



School Renaming Request for Queen Victoria Public School

To: Planning and Priorities Committee

Date: May 19, 2021

Report No.: 05-21-4097

Strategic Directions

- Transform Student Learning
- Create a Culture for Student and Staff Well-Being
- Provide Equity of Access to Learning Opportunities for All Students
- Build Strong Relationships and Partnerships Within School Communities to Support Student Learning and Well-Being

Recommendation

It is recommended that a school renaming committee be formed at Queen Victoria Public School in accordance with Policy P047, Naming Schools and Special Purpose Areas for the purpose of recommending a change of name for Queen Victoria Public School.

Context

Queen Victoria Public School was founded in the Parkdale community in 1887. The school was rebuilt in 1999. The school serves a diverse school community and celebrates that diversity through community events, advocacy work and a commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppressive practices in curriculum and instruction, staff learning and community engagement.

The School Council and the Black Student Success Committee have expressed an interest to begin the process of changing the school name. Under our current policies, a request of this nature can be initiated from a school or local community. Approval of the Board is required before any process may be implemented to determine and propose a new name. Initial discussions occurred with the School Council first on October 21, 2020 and then again on January 27, 2021. The response from School Council has been excitement at the possibility of being able to engage in the school renaming process. The desire to have a new name is representative of a “fresh start” for the school community amongst a range of other positive changes.

As stated in communication with the Queen Victoria PS School Council and the Queen Victoria Public School Black Student Success Committee co-chairs:

Our Queen Victoria school community, as you know, has withstood devastating challenges over the past year - feeling the unfortunate impacts of ETFO job action, ongoing experiences of anti-Black racism, and the Covid-19 pandemic.

But it is also true that the proud and hopeful spirit of Parkdale Village runs through our school community. It's a spirit that our administration has harnessed in envisioning our school as a centre of excellence that exemplifies and inspires the highest standards for literacy, equity and community-building.

We feel strongly that this is a fitting time to rebrand the school with a new name that honours and reflects these values, while stimulating renewed energy, sense of connection, and focus on a positive way forward - for our school community and neighbourhood.

It is recognized that a motion was approved by Board on April 21, 2021 [Renaming Schools Celebrating the Diversity of Toronto](#) which states:

Whereas, the Toronto District School Board has 583 schools, located in every community across Toronto; and

Whereas, school names are an opportunity to teach students about their community's history and place and their community's leaders and heroes; and

Whereas, there are few new school naming opportunities due to the small number of schools being opened each year; and

Whereas, few schools are named after celebrated Indigenous or Black Leaders or Leaders of colour; and

Whereas, some school names do not reflect the values of contemporary Toronto; and

Whereas, some schools are named after people with a racist legacy; and

Whereas, policy P047, Naming of Schools and Special Purpose Areas and procedure PR592, Naming of Schools and Special Purpose Areas create impediments to review or change school names and themselves might be characterized as systemically racist policies;

Whereas, based on the Board's policy review schedule, review of policy P047 is currently under Phase 3 of the policy review process;

Therefore, be it resolved:

- A. That a special purpose reference group comprised of students, parents, TDSB educators, community members, appropriate qualified experts and individuals involved in anti-racism work, be established:
 - a. to inform the consultation process;
 - b. to propose amendments to policy P047 and procedure PR592, Naming of Schools and Special Purpose Areas, so that school naming or renaming can be made from time-to-time to reflect the diversity of the City;

- c. to provide a proposal for a city-wide review of all school names so that TDSB schools reflect the diversity of Toronto's success;

- B. That the reference group present a report to the Governance and Policy Committee no later than June 30, 2021.

The School Council and the Black Student Success Committee look forward to the opportunity to continue the momentum and excitement of a school renaming early in the 2021/2022 school year as a critical moment for moving beyond recent negative incidents at the school.

Given the concerns expressed by students and staff at Queen Victoria PS, it is believed that engaging in the school renaming process without delay, and in partnership with community members, will support the rebuilding of trust given what has transpired in the school community.

Action Plan and Associated Timeline

Timeline	Action Plan	Staff Responsible
May 31, 2021	Once approved at board, a school naming committee of trustees, staff school council representatives, and a representative of a local ratepayer or recognized umbrella community group, will be formed to consider possible names for the school.	Superintendent Debbie Donsky

Resource Implications

Changing signage at the school

Communications Considerations

- Community consultation including parents, families, local residents.
- Communications with City Councillor

Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)

Policy P047 - Naming Schools and Special Purpose Areas

Appendices

- Appendix A: Renaming Schools Celebrating the Diversity of Toronto

From

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