

**NAMING OF FACILITY**

**Purpose**

It is the intent of the Governing Board to name schools and other facilities in the district in a manner that evokes pride in students, parents/guardians, and the community and school employees. Personal prejudice or favoritism, political pressure and current fashion shall not influence the selection process.

Our schools belong to the entire community and serve as centers of unity. As a matter of principle, the naming of a school should be the result of an open and participatory process. Furthermore, schools are symbols of non-partisan unity within their neighborhoods and this policy intends to protect schools from becoming objects of conflict or controversy through the naming process for political or personal causes. Any proposal to name a school may be disqualified by the Governing Board on this basis.

**Naming New Schools**

The Superintendent will direct the appropriate district administrator to lead a process culminating in a recommended name for the new school. A recommendation regarding school colors will also be submitted to the Board. The selection process will include consideration of suggestions from representatives of parents/guardians of students who reside within the anticipated boundaries of the new school.

The Superintendent shall maintain procedures for the creation of an ad hoc committee that will develop recommendations for naming a new school. The ad hoc committee will include representatives from the district staff, parents/guardians, students and community members. They will be responsible for receiving and screening school name suggestions and submitting the recommendation to the Board for its consideration and approval.

Composition of the Ad Hoc Committee responsible for recommending a school name to the Board shall be as follows:

- 3 students who reside within the anticipated boundaries of the new school
- 1 teacher from the appropriate grade level
- 1 classified representative
- 1 principal from the appropriate grade level
- 2 community representatives

**NAMING OF FACILITY** (continued)

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| 3 | parents/guardians of students who reside within the anticipated boundaries |
| 1 | architect assigned to the project  |
| 3 | Governing Board members (policy committee representatives)                 |

**General Guidelines**

The administration will establish an appropriate timeline for the naming of a new school.

The public shall receive two public readings and input on the recommended name prior to the official Board approval to name a school.

Final authority for naming schools rests with the Board.

**Naming Categories Authorized**

1. Names of recognized historical or geographical landmarks or local regions.
2. Names which reflect the character of the community culturally and historically, or which identify it by reference to indigenous and characteristic flora and fauna.
3. Naming a school after an individual.

The desire to name a school after an individual is an act to specifically honor one person. This inherently limits the extent to which a broad-based school community associates with an individual person. Because high schools and middle schools serve a broad area of feeder schools and neighborhoods, they will not be named after an individual or family. Naming an elementary school after an individual is deemed a highly unique and exceptional honor and shall be considered only after meeting specific standards and criteria.

## 3.1 Standards and Criteria

A proposal to name an elementary school in honor of an individual person can only be considered as a memorial honor for a deceased individual and cannot be proposed until at least one year after death. Additionally, such a proposal must meet all (each and every one) of the following criteria to be considered for approval by the Board.

**NAMING OF FACILITY** (continued)

The proposed individual must:

- 3.1.1 have been a resident of Visalia Unified School District. A school will not be named after a state or national figure, regardless of their contributions/achievements, unless they lived in and worked to specifically improve the communities served by the Visalia Unified School District.
- 3.1.2 have made significant contributions to improving the community in each of the following areas:
  - a. Education (local public schools within Visalia Unified School District)
  - b. Community Development
  - c. Health and Safety of community youth
  - d. Volunteer Youth Organizations
- 3.1.3 have made contributions and participated consistently in community improvements for multiple decades.

**Naming Restrictions**

The Board has placed the following limitations on names suggested and will not accept any suggested school name which violates these limitations:

1. Names of distinguished men and women who do not meet the criteria for naming of a new school, yet have made outstanding contributions locally, state or nationally, will be limited to specific buildings/facilities/athletic grounds within a school site.
2. No school will be given the name of a commercial development unless the name existed in the area prior to the development.
3. No middle school or high school will be named after an individual or family.
4. In honor of history, tradition, neighborhood, school, and community identity, names of existing schools and facilities cannot be changed.
5. In the event that the removal of a school site or facility name is deemed necessary by the Board, the Superintendent will propose an appropriate amendment to the Board policy.

**Commemorative Plaques**

The commemorative plaque shall be placed close to the main entrance of the facility. It shall acknowledge the Board and their offices and the Administration that took the action to move forward with the construction of the facility.

*Legal Reference: see next page*

**NAMING OF FACILITY** (continued)

*Legal Reference:*

EDUCATION CODE

*35160 Authority of governing boards*

Policy  
adopted: April 14, 1997  
revised: March 28, 2006  
revised: February 28, 2017

**VISALIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
Visalia, California