



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

December 2017

School Naming Policy

Chancellor's Directive #303

Version 01

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Chancellor's Signature

12/11/17
Date

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I. Executive Summary

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| Originating Office: Office of the Chief Operating Officer | Number: 303 |
| Subject: School Naming Policy Authority: 5-E DCMR 3510 | Date: December 2017 Rescinds: None |

A. Introduction

The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) operates over 100 schools with the mission of ensuring that every school guarantees students reach their full potential through rigorous and joyful learning experiences provided in a nurturing environment. This mission requires us to deliver education in a school environment supportive of student learning and reflective of the community served. Schools are named after people, places, or services provided at that location. School names serve to identify the school community, establish a legacy, and develop a sense of pride in the traditions of DCPS.

B. Purpose

This directive delivers the rules and procedures for the naming and renaming of all DCPS school buildings. DCPS recognizes that students, parents, and other community members may wish to propose a name for a school or request a name change for an existing school. Therefore, this policy outlines the specific steps to initiate this process, the decision-making considerations, and the legal implications involved in the naming of schools. Pursuant to 5-E DCMR 3510.10, any person or organization may submit a proposed name or change of name of any school building to DCPS for consideration but DCPS shall not be required to submit any particular name or recommendation for change of name to the Mayor. This policy applies only to the naming or renaming of school buildings. To the extent practicable and applicable, any naming associated with individual spaces within in a school shall be considered on a case by case basis. Any questions with regards to this policy should be referred to dcps.policy@dc.gov.

C. Roadmap

This directive first explains the criteria for official school names and the authority for new school names. Then, it explains the procedures for naming new schools and existing schools. Finally, it addresses procedures for community engagement and authority for the approval of a new school name. This policy shall apply to all school buildings associated with DCPS.

II. Naming and Renaming Procedures

A. Official Naming Criteria

Each school has an official school name. All such naming designations shall be according to the criteria explained below.

1. All naming based on a specific individual must comply with the following requirements:
 - The individual must not be a living person;
 - The individual must have been deceased for at least two (2) years; and
 - Only the individual's given name as well as their surname may be used (e.g. "Paul Lawrence Dunbar High School" rather than "Dunbar High School").
2. In determining whether to name a school after an individual, DCPS will consider whether the person:
 - Has made a significant contribution to society, including contributions made to the local school community;
 - Will lend prestige and status to an institution of learning; and
 - Represents the DCPS mission, vision, and values.
3. Nominations for names shall include a brief written statement (no more than 250 words) containing information about the name or person, including, if applicable, biographic data and significant contributions, and a statement of why such a name should be selected, including how it will lend prestige and status and represent the DCPS mission, vision, and values. In addition, the nomination must state that all conditions outlined in Section II.A.1 above have been met.

The wishes of the next of kin shall be taken into consideration. DCPS shall make reasonable efforts to locate the next kin and consider the perspective of the family before approving any official school name of a person.

Each school may have a mascot and school colors associated with the school's name or identity. Any changes to a school's mascot or colors shall occur during an official school name change unless it has been deemed the school's current mascot or colors are discriminatory or pose a significant safety threat.

B. Naming New Schools Procedures

School naming must be in accordance with the requirements described in Section II.A and performed according to the process described below.

1. Recommendation Review

In the case of a newly acquired school, or re-opening of a school, nominations for the official name of a school must be submitted to DCPS. Any such nominations shall be in accordance with the requirements and format described in Section II.A. DCPS will review the recommendation and respond to the stakeholder within 60 days on whether the new name consideration will move forward.

2. Community Engagement and Fiscal Impact Statement

The Office of Family and Public Engagement (OFPE) will determine the community engagement process regarding the potential naming of a new school. To the extent practicable and applicable, this engagement shall follow the process described below in Section D. The Office of Chief Operating Officer (OCOO) shall submit an analysis of the costs and timeline for potential implementation of the new name. After reviewing this input and information, a recommendation shall be made to the Chancellor.

3. Chancellor's Decision

The Chancellor, or designee, shall review a new school name consideration and determine whether the new school name shall move forward. Notice of proposed action shall be published in the D.C. Register for a period of not more than thirty (30) days prior to final action to name the school building. The Mayor shall have the final decision on any new school name.

C. Renaming Existing Schools

The existing name of a school may be changed in accordance with the naming requirements described below.

1. Recommendation Review

In the case of a request to rename an existing school, nominations for the official name of a school must be submitted to DCPS. Any such nominations shall be in accordance with the requirements and format described in Section II.A. DCPS will review the recommendation and respond to the stakeholder within 60 days on whether the new name consideration will move forward.

2. Community Engagement and Fiscal Impact Statement

OFPE will determine the community engagement process regarding the potential naming of an existing school. To the extent practicable and applicable, this engagement shall follow the process described below in Section D. OCOO shall submit an analysis of the costs and timeline for potential implementation of the new name. After reviewing this input and information, a recommendation shall be made to the Chancellor.

3. Chancellor's Decision

The Chancellor, or designee, shall review the request for name change to an existing school and determine whether the renaming shall move forward. Notice of proposed action shall be published in the D.C. Register for a period of not more than thirty (30) days prior to final action to name the school building. The Mayor shall have the final decision on any name change to an existing school.

D. Community Engagement Process

Any new school name or renaming of a school shall include a community engagement process before the final action on an official school name designation is completed. DCPS shall notify parents, students, alumni, and the community of the request for a name change, or new school name, and undertake a process to seek input on and recommendations regarding the proposed name.

Community engagement may include:

- Direct communications with students, parents, and families (during in-person parent or staff meetings);
- School specific surveys;

- School specific petitions;
- Local School Advisory Team (LSAT) meetings;
- Advisory Neighborhood Commission Meetings; and
- Community Civic Association Meetings.

DCPS may administer a survey to invite input, reflections, comments, and nominations regarding the proposed name change. This survey will be open to all members of the DCPS community, including current and former students, and will be distributed, at a minimum, through the DCPS website, Office of Family and Public Engagement email list, and social media platforms.