

To: Superintendent Sean McPhetridge
From: Haight Renaming Committee
Date: January 15, 2019
Re: Recommendation for Love Elementary School

Dear Superintendent McPhetridge,

The Haight Renaming Committee (HRC) requests that Haight Elementary School be renamed Love Elementary School following our research and community survey.

In January 2018, parents and students at Henry H. Haight Elementary School presented a petition to rename Haight after learning about Gov. Haught's racist views and actions.¹ According to Administrative Regulation (AR) 7310, if a group of school community members presents a petition for a school name change with at least 100 signatures, the principal has to convene a School Renaming Committee, in this case, the HRC.²

Upon receiving the petition, then-Principal Tracey Lewis convened the committee in March. All those who applied to the committee were invited to join. The HRC included parents, alumni, a teacher, and a civic leader. No students applied for the HRC.³

AR 7310 requires the renaming committee to research a proposed name and survey the school community with the choice of adopting the proposed name or maintaining the current name. To identify a name and conduct the survey, the HRC adopted an extensive community engagement process.⁴

The committee held 10 meetings over the past 10 months. After initiating community outreach to explain why Haight was proposed to be renamed, the committee developed renaming criteria. AR 7310 states school facilities may be renamed for locations, people, or reflect concepts or approaches to education. Considering the worldview of the school's namesake, the committee adopted anti-racist criteria for possible new names, including: diversity, equity, and inclusion.⁵

From Sept. 10 through Oct. 12, the HRC solicited [name suggestions](#) online and at Haight School. Using the established criteria, the committee narrowed the list of names from 400 to four. These names included Don Grant, Love, Nielsen Tam, and Ohlone. On Oct. 24, the HRC hosted a

¹ Link to Dec. 2017 and Jan. 18 articles about renaming and reference Tracey Lewis, "Eagle News: February 2018," Feb. 5, 2018, <<https://mailchi.mp/624988675a07/eagle-news-feb2018?e=0a7836c693>>.

² AR 7310, School/facilities, Alameda Unified School District.
<<http://www.gamutonline.net/district/alameda/DisplayPolicy/587049/>>.

³ AUSD Haight Renaming Committee <http://www.alameda.k12.ca.us/HaightName>

⁴ AR 7310, School/facilities, Alameda Unified School District.
<<http://www.gamutonline.net/district/alameda/DisplayPolicy/587049/>>.

⁵ "Haight chooses Love," Dec. 5, 2018; AR 7310.

community forum at Haight to discuss the significance of names and the history of Henry H. Haight, and to receive feedback on the renaming process, and share the top four finalists.⁶

On Nov. 6, the HRC hosted a student-centered [“primary” election](#). A total of 727 people participated in the election, including 496 (90%) students, 34 (68%) teachers and staff, 197 (~18%) parents. Students, parents/guardians, and staff voted on one of the four possible names. Thirty-seven percent of voters chose Love, followed by Grant with 23 percent, Ohlone with 20 percent, and Tam with 17 percent. Voter Guides were translated into Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.⁷

On Nov. 15, the HRC conducted the survey in the form of a “general” election. Participants were asked if they wished to rename Haight to Love or keep the current school name. A total of 674 people participated in the election, including 465 students (~84%), 27 (54%) teachers and staff, and 168 (15%) parents and guardians. Additionally, alumni from the last three fifth-grade classes, neighbors living on the perimeter streets of the school, and nearby businesses could also vote.⁸

HRC members encouraged the Haight PTA, Haight staff, and students to participate in the survey. HRC members also canvassed the nearby neighborhood and worked with the District to contact alumni (students that graduated in the past three years) to achieve a representative response and reach a substantial number of possible community members.

Volunteers translated materials into multiple languages to make the primary election and general election/survey processes more accessible. The survey was also impacted by school closures due to air quality issues related to the Camp Fire. To allow parents and students who did not come to school on the 14th due to the fire to vote, the HRC posted signs to inform them that they could submit “absentee ballots” in the office.

The HRC contacted and requested the League of Women Voters of Alameda to count the ballots. On November 30, the LWV counted the ballots and a majority of survey respondents, 70%, support renaming Haight Elementary to Love Elementary.⁹

In order to establish broad community awareness and democratic participation in the renaming process, the HRC reached out to staff, students, families, and Alameda residents from August-November by doing the following:

⁶ “Community Forum on Renaming – Oct. 24th 7pm”, Haight PTA, Oct. 21, 2018. <<https://www.henryhaightpta.org/2018/10/21/community-forum-on-renaming-oct-24th-7pm/>>
<<https://www.henryhaightpta.org/2018/10/21/community-forum-on-renaming-oct-24th-7pm/>>.

⁷ include citation with election results and info voter guides]

⁸ [link to election results]

⁹ “Haight Community Votes for Love,” AUSD, Dec. 5, 2018, <<http://alamedausd-ca.schoolloop.com/file/1514016404836/1376459767278/5979940895722028181.pdf>>.

-Staffed a table at the Park Street Art and Wine Faire on July 29th and provided pamphlets, fliers, and information about the renaming process. We had 131 contacts and discussions that day: four favored retaining the name of the school, the rest were positive about renaming the school, and many people we spoke with wanted to know how they could be involved.

-Set up a Haight Renaming Process bulletin board in the front hallway of Henry Haight Elementary, which included Rename Haight pamphlets, Henry Haight quotes, a timeline of the renaming process, name-suggestion sheets, and informational fliers in Arabic, Chinese, English, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. This bulletin board made it clear that the community would have the opportunity to vote on changing or retaining the name of the school.

-Publicized the renaming process on Facebook and Twitter and included a link to the Haight Renaming web page; the link was also published in the *Alameda Journal* on October 26th.

-Presented to students and their families at Back-to-School Night on August 29th, and set up a table with informative pamphlets, fliers, and a name-suggestion box. The first suggested names were collected at Back-To-School Night.

-On September 14th and October 23rd all families and Haight employees were sent information that included a link to the Haight Renaming web page. This link included a comprehensive [FAQ](#) sheet about the renaming process, which was also shared with the general public at the Community Forum on October 24th.

-Informed staff in a letter dated September 25th about: the dates and deadlines for the renaming process; information and rationale for the primary and general “elections”; an upcoming essay contest; the bulletin board in the front hallway; and legacy plans, which will include a permanent display of mementos, pictures, and information about Haight Elementary School in the school’s library. The letter was entitled, [“Get out the Vote! Update on the Haight Renaming Process”](#).

- Provided every teacher with a [“Cross-Curricular Activities Guide”](#) for TK-5th graders in late September. This guide described reading, writing, social science, science, math and art activities to engage students in academic topics related to Henry Haight and the renaming process.

-Provided every teacher with a suggested reading list entitled, [“Suggested Reading for discussing Henry Haight, Racism, and the Renaming Process”](#) in late September. This reading list included titles and authors of books for elementary school children, along with a short paragraph describing each book. Kindness, anti-racism, civic participation, community involvement, and genetics are among some of the topics discussed in these books.

-Engaged with teachers and responded to their questions, concerns, and suggestions at the October staff meeting. We also gave all teachers an up-to-date list of the name suggestions that had been submitted thus far.

-Administered a Doodle poll to Haight staff to receive their feedback on which dates to hold the “elections”.

-Informed and updated families about the renaming process at PTA meetings in September, October, and November, and January.

-Taught a lesson in Mr. Shih’s TK class and Ms. Sussman’s 2nd-grade class about the renaming process. Vice Principal Kimberly Valentino was there for the presentation in Ms. Sussman’s class.

-Created [Voters’ Guides](#) in Arabic, Chinese, English, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. These voters’ guides used simple language so that those of all ages and language-proficiency backgrounds could understand.

-Led a Community Forum on October 24th at Haight School and provided a PowerPoint presentation to the public about the renaming process, upcoming elections, and the top four candidate names.

-Held a [primary “election”](#) at Haight Elementary on November 6th, in which students, their parents and caregivers, and Haight teachers and staff had the opportunity to vote for one of four “candidates” the HRC selected from community name submissions: Niel Tam, Don Grant, Ohlone, and Love. The HRC used tri-fold science-project boards to create “privacy screens” for the casting of votes.

-Put up [campaign posters](#) around the school of the two candidate names, Henry Haight and Love, before the general “election” (the community survey required by the school district). Each poster included a picture and description of each candidate and arguments for and against each name. The posters were also translated into Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, and Vietnamese and placed at each “polling station” during the “election”.

Facilitating the election process, which included distributing paper ballots, and helping students cast and submit their vote would not have been possible without the help of parent and teacher volunteers, and Principal Kevin Baker, who was instrumental in engaging the Haight community about the renaming process.

While Principal Baker was always mindful about respecting teachers’ contractual right to not discuss Henry Haight or the renaming process with their students, he took a proactive role in getting necessary information to students and their families about candidates and the “elections”. For example, he passed out Voters’ Guides for the primary election to all students, making sure that those students whose families speak Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, Tagalog, or Vietnamese received a guide written in their respective native language. He also made a Video Voters’ Guide about the four candidates in the primary “election”, which was based on the information in the

Voters' Guide. This short video was key in helping teachers to easily disseminate information that was vital for the students to participate in the renaming process.

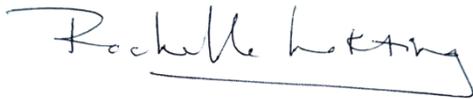
Principal Baker also talked to students about the renaming process during Wednesday morning announcements, and informed families of the "elections" via email and the Robocall system. Without Principal Baker's proactive communication, the HRC would have been very limited in its ability to reach students and families directly, and thus involve them, in this civic engagement experience.

The HRC believes our research and survey support the request for a name change – as first proposed by petitioners in January 2018. On January 10, 2019, a majority of the HRC voted to affirm this request. We hereby ask you to recommend that the School Board announce the proposal to rename Haight as Love Elementary School by February 15th.

Signed,

Haight Renaming Committee¹⁰

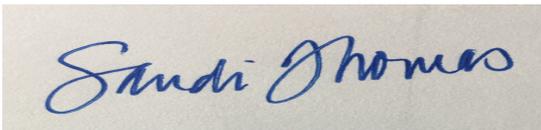
Kevin Baker
Jenya Cassidy
Zaid El-Amin
Rochelle Lokting



Steven Mack



Rasheed Shabazz
Sandi Thomas



Sachi Yoshii

¹⁰ One committee meeting resigned from the committee in the fall. Three others stopped attending meetings in spring 2018. Principal Kevin Baker replaced former Principal Tracey Lewis in August 2018.