

Haight Renaming Committee Seeks Name Suggestions

In December 2017, the public learned that Henry Huntly Haight, after whom Haight Elementary School is named, held racist views.

Haight, who was governor of California from 1867 to 1871, opposed Congress's Reconstruction plan after the Civil War, saying the policy deprived southerners of their constitutional rights. He spoke against allowing African-Americans, Native Americans, and Asians to vote, claiming suffrage would "end in the degradation of the white race and the speedy destruction of government."

And he opposed allowing various races to live together in America, saying "... it is not the dictate of ... sound policy, to locate together in one community races so radically dissimilar in physical, mental, and moral constitution, as the Caucasian and African, or Mongolian. The attempt to mix these races is in contravention of natural laws."

In response to the new information about Haight, a petition asking for a new name for the school was presented to the principal, who convened a "Renaming Committee" in the spring of 2018.

Through the spring and summer, the committee met several times to brainstorm ideas for engaging Haight families, students, staff, alumni, and neighbors in the renaming process. Through mid-October, committee members will be reaching out to stakeholders to talk to them about best ways to get involved.

AUSD's Renaming Policy

The committee has been following the AUSD policy that dictates how AUSD schools can be re-named. Under that policy, a school can be renamed for:

- Individuals, living or deceased, who have made contributions to the community, county, state, nation, or world
- The geographic area in which the school or building is located
- Curricular concentration or concepts or approaches to education

Based on these parameters, the committee members have identified the criteria and themes they would like the new name to incorporate. Those criteria are:

- Unity
- Diversity
- Inclusivity
- Community leadership
- Educational involvement
- Local connection and/or impact
- Devotion to civil rights/social justice/equity

The Process

Over the next six weeks, students, family members, alumni, and community members are welcome to submit names (or opinions about renaming the school) at: renamehaight@alamedaunified.org. There is also a box in the office into which they can put names. The deadline for submitting names is **5 pm on October 12**.

Once all the suggestions are collected, the committee will select a name and then survey the Haight community about whether it wants to a) preserve the Haight name or b) adopt the new name.

Legacy

If the school is renamed, the committee feels strongly that it does not want to erase the history and legacy of "Haight Elementary School." Instead, the committee plans to solicit and display memories and photos of the school, as well as put up plaques with a history of the school, including why it was renamed. When that process begins, committee members will reach out the community for suggestions and materials.

You can find more information about Henry Haight, the renaming process, the renaming committee, and ways to get involved on our [website](#).