed strategies for gathering feedback from the community. The group was given two weeks to collaborate with their constituents, solicit feedback and input, and gather public comment from members of their communities.

The committee's second meeting took place on Thursday, March 15, 2012. The committee reported back on community ideas and input. Each committee member was given an opportunity to list all the names provided by his/her community for consideration. In addition, each committee member was given a fair and equal amount of time for background sharing and advocacy. It was during this discussion that the names of Forest Glen Elementary School, Henrietta Lacks Elementary School, Susan Niebur Elementary School, and Jim Henson Elementary School were proposed and were placed on the list by the community. Forest Glen Elementary School had significant community support, as reflected by several e-mails and messages from community members.

A vote was taken during the second meeting. The results are as follows:

<u>School Name</u>	<u>1st Place Votes</u>	<u>2nd Place Votes</u>	<u>Total Votes</u>
Flora Singer	10	6	16
Forest Glen	4	6	10
Susan Niebur	1	3	4
Josiah Henson	2	1	3
Jim Henson		1	1
Mary McLeod Bethune			0
Charles Gilchrist			0

The other names that were considered did not receive any votes.

A third meeting was held on the evening of Wednesday, March 21, 2012. This meeting was advertised in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

At the meeting, the result of the vote was shared. There was some discussion among the team regarding how to proceed. While the vote revealed that two of the names were strongly preferred, there was discussion about how to determine the final recommendation to the Board.

Given time for reflection after this meeting and consultation from the Office of the Deputy Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Heatwole convened a fourth meeting, which was held on Thursday, April 19, 2012. This meeting was advertised in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. One community member, who was not on the naming committee, attended the meeting to observe.

The meeting opened with a confirmation of a quorum. The committee reviewed the Board policy, suggested school names, and community input. The team then discussed the process for identifying a preferred name. The committee selected a process whereby committee members would list six names, and assign from 0 to 5 points to each name, indicating their preference. There was no minimum or maximum on the number of points each committee member could assign. The committee felt that this would enable them to advocate more strongly for preferred names, and result in a more accurate reflection of the desires of the committee.

Committee members were given an opportunity to discuss the names proposed by the Board, as well as the names proposed by the community. Each committee member was given a fair and equal amount of time for background sharing and advocacy. Following this discussion, the committee resolved to move forward with a vote. The results of this final vote were as follows:

<u>School Name</u>	<u>Total Points Assigned</u>
Flora Singer	51
Forest Glen	49
Josiah Henson	23
Susan Niebur	22

Jim Henson	11
Henrietta Lacks	6
Mary McLeod Bethune	5
Charles Gilchrist	5

No other school names received any points. The results were calculated and shared during the meeting. Upon review of the results, the committee generated its final recommendation to the Board, in accordance with the guidelines set forth in Regulation FFA-RA. The consensus recommendation of the School Naming Committee is as follows:

1. Flora Singer Elementary School
2. Forest Glen Elementary School
3. Josiah Henson Elementary School
4. Susan Niebur Elementary School
5. Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary School
6. Charles Gilchrist Elementary School

Once again, the committee did an excellent job following the process, respectfully acknowledging the different viewpoints of others, and serving their communities, and members felt satisfied that consensus was reached on one particular name.

School Naming Committee members for Downcounty Consortium Elementary School #29 are as follows:

VicMarie Arocho, parent, Oakland Terrace Elementary School
Doug Bailey, parent, Oakland Terrace Elementary School
Christina Brackna, parent, Oakland Terrace Elementary School
Steve Bressler, parent, Oakland Terrace Elementary School
Marlynne Brown, parent, Oakland Terrace Elementary School
Julia Evans, parent, Oakland Terrace Elementary School
Kyle J. Heatwole, principal, Downcounty Consortium Elementary School #29
John Landesman, PTA president, Oakland Terrace Elementary School
Lisa Moreau, parent, Oakland Terrace Elementary School
Tamara Overby, parent, Oakland Terrace Elementary School
Douglas Patience, parent, Oakland Terrace Elementary School
Lauren Robertson, parent, Oakland Terrace Elementary School
Beth Saindon, parent, Oakland Terrace Elementary School
Mark Smith, parent, Oakland Terrace Elementary School
Lisa Strong, parent, Oakland Terrace Elementary School
Jean Zenklusen, MCCPTA and former parent, Oakland Terrace Elementary School

FKL:lgp