

**Subject:** Resolution No. 184-10A1

**In Support of a Formal Process in the Renaming of San Francisco Unified School District Schools**

- Commissioners Mark Sanchez, Stevon Cook, and Matt Haney

**WHEREAS:** SFUSD schools have been, are, and shall continue to be the source of great and enduring pride to the residents of the City and County of San Francisco; and

**WHEREAS:** Students, educators, school staff, and families are deeply invested and dedicated to the schools at which they attend, work at, or send their children to for a great education, as well as to all schools at large, making our network of public schools an integral part of our social fabric, and making our big city in many ways more accessible and embracing of our diverse community; and

**WHEREAS:** The renaming of SFUSD schools are the result of school communities petitioning the SF Board of Education, at times citing the need to have our academic institutions' names not only more accurately reflect current attitudes and values, but also, at times, to provide hard won voice and agency to those in our community who have been historically underserved, held down, subjugated, and the focus of concerted efforts to deny life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; and

**WHEREAS:** Efforts to rename schools, albeit for some of the reasons and intentions stated above, have and predictably and understandably will encounter opposition by some community members for a host of reasons, not least of them the attachment of a school's name to a beloved educational institution and the memories of events, classmates, teachers, and school leaders, and because the name of a school is oftentimes closely related to the cultural identity of current and former students; and

**WHEREAS:** Within at least the last three decades, SFUSD has proudly, confidently and with the advocacy and support of the community renamed a long list of schools, including, but not limited to:

Malcolm X Academy (formerly Sir Francis Drake Elementary School)  
Rosa Parks (formerly Raphael Weill Elementary School)  
Chinese Immersion School (formerly DeAvila Elementary School)  
Burl Tolar, at the Benjamin Franklin Campus (formerly Benjamin Franklin Middle School)  
Cesar Chavez (formerly Hawthorne Elementary School)  
Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy (formerly Douglass Elementary School)  
Ruth Asawa School of the Arts, at the McAteer Campus (formerly McAteer High School)  
Willie L. Brown (formerly 21st Century Middle School)  
Phillip and Sala Burton High School (formerly Woodrow Wilson High School)  
Dianne Feinstein Elementary School (formerly Parkside Elementary School)  
Enola Maxwell (formerly Potrero Hill Middle School)  
June Jordan (formerly Luther Burbank Middle School)  
Gordon J. Lau (formerly Commodore Stockton Elementary School)  
Yick Wo (formerly Sarah B. Cooper Elementary School)  
Leola M. Havard Early Education School (formerly Burnett Child Development Center); and

**WHEREAS:** Of note, and illustrative of the need to consider and reflect upon the appropriateness of those who have been honored with a school in their names, Sir Francis Drake Elementary School, attended predominantly by African American students, was renamed Malcolm X Academy in 1994, due to a compelling and sustained effort by the African American school community and its allies who called to attention and amplified the fact that Drake was a slave trader; and

**WHEREAS:** Reflecting on the historical past and the appropriateness of some cultural icons is being debated across the nation, notably concerning the confederacy's flag, iconography, and statues, as well as the names of revered institutions, including public schools; and many communities are blazing a path toward a more relevant and culturally responsive approach to addressing historical wrongs; for example, the City of New Orleans removed the Robert E. Lee and other confederate statues in May of 2017; similarly, in San Francisco, city officials recently decided to remove a controversial monument that depicts a Native American man sitting at the feet of a Mexican vaquero and Franciscan monk.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:** That the San Francisco Board of Education finds it necessary to engage the larger San Francisco community in a sustained discussion regarding public school names, their relevance, and the appropriateness of schools named for historical figures who engaged in the subjugation and enslavement of human beings; or who oppressed women, inhibiting societal progress; or whose actions led to genocide; or who otherwise significantly diminished the opportunities of those amongst us to the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED:** That said process shall be led by a blue-ribbon panel\*, whose membership shall be established by the Superintendent of Schools and ratified by the San Francisco Board of Education no later than the beginning of the 2018-19 school year; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That said blue-ribbon panel shall offer findings and recommendations, through the Superintendent of Schools to the San Francisco Board of Education regarding the potential renaming of SFUSD schools as soon as June, 2019, but no later than June, 2020, at which time the advising panel shall be dissolved; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED:** School communities interested in undergoing a process to change the school name for reasons unrelated to the purposes of this Resolution should reference and follow Board Policy (7310) for instructions on how to go about that process.

*(\*A blue-ribbon panel is a group of exceptional people appointed to investigate, study or analyze a given question. Blue-ribbon panels generally have a degree of independence from political influence or other authority, and such panels usually have no direct authority of their own. Their value comes from their ability to use their expertise to issue findings or recommendations which can then be used by those with decision-making power to act.)*

- Referred by order of the Chair on 4/10/18 to a meeting of Committee of the Whole
- Taken up at the Committee of the Whole meeting of 5/15/18. Forwarded to the 5/22/18 Board meeting for action.

4/10/18