



## **Naming of Schools and Special Purpose Areas Policy (P047) Review, Phase 2 – Status Update**

**To:** Governance and Policy Committee

**Date:** 30 September, 2020

**Report No.:** 09-20-3938

### **Strategic Directions**

- Create a Culture for Student and Staff Well-Being
- Provide Equity of Access to Learning Opportunities for All Students

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the preliminary provisions for draft Naming of Schools and Special Purpose Areas Policy (P047), as presented in Appendix B of this report, be received for information.

### **Context**

The Naming of Schools and Special Purpose Areas Policy (P047) (Appendix A) was adopted by the Board of Trustees on August 29, 2001 and last updated on February 9, 2011. The current policy establishes rules for the naming and renaming of schools, special purpose areas of schools and new additions.

The review of the Naming of Schools and Special Purpose Areas Policy (P047) was initiated on November 3, 2016. On May 23, 2018, the Board of Trustees decided that the Naming of Schools and Special Purpose Areas Policy (P047) and related Procedure (PR592) be suspended to allow the process to rename Kipling Collegiate Institute to be completed with a student-centred approach. The approach ensured that students enrolled at the school as of September 2018 had a strong voice on the renaming process and revitalization of Kipling CI. While the outcome resulted in the status quo, it underscored the importance of student involvement in the school naming/renaming process.

With the Naming of Schools and Special Purpose Areas Policy emerging as a priority more recently, a working group comprised of senior staff developed preliminary provisions for the revised draft Policy (Appendix B). The preliminary provisions are expected to be incorporated in the revised draft Policy and then shared during public consultations with the Board's stakeholders, including students (Student Senate), parents/guardians, Community Advisory Committees, school councils, and the general public.

Upon completion of the public consultations, the revised draft Policy will be brought back to the GPC and then to the Board of Trustees for final approval.

In light of recent discussions on racial injustices, inequality and anti-Black racism, including scrutiny of the origins and history of monuments, street names, parks, buildings and schools across the city, staff conducted a jurisdictional policy scan of comparative school boards and public organizations (Appendix C).

The preliminary provisions, as outlined in Appendix B, are being presented for the Committee's information.

## **Action Plan and Associated Timeline**

October – November 2020: Internal Reviews and Sign-Offs (Phase 3)

- Subject to the Governance and Policy Committee and Board directions, staff will prepare the draft Policy based on the preliminary provisions and will conduct internal reviews/sign-offs by key departments impacted by and involved in implementation of the Policy.
- Draft Policy will be submitted to Executive Council and provided to the Director of Education for sign-off prior to initiation of public consultations.

**[Timeline to be determined due to COVID-19]:** Public Consultations (Phase 4)

- Staff will initiate public consultations for duration of 45 days.
- Draft Policy will be posted on the TDSB policy consultation website and also shared with Community Advisory Committees, Student Senate, school councils, and other Board stakeholders.

**[Timeline to be determined due to COVID-19]:** Committee / Board Approvals (Phase 5)

- Staff will analyze feedback provided during the public consultations, revise the draft Policy, as applicable, and submit the revised draft Policy to the Governance and Policy Committee and the Board of Trustees for final approval.

**[Timeline to be determined due to COVID-19]:** Implementation (Phase 6)

- The approved Policy will be communicated to the system and posted on the TDSB public website.

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- Staff will review operational procedure PR592, Naming Schools and Special Purpose Areas, to ensure alignment with the Policy.
- Training/information sessions will be conducted, as required, with staff involved in implementation of the Policy.

### **Resource Implications**

No additional resources will be required for revisions to this Policy.

### **Communications Considerations**

The Policy will be communicated in accordance with the Policy Review Work Plan.

### **Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)**

- Equity Policy (P037)
- Human Rights Policy (P031)
- Fundraising Policy (P021)
- Naming of Schools and Special Purpose Areas Procedure (PR592)
- Fundraising Procedure (PR508)

### **Appendices**

- Appendix A: Naming of Schools and Special Purpose Areas Policy (P047) – Current
- Appendix B: Preliminary Provisions for draft Naming of Schools and Special Purpose Areas Policy (P047)
- Appendix C: Policy: Scan of Selected School Boards and Other Jurisdictions

### **From**

Manon Gardner, Associate Director, School Operations and Service Excellence at [manon.gardner@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:manon.gardner@tdsb.on.ca)

Andrew Gowdy, System Planning Officer, Strategy and Planning at [andrew.gowdy@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:andrew.gowdy@tdsb.on.ca)

# Toronto District School Board

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Policy P047

Title: **NAMING SCHOOLS AND SPECIAL PURPOSE AREAS**

Adopted: August 29, 2001

Revised: December 14, 2005, February 11, 2009, **February 9, 2011**

Reviewed: April 2010, March 2012

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## 1.0 OBJECTIVE

To establish guidelines for the naming and renaming of schools, special purpose areas of schools and new additions.

## 2.0 RESPONSIBILITY

Director, Strategy and Planning

## 3.0 DEFINITIONS

*Special Purpose Area* A room or other sub-component area of a school (including new wings) other than a classroom that is unique or has special significance to the school and the local community such as an auditorium, courtyard or garden.

*Local Community* The geographic area defined by the local school's attendance area, families of students attending the school, and alumni association members, if any.

## 4.0 POLICY

### Schools

- 4.1. The naming or renaming of a school or school wing may be necessitated as a result of site consolidations, academic redesignation, school closures, school reopenings, school expansions and on the rare occasion, a request from the school or local community.
- 4.2. Approval of the Board is required before a process may be implemented to determine and propose a new name (except when the school is already part of a Board-approved reorganization).
- 4.3. Consultation with the school (including students) and local community shall be an integral part of any renaming process.
- 4.4. Names of schools shall be based on one of the following criteria:
  - (a) The name of the street on which the school faces

- (b) The historical or current name of the district or local community in which the school is located
- (c) A name symbolic of the unique program focus of the school in the case of specialized or alternative schools
- (d) The name of a renowned Canadian of historical significance to the Toronto community, or whose contribution to Canadian society or to the world is recognized and valued across Canada
- (e) The name of an internationally renowned person whose contribution to humanity is widely recognized within the Toronto community or across Canada
- (f) In respect of a new school wing, the name of a community member whose long-term unique contribution of voluntarism has enhanced the learning environment and overall well-being of the school community

4.5. The Board shall approve school names and name changes.

#### Special Purpose Areas

- 4.6. The school principal and Business Development staff, in consultation with school representatives, student representatives (student council representatives, where applicable) and the local trustee, shall determine the names of special purpose areas of a school.
- 4.7. When a donor's contribution constitutes a significant percentage of the total cost of a project, the donor's name may be considered as a possibility for the name of the special purpose area.
- 4.8. Signage and plaques recognizing donors shall not constitute commercial advertising.
- 4.9. Signage and plaques recognizing donors shall be modest, in good taste, and complement the style and design of the facility and project.
- 4.10. Any sponsorships involving written contractual arrangements, advertising, logos or any other instances that will affect another school, department or the Board system-wide will be referred to the Business Development department prior to acceptance.

## **5.0 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES**

The Director is authorized to issue operational procedures to implement this policy.

## **6.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

Policy P021, Fundraising and Donor Recognition

Operational Procedure PR592, Naming Schools and Special Purpose Areas

Operational Procedure PR508, Fundraising

**PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS – NAMING OF SCHOOLS, SPECIAL-  
PURPOSE AREAS AND TEAMS POLICY  
(FORMERLY NAMING OF SCHOOLS AND SPECIAL PURPOSE AREAS  
POLICY)**

## **1. OBJECTIVE**

To establish guiding principles and criteria for the naming and renaming of schools, special-purpose areas, and teams consistent with the Board's Mission, Values and Goals Policy (P002) and the Equity Policy (P037) commitments.

## **2. DEFINITIONS**

*Board* is the Toronto District School Board which is also referred to as "TDSB".

*Special-Purpose Area* is a room or other sub-component area of a school other than a classroom such as an auditorium, gymnasium, wing, courtyard, garden or field that is unique or has special significance to the school.

*TDSB* is the Toronto District School Board which is also referred to as the "Board".

*Team* is any formally-organized, sports-related, recreational, curricular or extra-curricular group involving students that represents the local school and/or the TDSB. Icons associated with a team such as but not limited to mascots, logos, costumes, promotional materials, slogans, songs, and cheers are also included.

## **3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The Toronto District School Board recognizes that names of schools, special-purpose areas, and teams contribute an important element to the creation of positive school climate and image and have a direct impact on students, staff, and the entire organization.

The following guiding principles ensure naming conventions build positive climate that reflects the diversity of our students and communities; value their voices; and foster a culture of equity, inclusion, dignity and mutual respect.

Naming/Renaming will:

- Reflect the TDSB's commitments as stated in the Mission, Values and Goals Policy (P022) and the Equity Policy (P037);
- Ensure student voice is at the centre of the naming/renaming process;
- Provide inspiration, dignity and respect;
- Ensure fairness and transparency;

- Consider names that have local community, district, provincial, Indigenous, Canadian or international significance and reflect the diversity of Toronto;
- Take into account the impact of colonialism and anti-Indigenous racism that are part of Canada’s history and reject any names, symbols or namesakes that reinforce that history as well as the negative impacts of colonialism; and
- Not reinforce names (symbols) or namesakes (legacies), tied to systems of oppression, race, histories of discrimination, stereotypes, bias, prejudice or hate and uphold the TDSB’s commitment to human rights.

#### **4. NAMING/RENAMING SCHOOLS**

##### **Naming a New School:**

Board of Trustee approval is not required to begin the naming process but is required to endorse the selection of a name.

In the case of new school construction where no school currently exists or new school formation through closure or consolidation following a review process, the naming process may proceed after the decision to construct or form a new school has been approved by the Board of Trustees.

##### **All Other Situations:**

Board of Trustee approval is required to begin the naming process and **to** endorse the selection of a name.

The naming of an existing school may be necessitated by a significant change in school focus, the development of a new school, identity, or a request from the school.

Names of schools must be consistent with the Board’s Mission, Values and Goals Policy (P002), the Equity Policy (P037) commitments, and TDSB’s guiding principles for naming.

Student voice will be at the centre of the naming/renaming process.

The TDSB will seek and accept input regarding the names of the schools but reserves the right to make the final decision regarding the name.

#### **5. NAMING/RENAMING SPECIAL-PURPOSE AREAS**

Board of Trustee approval is not required to begin the naming/renaming process or to endorse the selection of a name.

The naming/renaming of special-purpose areas will be locally determined by each school but will also be consistent with the Board’s Mission, Values and

Goals Policy (P002), the Equity Policy (P037) commitments, and TDSB's guiding principles for naming.

Student voice will be at the centre of the naming/renaming process.

## **6. NAMING/RENAMING TEAMS**

Board of Trustee approval is not required to begin the naming/renaming process or to endorse the selection of a name.

Team names and related icons will be determined locally by each school but will also be consistent with the Board's Mission, Values and Goals Policy (P002), the Equity Policy (P037) commitments, and TDSB's guiding principles for naming.

Student voice will be at the centre of the naming/renaming process.

Corporate/commercial names will not be permitted.



**Scan of Selected School Boards and Other  
Jurisdictions:  
Naming of Schools and Special  
Purpose Areas**

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**Summary**

The TDSB's [Naming Schools and Special Purpose Areas Policy](#) (P047), which establishes rules for the naming and renaming of schools, special purpose areas of schools and new additions, was adopted in 2001 and last reviewed in March 2012. According to the Policy, naming or renaming of a school is initiated as a result of site consolidations, re-designations, school closures, re-openings, expansions and sometimes as a result of school or community requests. Consultation with the school and local community is an integral part of the process, with the Board of Trustees ultimately approving school names and name changes.

**Key Themes**

Through a scan and subsequent review of twenty (20) organizations, all policies and procedures reviewed include a similar process for naming or renaming public assets. Across district school boards and municipalities, a name contributes to creating a culture and sense of identity for the community and promotes public awareness including the ability to locate the property quickly and effectively. In several organizations, names of schools are aligned with the names of streets or can be based on geographical area, while in other examples, numbering is used independently or in conjunction with a geographical name. Though some organizations (e.g., City of Burlington, City of Calgary, City of Grand Prairie) include revenue generating strategies as part of its naming through naming rights in exchange for financial support, this scan primarily focuses on honourific naming dedication.

In light of recent events such as the Black Lives Matter movement, cities and school boards are now reviewing naming of civic assets to more broadly understand and respond to how systemic racism and discrimination are embedded in public assets, commemorative programs and naming policies.

**Naming Conventions (People, Places, Events, Geography)**

All organizations included in this scan use naming conventions for their public buildings, streets and public spaces. While individuals and organizations are often recognized through dedicated naming to honour their past contributions to the organization or community, each organization uses its own yet similar criterion to determine naming recognition. Most organizations (e.g., City of Burlington, City of Toronto, City of Vancouver, Santa Rosa City Schools) give consideration to persons who have exceptionally dedicated or demonstrated excellence in service in ways that made a significant contribution to the community, city, province/state, or nation.

While many organizations require alignment to their mission, vision and values (e.g., City of Burlington, City of Edmonton, City of Vaughan, York Region DSB) or naming that is reflective of a "positive image" (e.g., Upper Grand DSB), one school board (i.e., Orleans

Parish School Board, New Orleans) also requires that individuals must have been of such outstanding character and distinction that naming a school facility, private drive or street after them would honour both the school district as well as the individual and would provide educational or motivational value to the students served at the school. At one Catholic school board (i.e., Halton Catholic DSB), schools can be named after deceased local exemplary Catholics. However, due to a recent instance of sex abuse allegations against a school's namesake which required renaming, the school board is proposing to limit all future schools from being named after anyone but saints, popes or divine persons of the Holy Family. In order to maintain integrity and practice due diligence, another organization (i.e., Princeton University) requires that honourific naming must advance the organization's values and policies and that requested names not belong to a person or organization that has a record of malfeasance of a character that would make the name inappropriate. In addition, the policy includes a presumption against names honouring countries or political bodies because they may undergo dramatic change and commit dramatic injustice.

Given that distinguishing noteworthy people or commemorating history, places or events can be subjective in nature and may not always be able to "stand the test of time," which one school board (i.e., Upper Grand DSB) refers to as a requirement in its policy, the majority of organizations also consider names which reflect the unique location, geography, or community of where the property is located, including cultural, aboriginal or social significance. This can also include native wildlife, flora, fauna or natural feature in the geographical area (City of Calgary, City of Edmonton, City of Toronto, City of Vancouver). Although a geographical naming system may help avoid future controversies, the problem still lies in understanding how the geographical areas came to exist and whether it was through colonialist methods.

Several organizations (e.g., Orleans Parish School Board, Santa Rosa City Schools) have rules that prohibit schools to be named after a living person or similar to the name of any existing district school to avoid confusion. In another organization (i.e., Ryerson University), no naming should infringe on academic integrity or be deemed to imply the University's endorsement of a partisan political or ideological position or of a commercial product or service. To protect an organization from potential controversy, one organization (i.e., Santa Rosa City Schools) reserves the authority to terminate naming rights if it is determined that the name could bring the district into disrepute, while at another institution (i.e., Ryerson University), no naming will be approved or (once approved) be continued if such a naming will call into question the integrity or reputation of the organization.

The TDSB's current policy includes similar requirements for the naming of schools and in the case of alternative or specialized schools, may also have a name symbolic to the unique program focus of the school. Special purpose areas can sometimes also be named in exchange for sponsorship or donations.

### **Numbering System**

Though not widely used, some organizations throughout the world (i.e., New York State Schools, Russia) use a numbering system for buildings, schools and other public spaces. In Russia, formats include School No.1, School No. 775 and are grouped by geography. In North America's largest school system (i.e., New York State Schools), numbering is used with either a geographical area or name attached to it within its [various school districts](#). Schools usually follow the number and name format (e.g., PS 166 – The Richard Rogers School of the Arts and Science) or geographical area and number (e.g., Geog District #15 – Brooklyn). When creating new schools in this board, an allocation code management system assigns schools with a number or code for state approval. While a numbered building or school may be seen to lack character, personality, connection or “belonging” in its community, the advantage it has is that there can be little criticism with most of these organizations citing no record of objections to its numbering system.

Under the TDSB's current policy, a numbering system is not utilized.

### **Process and Community Engagement Methods for Naming/Re-Naming**

Naming requests can come forward for various reasons including: anniversaries of significance, heritage significance, death of a significant person, honouring residents with exemplary public or community service, or the construction of a new school or civic-owned property. Across all jurisdictions scanned, the naming of schools, buildings and other civic assets could either be driven by the community through a request or application process, or facilitated by the organization which includes staff recommendations, various community engagement processes such as feedback opportunities or community meetings, and input/approval by the Board.

When soliciting input and suggestions from the community, one municipality (i.e, City of Vancouver) allows members of the public to suggest names for streets and lanes, sidewalks and cycling infrastructure, bridges and city owned properties such as buildings and associated exterior spaces, using a dedicated [web page](#). Although each organization has its own criterion, most organizations (e.g., City of Toronto, City of Vancouver, City of Grand Prairie, Orleans Parish School Board) require the rationale, relevance of the proposed name to the asset, a biography and documented support including petition and support letters as part of the application process. In Vancouver, the support of 75% of property owners that abut the street, place or building is required, whereas in Toronto and Grand Prairie, these support letters can come from recognized organizations or the general public. Similarly, in a United States municipality (City of Harrisonburg, VA), sponsors must accompany the application with a petition of at least 100 signatures of city residents. If the application is to rename a street, the application must contain signatures of at least 51% of residents or owners of properties on that street. At another organization, (e.g., City of Greater Sudbury) naming request applications are processed at a \$900 fee to cover the cost of city-wide advertising to measure the level of public community support.

Naming appropriateness is considered by staff before a name can put forward to committee/board or council for approval. As part of the process, staff are responsible for

recommending or reviewing names provided by the general public. In an effort to best understand the history of the person or naming convention, many organizations (e.g., City of Edmonton, City of Vancouver) engage experts including in-house archivists or historians to research and review names and keep an inventory of name requests and names currently in use. An online naming inventory with applicable background history is routinely used at one organization (i.e., City of Ottawa).

Most organizations (e.g., City of Grand Prairie, City of Edmonton, City of Ottawa, Santa Rosa City Schools) also engage with their advisory committees responsible for naming and renaming, which includes citizen, staff and elected official representation.

As part of a general engagement strategy, virtually all organizations conduct some form of public consultation and outreach. At one organization (e.g., Santa Rosa City Schools), the board requires a public hearing at which members of the public are given an opportunity to provide input before the board approves naming recommendations. This would be similar to the TDSB's delegation process. In another organization (City of Boulder, Colorado), the city issues a press release to announce naming efforts, followed by a collection of feedback from social media and various city run platforms. Targeted outreach is another strategy employed to ensure that all voices are heard. For example, one organization (i.e., City of Boulder) engages with its "racial equity email listserv" and works with local partners and interested organizations, while another organization (i.e., Hamilton Wentworth DSB) carefully takes into account the input from underrepresented groups (defined as "groups that are typically underrepresented and underserved and whose voices are often not included in planning or heard on issues"). Canada's largest city (i.e., City of Toronto) follows similar steps and involves certain communities such as the aboriginal community and adherence to appropriate aboriginal protocols when naming portrays aboriginal significance.

While every organization requires approval from their governing body, one organization (City of Edmonton) offers an appeal opportunity for applicants when their name is not approved whereby the matter is brought forward to the executive committee.

Under the TDSB's current policy, consultation with the school and local community is an integral part of the process, with the Board of Trustees ultimately approving school names and name changes.

### **Current and Future Equity Considerations**

Most policies include equity considerations when naming or renaming facilities and civic assets. For example, at one organization (City of Toronto) names of city properties cannot result in or be perceived to confer any competitive advantage or benefit to the named party, or be or be perceived to be discriminatory or derogatory of race, colour, ethnic origin, gender identity or expression, sex, sexual orientation, creed, political affiliation, disability or other social factors. Other organizations (e.g., City of Edmonton, City of Ottawa) include as part of its criterion that individuals can be nominated and receive naming dedication for their community work to foster equality and reduce discrimination. At a neighbouring school board (i.e., York Region DSB), consideration is

given to the principles of equity and the culture, history and accomplishments of the school(s) affected. This includes consideration to local Indigenous communities and the contributions of Indigenous peoples to the Canadian mosaic.

In acknowledging that most organizational policies related to naming are dated and have not been reviewed in recent years, recent public pressures, the Black Lives Matter movement and protests worldwide has led nearly all organizations included in this scan to review its naming policies, statues and naming conventions. While one organization (City of Vancouver) is undertaking a process of naming and renaming several existing City-owned public spaces as a fulfillment of its broader policies and approach to Reconciliation and redress regarding its Aboriginal peoples, many organizations both locally and globally (e.g., City of Toronto, City School District of Albany, Pennsylvania University, Princeton University, Ryerson University) are reviewing and/or revising its policies to ensure that all names reflect the organization's commitment to eliminate systemic and institutional barriers that result in racially disparate outcomes. As one school board (Santa Rosa City Schools) explains, the Board is conducting a comprehensive review of its naming program given that "names placed on those institutions may not have reflected an honest understanding of the history of those people." On September 15, 2020, a neighbouring school board (York Region DSB) decided to initiate the process to rename one of its schools, Vaughan Secondary School, due to the namesake's history with racism.

Using another local example, the City of Toronto has conducted a review and will release its report on September 23, 2020 to assess options for the renaming of Dundas Street in order to respond to the community at large, Black and Indigenous communities. While it is anticipated that the costs related to education, changing signage, maps and service directories will be quite significant for a major arterial street like Dundas (which will be provided in the September 2020 report), the City plans to take a constructive and symbolic step toward disavowing its historic associations with persons who have actively worked towards preserving systems of racial inequality and exploitation. Importantly, the City will be also be outlining a community engagement strategy and change management process that simultaneously addresses in an integrated manner all civic assets (streets, parks, public monuments, civic awards and honours, TTC, Toronto Public Library, and Yonge-Dundas Square) by the end of 2021.

Several organizations have taken immediate steps. Until a full review can take place, one school board (Orleans Parish School Board), has amended its policy to include the following directional statement: "The Orleans Parish School Board believes all schools should be welcoming, inclusive, and inspiring places for all students, and desires to ensure that the names of our school facilities and the people that we honour through naming reflect the values of the school district. The School Board is fundamentally opposed to retaining names of school facilities named for persons who did not respect equal opportunity for all." Similarly, in response to complaints about certain names across the community, another organization (i.e., City of Calgary) is reviewing its naming policy/program and approved the following provision to be added as a criterion of the

policy as an interim measure: “Names should not be divisive in nature. When an individual or group is identified by a name, best efforts should be taken to ensure that the name is not seen as linked with discrimination, oppression and systemic racism nor in violation of community standards as they exist today.”

At the TDSB, an equity lens is applied under its Equity Policy (P037) but the current policy does not document equity considerations in the [Naming Schools and Special Purpose Areas Policy](#). The equity principles are recommended to be included in the revised Policy.

**Organizations Reviewed (20): California Department of Education, City of Burlington, City of Grand Prairie, City of Harrisonburg, City of Ottawa, City of Toronto, City School District of Albany, City of Vancouver, Halton Catholic DSB, Hamilton Wentworth District School Board, Orleans Parish School Board, Los Angeles Unified School District, New York State Schools, Princeton University, Ryerson University, Russia, Santa Rosa Public Schools, Toronto DSB, Upper Grand DSB, Wisconsin Department of Instruction, York Region DSB.**