

# Indian Head Elementary School

Charles County Board Presentation  
January 14, 2025

# Charles County Public Schools

## Board Policy 7230

Prior to deciding whether to rename a school currently named after a person, the Board shall consider:

- the degree to which the use of the name affirms the school's educational mission, the school community's values, and the Board's core values;
- the context of the individual's life related to the historical era in which the person lived;
- the individual's legacy and significant contributions to Charles County, the state, or the nation; and
- the reason, if known, why the name was originally chosen.

# Charles County Public Schools

## Mission and Core Values

The mission of Charles County Public Schools is to provide an opportunity for all school-aged children to receive an academically challenging, quality education that builds character, equips for leadership, and prepares for life, in an environment that is safe and conducive to learning.

1. The Board values collaborative, meaningful relationships with all stakeholders to include parents/legal guardians, students, teachers, staff, administrators, Board members, state and local elected officials, and members of the community at large.
2. The Board believes in equity for all students, understanding that some students require additional resources in order to receive a quality education.
3. The Board values equity as a personal and professional responsibility and will strive to create inclusive learning environments in which every child is able to achieve her/his highest potential.
4. The Board will maintain rigorous standards and high expectations for all students as keys to academic excellence and lifelong learning.
5. The Board believes there is value in diversity and all students and staff members are endowed with unique talents and entitled to mutual respect.
6. The Board values and promotes practices that ensure a safe and orderly learning and work environment.
7. The Board will responsibly advocate for funding to operate an outstanding school system and expects to be held accountable for allocating that funding to meet system needs.

# Indian Head Elementary School

## Mission

Our mission at Indian Head Elementary School is to provide an academically challenging, quality education. We will use technologically embedded instruction to close the achievement gap and exceed state standards. As a school, we will provide a safe environment that promotes mutual respect and responsibility between home and school.

## Value Statements

- Children come first.
- Children are our link to the future; therefore, they are the mutual responsibility of the parents, school, and the community.
- Staff and students have a right to a safe and secure learning environment.
- Students recognize the intrinsic value of being a positive contributor to school and community.
- Closing the achievement gap guarantees that students leaving our school will read, write, compute, and speak to the best of their abilities.
- Staff must be knowledgeable of the County and State Educational requirements (Common Core Curriculum) in order to provide quality education and ensure students' academic success.
- Technology is an important educational enhancement and necessary for our students' preparation for the future.
- Providing parents and families with knowledge and support positively affects the students.

# Chronology of Indian Head Elementary School

- **1900** – Indian Head School first proposed. (*students attended Glymont school at that time*).
- **1904** – The school was dedicated and opened. (eight elementary grade levels)
- **1919** – A new school was built and opened under the initiative of Captain Henry E. Lackey and other stakeholders of the community and Board of Education.
- **1954** – Junior and senior high students are moved from Indian Head School to Lackey High School (currently General Smallwood Middle School).
- **1976** – Indian Head Elementary School is opened at its current location.

*\*Historical records do not indicate the reason for the school's name other than its location, a naming protocol typical for CCPS schools in the early 1900's.*



**The first public school in Indian Head, Maryland (1904)**



Indian Head, Maryland

A "headland" is a point of land, usually high and rocky, that extends out into a body of water, formed when waves erode softer rock around a harder, more resistant rock formation, leaving a protruding section of land jutting out into the sea. These lofty outcrops are alternately referred to as capes, promontories or simply heads. They are a common feature due to the distinct geology of many coastlines.

- *National Geographic Society*

# Earlier Geographic Designations of the Region

A series of old charts show that Indian Head has had four names since its settlement in the colonial period. On 1776 charts it was called Indian Point; on a chart drawn in 1835, Indian Headlands; Indian Head Point in 1865; and finally Indian Head on area charts dated 1866.

Indian Land



*Johann Homann, 1736*

Indian Point



*Charles Desilver, 1856*

Indian Head



*Simon Martinet, 1866*

# Corroboration for the Geographical Interpretation

“...the vastly larger majority of our citizenry are more concerned that this name change will precipitate an unintended erasure of past references to “Indian Headlands”, a term which was used in historical records to identify the Southern Maryland region where our people resided historically for thousands of years.”

- *Francis Gray, Tribal Chair, Piscataway-Conoy Tribe (PCT)*

“A history of the development of the Cornwallis Neck prior to 1890 (implies) the origin of the name ‘Indian Head’. The name is a corruption of ‘Indian Headlands’. As the entire lower end of the peninsula was once an Indian reservation, the Indian portion of the name requires no further explanation.”

- *Joseph Y. Rowe, Educator/Historian*

"Head is . . . a shorthand geographical term for a piece of land that juts out. Neck is a long thin piece -- like the Northern Neck over in Virginia. Indian Neck in Virginia bears that name because that's where the Rappahannock and other coalescing tribes were pushed c. 1705. It doesn't look like a head so much as a neck.”

- *Dr. Julia King, Professor of Anthropology, St. Mary's College*

# Indian Head Elementary School

## Description History



### History

The school located near the Navy base is named after the town of Indian Head. Indian Head was once home to the Algonquin Indians. Legend says the town is named after a young Indian from a foreign tribe who was in love with an Algonquin princess. When his love for her was discovered, he was killed, and the town was literally named after his head.

- *Indian Head Elementary School website*

# Alternative Versions on the Origin of “Indian Head”

In the county levy for 1666, there is a curious mention of “Indian heads”, the meaning of which is ambiguous. It seems almost certain, however, that by “Indian heads” were meant the heads of wolves killed by Indians, which had been acquired from them by the white settlers, who were entitled to the wolf head bounty offered, then 100 pounds of tobacco.

- *Proceedings of the County Courts of Charles County, 1666 – 1674*

“It appears that the earliest naming protocol within Charles County was to name the school, regardless of grade level, after the local town in which the school was built. Thus, I believe it quite reasonable to propose: Indian Head Elementary school was named after the town of Indian Head.”

- *Mario Harley, Member of the Piscataway Conoy Tribe*

“Both the Calvert and royal governments wanted Native people as their allies and have them as a buffer on the frontier, so this kind of killing (beheading) would have been dealt with swiftly by both colonial and Native leaders. The Maryland colonists . . . ultimately sought to dispossess Native people of their land; itself a form of violence. In other words, the violence was not the imagined beheading but the theft of land.”

- *Julia King, Ph.D., Professor of Anthropology, St. Mary's College*

# “The Legend of How Indian Head Got Its Name”

- C. M. Bryant

(provided by Tommy Wright: NEPA and Cultural Resource Manager - Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command, Washington)

## THE LEGEND OF HOW INDIAN HEAD GOT ITS NAME

By C. M. Bryant (see Note below)

Many moons ago there lived on the Mattawoman a tribe of Indians who had a Chief named the Black Eagle. He had a beautiful daughter. She was the pride and joy of her father. All loved her. She grew among them from childhood into a tall and comely maiden and because of her beauty they called her Floating Cloud. The young braves of the tribe sought her in marriage, but her father, mean and selfish, set the price of her hand so high that none had wealth to satisfy his greed. For he said she should be the squaw of a great chief and bring wealth to his tribe. There arrived from across the river from the country of Powhatan an envoy, Bounding Elk by name, a great warrior who brought a message of good will to Black Eagle, they both belonged to the same Algonquin Tribe but had constantly been at War with each other. Bounding Elk and Black Eagle smoked the pipe of peace and buried the hatchet. When he met Floating Cloud a great strong love sang in his heart for the dusky maiden and they talked at the outskirts of the village. Bounding Elk knew that his love was returned, he asked Black Eagle for her hand. He refused because he has no wealth. He ordered Bounding Elk to leave and never return. If ever caught on this side of the river again he ordered his Braves to bind him and throw him in the whirlpool of the Potomac. He left with a heavy heart and returned to his home across the river. In his absence makes the heart grow fonder - and his love for Floating Cloud was so great that he was determined to have her at any cost. Launching his canoe at the Hallowing Point, calling upon the great spirit for aid on his great venture, he paddled the broad Potomac in his canoe, moving inland through the forest to the Indian Village - he gave the Indian love call, "Floating Cloud, I love you." She knew and ran to warn her father of her father's anger. They fled towards the Potomac River but the braves were on the alert, they were persued and he was wounded when an arrow pierced his thigh. Bravelly he struggled but with the burden of the girl and weakness from his wound he fell and the braves with warhoop of their tribe sank a tomahawk in his head and cut his head from his body. Floating Cloud seeing her lover slain - with anguish in her heart she and fled towards the Potomac, although persued she eluded them and singing a song of death, plunged into the angry waters of the whirlpool (off shore at Glymont) and met death in a watery grave. When Black Eagle learned of his daughter's death, he went to his Wigwam and mourned his loss all alone. The braves called a Pow Wow of sorrow, and ever after called Floating Cloud the Bride of the Whirlpool.

# Francis Gray, Tribal Chair Piscataway-Conoy Tribe (PCT)

“ I would like to state that while it would be an honor to have recognition of our tribe’s longstanding presence in the State of Maryland and especially Charles County, the renaming of the school does not have widespread support amongst our tribal community and therefore, is not supported for consideration by this governing body.”

“... the reason by some in support of changing the school’s name falls short of any constructive progress and is deemed to be not beneficial to our tribal community; therefore, we cannot support the proposed name change at this time.”

*Letter to the Charles County Board of Education, October 15, 2024*

# Research Resources

- Archives of Maryland (Digital Collections)
- Maryland Center for History and Culture (Digital Collections)
- Indigenous Cultural Landscapes Study for the Nanjemoy and Mattawoman Creek Watersheds (V.R. Busby, J.A. King, and S. Strickland)
- Minutes of Meetings, Charles County Board of Education
- Charles County Public School Names and their Origins (compiled by Mary Jones)
- “What’s in a Name?”: The History Behind the Names of Charles County Public Schools
- The Origin and Meaning of the Indian Place Names of Maryland (Hamill Kenny, Ph.D.)
- The Piscataway Indians of Southern Maryland (Alice Ferguson Foundation)
- “Indian Head Before the Year 1890” (Joseph Y. Rowe)

# Interview Resources

- Francis Gray: Tribal Chair (Piscataway Conoy Tribe)
- Mario Harley: Member (Piscataway Conoy Tribe)
- Anjela Barnes: Executive Director (Accokeek Foundation at Piscataway Park)
- Dr. Julia King: Professor of Anthropology (St. Mary's College)
- Tommy Wright: NEPA and Cultural Resource Manager (Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command, Washington)
- Mervyn Savoy: Previous Tribal Chair (Piscataway Conoy Tribe) and Retired CCPS Educator

# Charles County Public Schools

## Board Policy 7230

Excerpt:

Prior to deciding whether to rename a specific school, the Board shall inform the specific school community about the possible renaming. The Board shall direct the Superintendent to detail a process that engages the specific school community regarding renaming of its school facility and that includes a cost analysis of the renaming.

# Community Engagement: Proposed Outreach

- **Stakeholders:**
  - Students, Staff, Families, Indian Head Community (faith-based, service providers, etc.), Elected Officials, and Advocacy Groups.
- **Engagement Strategy:**
  - Common survey tool available online.
  - In-person and virtual meetings for community.
  - Class presentation and survey for students.
- **Timeline:**
  - Conduct all outreach in February - April.
  - Present results of survey to Board at May Board Meeting.

# Cost Analysis of Renaming Indian Head Elementary School

- School marquee - \$20,000
- School plaques - \$5,000
- School banners - \$1,000
- Total cost - \$26,000

# Charles County Public Schools

## Board Policy 7230

Excerpt:

The Board may not vote on the decision to rename a school until holding at least three intervening Board meetings after notification to the specific school community...The Superintendent shall implement a process for developing recommendations to the Board on the new name of the school facility.

# Questions/Feedback

Charles County Board Presentation  
January 14, 2025