



High School Name Change



Background

- June-December 2020: School board received concerns asserting a violation of naming policy.
- October-December 2020: Administration provided historical resources for review by the board.
- December 2020: Board voted to change high school name based on naming policy.
- December 2020-January 2021: Administration developed a process for the name change for board review.

Timeline

School District 197 High School Name Change Timeline (2021)



Process: Adapted Decision-Making Framework

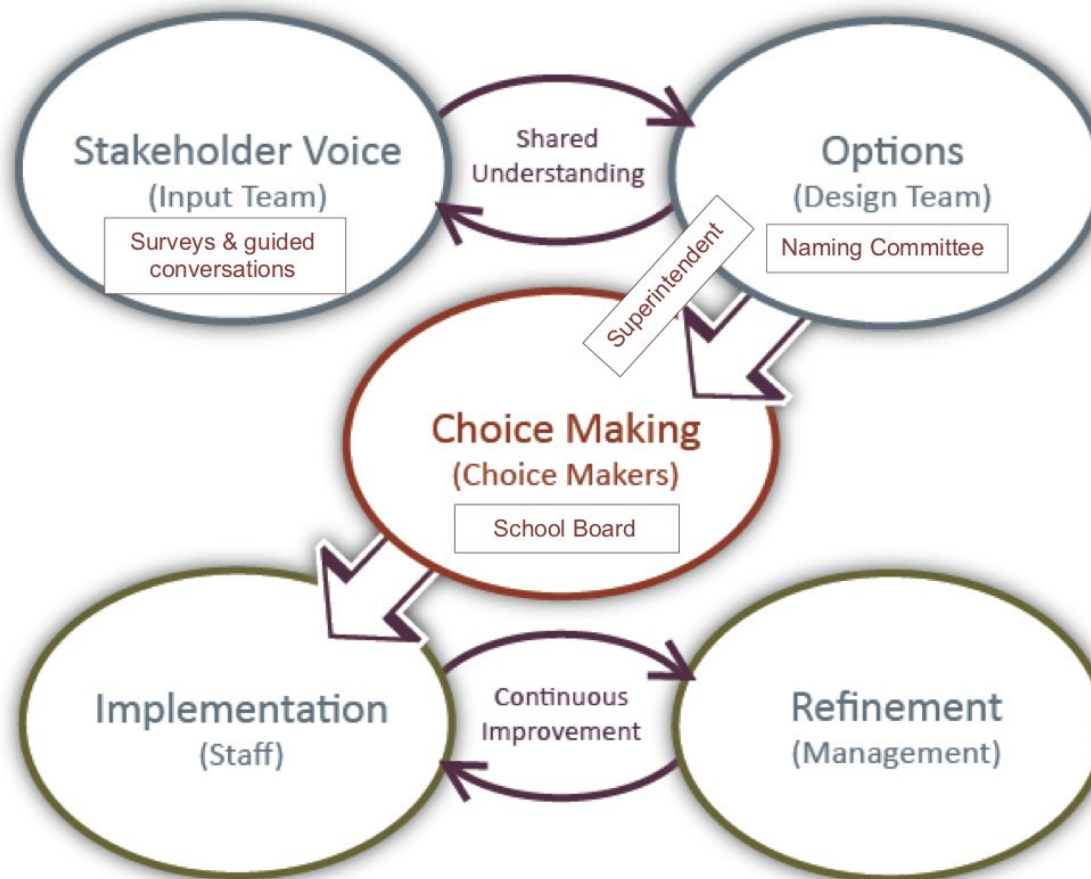


Decision Making

Part of the FrameWorks Series

Used For:

- Choice Making
- Managing Participant's Time and Roles
- Clarification of Authority



Parameters for the Process:

Guiding Change Document (See Name Change Website)



GC for High School Name Change Process - Focus Question: How do we transparently and inclusively develop name options for the high school that aligns with the strategic framework of School District 197?

Context and Reality (The Why)	Unacceptable Means (Not Hows)	Desired Results (The What)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After a review of historical resources, the board determined the current high school name (Henry Sibley) violates the board policy given that Henry Sibley does not meet the required criteria of "being a person of good character" based on his treatment of the Dakota people. On Dec. 8, 2020, the school board put in motion a process to rename the high school that includes stakeholder engagement and the formation of a committee to make recommendations to the school board regarding possible new names. There are mixed feelings about the current name, with some finding the name hurtful and others wishing the name remained the same. There are some who feel the question should have been posed to the public in a referendum-style vote and/or there should have been more communication and opportunities for input prior to the vote. The board determined that the analysis of the board policy, specifically regarding the analysis of a historical figure's character, was not one that would be appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name options that violate current policy. Blaming and shaming those participating in the process. Options that include the current school name. Options that are named after an individual. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The committee will follow the process approved by the board. Transparent and inclusive process representative of student, family, and staff voices, as well as some representation from alumni and other community members. Name options for the school board to consider that meet current district policy and strategic framework. Respectful dialogue and consideration by those participating in the process (committee members, meetings, conversations) as described in norms to be developed by the committee. 2-3 options are presented to the board, all of which should be compatible with the Warriors mascot. At least 75% of the committee must endorse each option that will be forwarded to the board. Options that avoid cultural appropriation. Stakeholders broadly knew about the naming process and had the opportunity for feedback and/or input. Name options of which we can be proud and

Name Committee: Composition

- 35 committee members represented staff, parents/families, students, community members, alumni parents, and alumni.
- Committee members reflected a diversity of demographics, perspectives, school affiliation, and city of residence.
- The committee members identified themselves using the following demographics (many representing more than one):
 - Parents:** Elementary (5), Middle School (7), High School (12), Alumni (4)
 - Staff:** Early Learning (1), Elementary (1), Middle School (1), High School (5), District (1)
 - Students:** Middle School (3), High School (4)
 - Alumni:** 7
 - Community Members:** 26

Name Committee: Developing Name Options

- Four meetings between April 22 and June 17
- Reviewed Guiding Change document and community name suggestions in early spring and developed themes around those suggestions
- Reviewed other resources and information to help with the name option development, such information about the history, topography, and geography of the local area
- Thoughtful discussions and debate, as a diverse group of stakeholders, to move toward a set of five name options that were shared with the broader community for feedback

Name Committee: Narrowing the Options

- Took seriously the challenging task of developing name options that would be acceptable, and not harmful, to the broad and diverse communities represented across the school district as well as meet the school board's parameters
- Participated as facilitators and note takers in feedback sessions
- Narrowed down the name options to three (June 17) to present to the school board after discussion, debate, review of survey and session feedback data, many more name ideas, and exploration of new ideas

Name Committee: Challenging

- Parameters
 - Naming after a person
 - Mascot limitation
 - Cultural appropriation
- How to best honor Dakota/Native American people, history, and past as part of this process
 - “The most challenging part of this process was knowing that because we were forced to keep the mascot as the Warriors, we had to eliminate lots of really worthy names--names that could have been restorative for the Native people who have been harmed for so long.”
- Strong differences of opinion about the name and mascot among the committee and community (with some wanting a mascot change and some having joined against the name changing).
- Narrowing down the name options, feeling as though were left with “safe” choices.

Name Committee: Surprising

- How challenging it was to find names that would work, please committee members, and honor the school's history
 - How difficult it was to come up with names that reflect and honor the diversity of our communities
- That some people on the committee were opposed to the name change
- How often the conclusions of the small groups were similar...the three final names, or at least very similar names, bubbled up, independently, from multiple small groups
- The amount of diversity on the committee and the fact that everyone so was respectful of each other no matter the age, position, or demographic
- That the mascot would not be part of the change

Name Committee: Valuable

- The eloquence, passion, and intelligence of the student participants
- The discussions: hearing the different perspectives and ideas from others among the committee and community
 - “In some cases it has reaffirmed my belief in how hard we need to continue to work to make sure marginalized voices are heard, acknowledged and respected.”
 - “The number of people who stuck with the process, even after the last meeting was extended way beyond the scheduled time... Gives me faith that we can come together, even when we disagree.”
 - “We had really difficult conversations, especially about the legacy of the mascot and emblem; while these exchanges were messy and often exhausting, I think many of us did our best to fully represent our district community with integrity, patience and a willingness to learn from one another.”
 - “Ability to voice one's opinions and concerns comes hand-in-hand with very open mind and profound listening skills, where we are able to hear and accept variety of sometimes complete opposite opinions and points.”

Feedback Survey: Background

- The High School Name Feedback Survey was open between May 25 to June 11 (online and hard copy upon request).
- A postcard mailer was sent to all community households (14,500 in English/615 in Spanish) with information on the name change process and options for completing the feedback survey.
- Hard copies of completed survey were manually entered and included in the overall results.
- 4,182 surveys were completed.
- This was not a representative sample survey of the community, but rather the volunteer opinions of survey respondents.

Feedback Survey: Analysis

- The data was reviewed in total (4,182 surveys) and by removing duplicate IP addresses resulting in differences of no more than 1% for all questions. Therefore, all 4,182 surveys were included in the analysis. (An IP address is specific to the WiFi network a device is on and not to a specific device.)
- Within the responses from duplicate IP addresses, there were 147 surveys that were completed from the same IP address and had all the same answers. When those 147 were removed from the data, again, the answers for all the questions were all within 1%.
- The data showed that there were 392 (9.3%) of the responses where all the questions were rated either strongly disagree or disagree. (The majority of those responses also had a comment that suggested the name should not be changed.)
- This summary reports the close-ended responses for the total percent of responses of “strongly agree” and “agree” combined.
- Respondents self identified demographic information and could select more than one category: student, staff member, former staff member, alumni, parent of students who currently attend ISD 197 (early, elem, middle, HS), parent of students who graduated from ISD 197, resident, none of the above.
- 833 new name options submitted via the survey.

Results by Current Students, Staff, Parents and Other (% Strongly Agree & % Agree)

	Proud		Reflects Our Community		Reflects our Strategic Framework		Stand the Test of Time	
	Current	Other	Current	Other	Current	Other	Current	Other
Hillside	43%	22%	35%	18%	32%	18%	49%	29%
Two Rivers	42%	39%	43%	39%	33%	32%	44%	43%
Mni Sota	16%	17%	18%	17%	19%	19%	15%	15%
West Heights	46%	42%	51%	46%	40%	37%	48%	44%
Ohoda	25%	23%	23%	21%	25%	23%	22%	21%

Current = Respondents who identified as current students, parents and staff = 1,901

Other = 2,281

Total Survey Results = 4,182

(% Strongly Agree & % Agree)

	Proud	Reflects Our Community	Reflects our Strategic Framework	Stand the Test of Time
Hillside	32%	26%	24%	38%
Two Rivers	40%	41%	33%	44%
Mni Sota	17%	17%	19%	15%
West Heights	44%	48%	39%	46%
Ohoda	24%	22%	24%	21%

Results by Students, Parents, Staff, Alumni*

(% Strongly Agree & % Agree)

	Proud				Reflects Our Community				Reflects our Strategic Framework				Stand the Test of Time			
	Students	Parents	Staff	Alumni	Students	Parents	Staff	Alumni	Students	Parents	Staff	Alumni	Students	Parents	Staff	Alumni
Hillside	53%	38%	38%	24%	43%	30%	33%	20%	41%	30%	25%	20%	58%	45%	43%	31%
Two Rivers	35%	47%	45%	35%	35%	48%	45%	35%	28%	37%	34%	30%	36%	50%	46%	40%
Mni Sota	15%	17%	19%	17%	18%	17%	19%	18%	15%	21%	21%	19%	15%	14%	17%	16%
West Heights	43%	46%	49%	41%	47%	51%	56%	46%	40%	40%	41%	37%	44%	49%	53%	44%
Ohoda	26%	24%	26%	23%	25%	21%	25%	22%	23%	26%	29%	24%	25%	20%	23%	22%

* Note: Respondents can appear in more than one category

Feedback Sessions

- Facilitated group conversations between May 26 and June 9.
 - Secondary students randomly selected and invited to participate in school-based sessions.
 - Parents randomly selected and invited to participate in an evening virtual feedback session.
 - Staff invited to join one of three staff sessions (scheduled around the variety of school schedules in the district.)
 - Two evening community-wide sessions (one virtual and one at the high school.)
- Three main questions asked, in addition to collecting alternative name ideas:
 - What are the strengths of each option?
 - What are your concerns about each option?
 - How might you improve each option?
- Some members of the Name Committee assisted in the facilitation of small groups and note taking.
- Feedback Sessions Report provided to Name Committee for name option refinement.

Feedback Sessions - Themes

- The strengths of the three options were shared as part of the information from the feedback sessions. Those strengths will be shared by the committee representatives tonight.
- Information from the feedback conversations helped the committee to learn:
 - The difficulty and concerns expressed by some of pronouncing/mispronouncing some of the names, as well as potentially misspelling the names.
 - That one of the names, when spoken aloud, would not be ideal as it sounded like an inappropriate word in another language. (That name was taken out of consideration.)
 - The competing expectations of those who want the name to change (to honor the Dakota people) and those who want the name to remain as is. (Which also was shared by those on the committee.)
 - A desire to find a name that includes the many cultures and ethnicities of the students and families of the school district.

Three Name Options Submitted to the School Board by the Name Committee

- Two names met the threshold set by the board of at least 75% of committee support:
 - West Heights High School
 - Two Rivers High School
- One name name was just short of the 75%, but the committee wanted to submit the name to Board as well:
 - Hillside High School

Why West Heights?

- Geographic position on the border of West St. Paul and Mendota Heights (Delaware Avenue)
- Represents the location of the school
- Blending of and honoring the two largest communities in the district and the two communities where the high school has been and is located
 - “The other communities are not lesser, but are a part of the larger communities. It is like a blended family. No one wants to be ignored or under represented by their family, but in order to be a blended family, there has to be compromise, collaboration and looking out for each other in order for it to be a happy, healthy functioning family.”
- Had broad support from community in the feedback survey

Why Two Rivers?

- Representative of the actual union of two rivers in the area. The archetype of the river is rebirth and renewal.
- The name reflects the submissions that referenced the confluence and had strong support from community feedback.
- Symbolic significance: suggests the theme of unity, and the merging of past and future ideas about our identity as a district community.
 - “It because of the confluence of these two rivers and their navigability that this area was inhabited—first by the Dakota, and later by the traders, farmers and military that settled here.”
- “The Duality of our narratives and unification... The name Two Rivers High School reminds us that we must find a way to move with the current instead of fighting to stand still. There is no shame in renaming our school. There is pride in learning to gracefully move with the river of time as it flows ever onward.”

Why Hillside?

- Strong support from students
 - “Hillside was very popular among the students and community which is very important because the students are the people who will be graduating from the school and will have to say its name and be proud of the name.”
- Defining feature of the land the school sits on and is geographically accurate
- References the geographic location of the high school, and connects to the name of the athletic complex (dubbed "The Hill")
- Fond stories of “the hill” referenced in feedback

Final Thoughts & Considerations

Communications

Committee Application Communication

Hank Herald, social media (district and schools), district/school homepage news, District Update, Warrior Weekly, and principal messaging

Name Idea Collection Communication

District Update, Warrior Weekly, social media (district and schools), district/school homepage news, District Update, Warrior Weekly

Feedback Survey

Postcard to all households, District Update, Warrior Weekly, social media (district and schools), district/school homepage news, District Update, Warrior Weekly