



Office of Capital Planning

Delavern Stanislaus, Chief of Capital Planning

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
2300 Washington Street, 5th Floor
Roxbury, Massachusetts 02119

capitalplanning@bostonpublicschools.org
617-635-9000

www.bostonpublicschools.org

To: Boston School Committee

From: Delavern Stanislaus, Chief of Capital Planning

Cc: Mary Skipper, Superintendent, Samuel DePina, Deputy Superintendent of Operations, Kristen Weeks, Region 5 School Superintendent, Danladi Bobbit, Philbrick Principal, Meghan Welch, Sumner Principal, and the Philbrick and Sumner School Site Councils

Re: Naming of the Philbrick and Sumner Merged School Communities

Date: February 26, 2025

On Wednesday, February 26, 2025, the Boston Public Schools and Superintendent Skipper will present a proposal to name the merged Philbrick and Sumner school communities the Sarah Roberts Elementary School.

School staff, students, and community stakeholders were deeply involved in the process of identifying options for naming the new school. In partnership with the Community Engagement Team, the Philbrick and Sumner school communities and School Site Councils held 6 meetings to develop potential school names and collect feedback. Over 300 members of the school communities gave input through surveys. On February 11, 2025, the schools' School Site Councils from the Philbrick and Sumner voted to adopt the new name - Sarah Roberts Elementary School - symbolizing the vision for their unified school community. The proposal now requires School Committee approval per [Circular SUP-04](#).

About Sarah Roberts:

In 1847, Benjamin Roberts applied for his daughter, five year-old Sarah Roberts, to attend a white school closer to their home. The Boston Primary School Committee denied his request. Roberts v. City of Boston, was the first school desegregation lawsuit in the United States. Charles Sumner represented the Roberts family. Six years later in 1855, segregated public schools in Massachusetts were abolished. John Philbrick became Superintendent of Boston Schools in 1856. He was a revolutionary educator and presided over Boston Schools at the dawn of their desegregation. He also introduced grades in the place of one room schoolhouses. Honoring Sarah Roberts memorializes the bravery of the students and families that carved the path to desegregation in the Boston Public Schools as well as the unified history of the Sumner and Philbrick schools. It also contributes to the small but growing number of BPS schools named

Boston Public Schools

Mary Skipper, Superintendent

Boston School Committee

Jeri Robinson, Chairperson

City of Boston

Michelle Wu, Mayor



after groundbreaking African American women (Muriel Snowden, Ruth Batson, Lilla Frederick, Dr. Catherine Ellison and Rosa Parks (Ellison/Parks)).