

Comment Period Opens on Proposed Name for Haight Elementary School

Alameda – January 24, 2019 – The Board of Education for the Alameda Unified School District (AUSD) is now taking public comment on the proposed new name for Haight Elementary School.

Parent/guardians, students, and community members began advocating for a new name for the school last December, when they learned that Henry Huntly Haight, the state governor after whom the school was named, espoused racist views and opposed giving Asians, Native Americans, and formerly enslaved Africans the right to vote.

The proposed name, “Love Elementary School,” is the result of a year-long process that included a petition calling for a new name, the formation of a renaming committee, the development of criteria for a new name, and a six-week public name submission period.

More than 200 names were submitted by the community. Of those, the Haight Renaming Committee chose four that fit the criteria it had developed: Don Grant and Niel Tam (submitted by adults) and “Love” and “Ohlone” (submitted by students).

Haight elementary students, family members, and staff received [Voter Guides](#) on the candidate names and had an opportunity to vote on those names in a “primary election” held November 6, 2018. “Love” won the primary election.

Name	Percentage of Votes
Love Elementary	37%
Don Grant Elementary	23%
Ohlone Elementary	20%
Nielsen Tam Elementary	17%

On November 15, Haight elementary students, family members, alumni, and neighbors had the opportunity to vote in a “general election” between the old name (“Haight Elementary School”) and the new name (“Love Elementary School”).

Election materials distributed before the election noted that keeping “Haight” as a name shows respect for history, tradition, and a former governor of California. Election materials stated that “Love” is a suitable name for a school:

Because love is at the center of learning, and love should be built into our school in every way possible. School is a place where you can show love for yourself and your family, your teachers, and your students and peers. Love of our school means love of teaching and learning, of reading, writing, playing, laughing, and fun. Naming our school for Love shows that everyone belongs here, that we can give love to those who are hurting and to those who believe other things than we do. At a school named Love we teach and learn love for our neighbors, love for our city, love for our country, and love for the Earth.

More than 70% of the voters chose “Love.”

Voting Group	Haight	Love	Abstentions
T-Kindergarten	0	22	
Kindergarten	9	75	
1 st Grade	13	72	
2 nd Grade	17	58	
3 rd Grade	33	26	
4 th Grade	31	41	
5 th Grade	40	28	
Teachers & Staff	14	13	1
Parent & Guardians	43	125	
Alumni	1	4	
Local Businesses	1	0	
Neighbors	1	7	
Total	203	471	

More information on the process is available on both the district's [Haight Renaming Committee](#) web page and the [Haight Name Selection Process web page](#).

The Haight Renaming Committee submitted a recommendation to change the name to "Love Elementary School" to Superintendent Sean McPhetridge on January 15. The superintendent, in turn, presented the name to the Board of Education at its January 22 public meeting. The committee also gave a presentation on the name change process at that meeting.

The [AUSD regulation that governs school names](#) mandates a comment period for a new name that runs, at a minimum, from March 1 to April 15. The comment period for the Haight renaming is open as of January 25. Comments can be sent to Board of Education members; their contact information is [here](#).

"The Haight Renaming Committee followed AUSD's regulations for proposing a school name change," says Superintendent McPhetridge. "I thank the committee for its efforts to run a democratic process that emphasizes community engagement, student voice, and social justice. That democratic process now enters the next phase of community engagement with this open comment process. I encourage our community to send their thoughts and comments to our Board members."

