An architectural rendering of a school building. The building is a mix of brick and light-colored stone or concrete. It features a prominent set of wide stone steps leading to a central entrance. To the right, there is a modern glass-walled extension. An American flag is visible on the left. The scene is set on a paved plaza with several black bollards. A semi-transparent white box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the main title and date.

Naming of the Philbrick & Sumner Merged School Community Proposal: Sarah Roberts Elementary School

February 26, 2025

Reminder: Merger Implementation Timeline



- **May 2023:** Philbrick-Sumner merger approved by School Committee
- **June 2024:** Construction began on the Washington Irving Elementary School building including a new Media Center, 2 Science, Technology, and Engineering Classrooms, 2 music rooms, 2 art rooms, an updated gym and auditorium as well as renovated classrooms throughout with new school furniture and technology
- **November 2024:** Spanish Dual Language Program was approved by DESE for the new merged school
- **March 2025:** Anticipated announcement of a school leader
- **Beginning of SY25-26:** Anticipated completion of construction; unified school community begins

Naming Process



The Philbrick and Sumner school communities, the Community Engagement Team, and both School Site Councils held 6 Public Meetings, including:

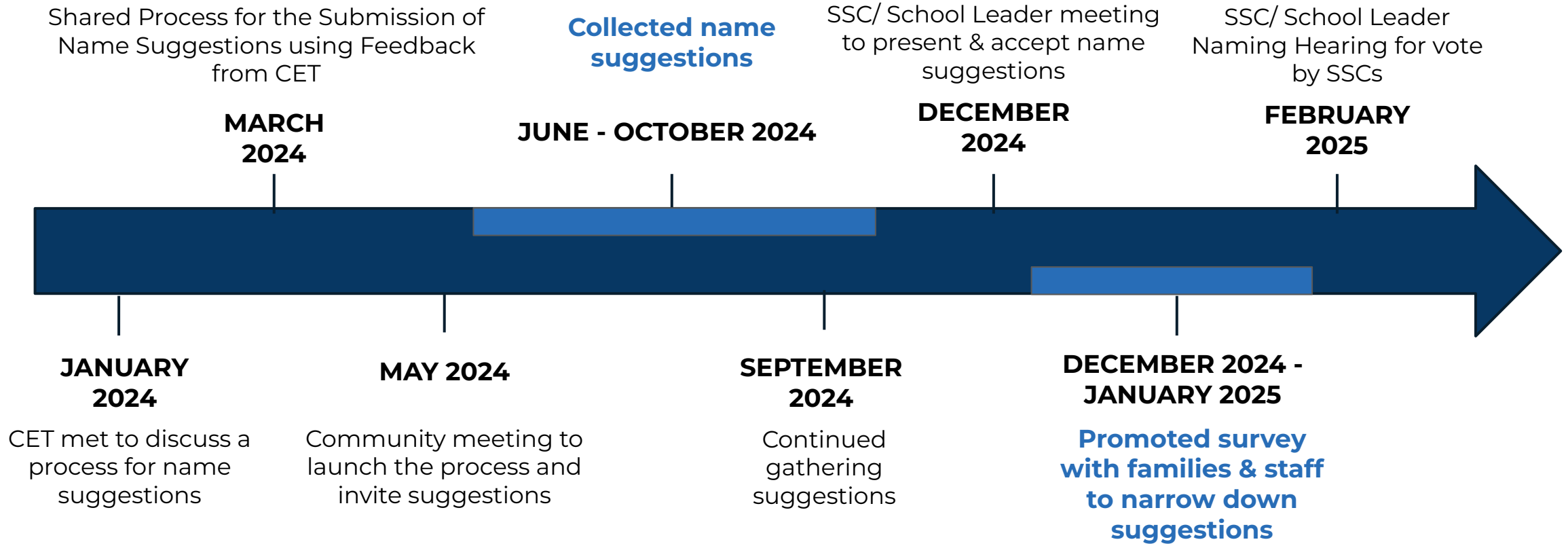
- [Community Engagement Team meeting](#) to discuss renaming the merged school;
- [Community meeting](#) to launch the naming process;
- [Joint School Site Council meeting](#) to accept name suggestions and for the SSCs to narrow the list down to 7 possible name options (Slides 25-38); and
- [Public Naming Hearing](#) for the SSCs to vote on a final name suggestion

76 survey responses were collected to gather proposed names and 22 names were presented to the School Site Councils.

303 survey responses were collected to narrow the names from 7 to 3 possible options.



Naming Timeline



Proposal to School Site Councils



“Honoring Sarah Roberts keeps our history as the Sumner and Philbrick schools alive, AND it adds to the small number of BPS schools named after women and African American historical figures. Please vote for Sarah Roberts! It’s time she won!”

– **Carla Hosking Majovski, Marian Hosking Majovski, Robert Majovski, and Rosy Hosking**

About Sarah Roberts



1847: Benjamin Roberts applied to the Boston Primary School Committee for his daughter, five year-old Sarah Roberts, to attend a white school close to their home.

- Robert Morris and **Charles Sumner** represented the Roberts family. Though the Committee denied their request, the fight continued.
- Roberts v. City of Boston was **the first school desegregation lawsuit** in the United States.

1855: Segregated public schools in Massachusetts were abolished.



The Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change at the University of Memphis ([YouTube](#))

About Sarah Roberts: Continued



1856: John Philbrick became Superintendent of Boston Schools.

He was a Boston school teacher and educational leader who served as superintendent from 1856 to 1878.

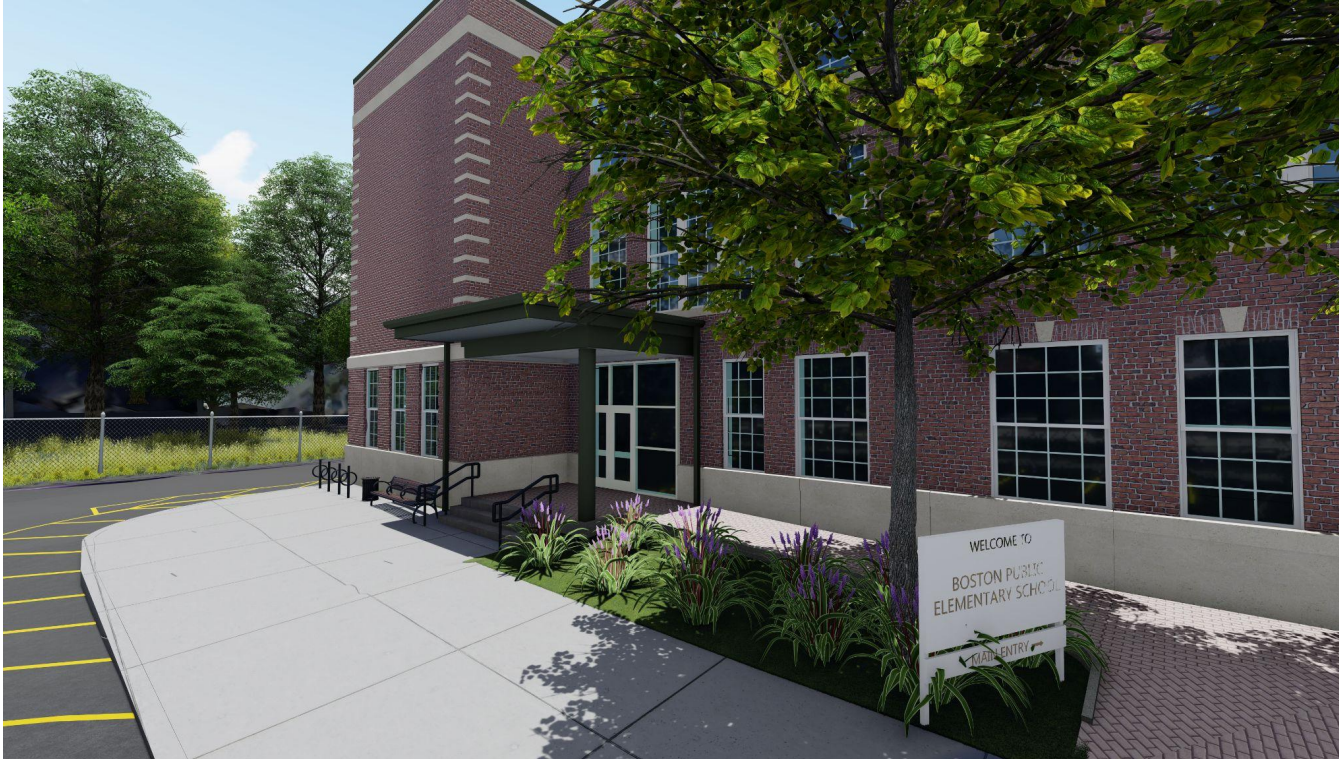
Naming the school after Sarah Roberts **honors the City's ongoing fight for true racial equity** while keeping the history of both the Sumner and Philbrick schools alive.

This name would also add to the small number of BPS schools named after women and African-American historical figures – and children.



Artwork by E. B. Lewis from the picture book, *The First Step: How One Girl Put Segregation on Trial*

Next Steps



Rendering of the back entrance of the renovated school building

Assuming an affirmative School Committee vote, the District will take steps in partnership with the school community and the City's Public Facilities Department to update the facility with appropriate signage and update appropriate operational systems.

In the fall, there will be an opening ceremony to announce and celebrate the new school.