

**School Committee Ad Hoc Task Force on School Names**  
**Monday, August 6, 2018**  
**5:30 PM – 7:00 PM**  
**Walsh School Committee Room, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Brookline Town Hall**

**Agenda**

- 1) Approval of Minutes of the June 18, 2018 Meeting
- 2) Presentation of Ad Hoc Task Force Research on the Names of Brookline Schools - Baldwin
  - a. Ad Hoc Task Force Discussion
  - b. Public Comment
- 3) Update/Discussion on Heath School Name Research (efforts to recruit researchers and scope/timeline)
  - a. Ad Hoc Task Force Discussion
  - b. Public Comment
- 4) Discussion of Report/Recommendations to School Committee
  - a. Ad Hoc Task Force Discussion
  - b. Public Comment
- 5) Meeting Schedule and Agenda for Next Meeting
  - a. Ad Hoc Task Force Discussion
  - b. Public Comment
- 6) Old and New Business

### **GEORGE S. BALDWIN SCHOOL**, Heath Street

This building contained both a school and a branch library. The land had been purchased in 1873 and in 1898 and had previously been the site of a fire station on Oak Street. The red brick Colonial Revival school and library, designed in 1926 by Kilham, Hopkins & Greeley, opened on September 12, 1927. The building held a kindergarten, three classrooms and a playroom. This school was forced to close in 1981 due to the financial constraints of Proposition 2 1/2. It later was used for a staff-run day care program. It is now used as the site of Winthrop House, an alternative program of Brookline High School.

### **GEORGE S. BALDWIN**

George Storer Baldwin (1866 – February 4, 1922) was a member of the Brookline Board of Selectmen in 1910 and 1911. He was elected to the Board again in 1920 and 1921. He served on the Park Commission until 1920. He was a member on – and for several years was chairman of – the Playground Commission and the Gymnasium and Bathhouse Commission until the time of his death. In 1918 he began a two-year term as Brookline’s representative to the General Court.

Baldwin died of congestive heart failure at the age of 55 in his home at 91 Middlesex Road. His ashes are interred in Forest Hills Cemetery.

By all accounts Baldwin was a good man. At the time of his death he was described in the *Brookline Chronicle* as “one of the best known and prominent citizens of the town,” a person who “had taken a deep interest in civic affairs and given much of his time and attention to matters pertaining to the advancement of the town and the betterment of local conditions.”

Baldwin was born in Boston and attended the Boston Public Schools. He made a small fortune in the stock and bond business. He was a member of the Boston Stock Exchange for twenty-two years and was a prominent figure in financial circles. For example, in a letter to the forty-year-old Baldwin in July of 1906, Louis Brandeis wrote “...Glad to know you’re willing to work with me in this industrial insurance work ...”

His father, William Baldwin, was one of the founders of the Boston Young Men’s Christian Union (not to be confused with the YMCA) on Boylston Street near Tremont. George Baldwin served for many years as the vice president of the organization. The goals of the BYMCU were to “furnish the young men of Boston and vicinity a place of pleasant resort where the influences are beneficial and elevating, to provide them with opportunity of self-improvement and healthful recreation, at little or no expense; to give them opportunities for doing good, by engaging in charitable and benevolent work.” (The distinctive BYMCU building was shuttered in 2012 and is being turned into affordable housing.)

As reported in the *Brookline Chronicle*, the Board of Selectmen issued a statement at the time of Baldwin’s death. It included the following: “The town has lost one of its most valuable officers, and the community a citizen whose frank, sincere, and open conduct in all relations of life made him a useful and effective influence of good ... He has sacrificed his private interests for his public duties. A man of remarkable force and decision... The town has heard much of his efficiency and success but too little of his widespread but quiet charity, genial hospitality, and warm friendships...Distinguished for his fairness, impartiality, executive ability, firmness, and kindness of heart ...Most marked of his many attributes was his interest in the public welfare, physical training, and happiness of children and he leaves an example in his public service for his associates and successors to emulate.

Baldwin was survived by his wife, Nellie (Todd) Baldwin and children Frances Todd Baldwin, George S. Baldwin, Jr., James Todd Baldwin, and Nell Todd Baldwin.

Charles Stearns, the retiring president of the Brookline Historical Society, in his "Report of the President" on January 30, 1923, summed up what many people felt about George S. Baldwin: "He was a genial and hearty gentleman and had many friends."

Sources:

- *Brookline Chronicle*, February 11, 1922
- *Proceedings of the Brookline Historical Society*, January 30, 1923
- *Letters of Louis D. Brandeis, Volume III, 1913-1915, Progressive and Zionist*
- National Listing of Historic Places in northern Boston 1980
- <https://www.mtlhouse.org/slavery/>

## **COOLIDGE CORNER SCHOOL NAMING PROCESS**

### ***DRAFT***

#### **BACKGROUND**

In May 2018, as part of the Town of Brookline's continuing commitment to diversity and inclusion and its efforts to remain "vigilant against all practices and institutions that dehumanize and discriminate against people," Brookline Town Meeting voted to change the name of the Edward Devotion School.

Through its May 2018 vote, Brookline Town Meeting temporarily changed the name of The Devotion School to The Coolidge Corner School, with instructions that the School Committee determine a process to select a new, permanent name. The name identified by the School Committee would then be referred to the Town's Naming Committee before being voted on by Town Meeting in Spring 2019.

The effort to rename the school grew from the understanding and acknowledgement that Edward Devotion was a slaveholder and that part of his wealth resulted from holding another human in bondage. In the context of Brookline's stated values and its recent efforts to address institutional and structural racism, Town Meeting decided that it is no longer appropriate for the school to be named after him and to continue to do so would undermine the core values of equity and mutual respect that our public schools strive to impart on our students.

Renaming the Devotion School should be viewed as another step in the Town's continuing efforts to recognize the strength of its diversity and the contributions of people of color to the town's rich history. Since 2006, when the Hidden Brookline Committee was established, community members have been working to better understand and bring to light the history of slavery and freedom in Brookline. Hidden Brookline's work led to Town Meeting's passing, in 2012, of a warrant article called "A Resolution Regarding Slavery in Brookline: that acknowledged the history of slavery in Brookline and pledged "vigilance against all practices and institutions that dehumanize and discriminate against people." Also as a result of Hidden Brookline's work, the Public Schools of Brookline's 3rd grade social studies curriculum contains a unit about slavery in Brookline that includes the history of Edward Devotion being a slaveholder. More recently, in 2017, the Town entered into a compact with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE). This compact commits the Town to strive toward racial equity in all facets of its operations and policies and to work with community partners in reducing racism in all of its forms.

#### **OVERVIEW OF THE NAMING PROCESS**

Renaming an existing school is a rare and special opportunity. Naming a school requires a high standard; one that is above and beyond naming a street or another type of public building. In our schools, we ask students to assume the identity of the building's namesake. For example, we ask a 1st grader to say, "I am a proud student at the Baker School", we prod Lincoln students to root for their school's basketball team, we encourage Lawrence students to show their pride for classmates during the 5th grade spelling bee, and we urge Driscoll students to

cheer for their classmates at Math League tournaments. A school name is an important part of a child's identity and that connection stays with them for years, if not decades.

The School Committee would like the town to take this unique opportunity and use it to not just pick a new name, but to thoughtfully identify a name that reflects the school's past, present and future, embodies its core values, and inspires students for decades to come. The process needs to be guided by the school's core values, allow for naming suggestions from the current school community and the broader public in Brookline, and consider closely the issues raised during the Town's decision to change the school name including the history of slavery and the need to more accurately recognize the contributions of people of color to the town's rich history.

The Town's by-laws state that the new name of a school building must be recommended by the School Committee to the Town's Naming Committee. If approved by the Naming Committee, the proposed name is submitted to Town Meeting as a Warrant Article and is voted on by Town Meeting.

In developing a process for naming, Superintendent Bott has gotten input from the School Committee, the petitioners involved in the Town Meeting warrant article, the Coolidge Corner School principals, the educators who serve on school's Access and Equity Team, and the PTO leadership. As a result of this input, the School Committee is supporting an approach that will put students at the center of the nomination process. With support from teachers and administrators, a group of Coolidge Corner students will be selected to form the Nominations Committee. The Nominations Committee will review all names that are suggested by members of the public and will be responsible for selecting up to 10 names to be considered further by the School Committee. Members of the Nominations Committee will also work with the School Committee on the public process that will result in the full School Committee ultimately voting on a name to recommend to the Town's Naming Committee.

While it is not conventional for students to play such a significant role in an important town decision-making process, the Coolidge Corner School principals, Superintendent Bott, the School Committee and the Coolidge Corner teachers who are serving on the school's Equity and Access team are confident that with the right adult support, a group of committed students will be able to participate fully and help manage a process that will be inclusive, open, and thorough. Involving students in critical decisions about their school reflects a core part of our educational mission in Brookline -- fostering meaningful student engagement in their learning and developing students' skills and knowledge so they can participate thoughtfully in a democracy. This approach builds on the proud history of decades-old institutions like School Within A School at Brookline High School and other important examples of student activism in our schools and in Town throughout the years.

To help identify a name that represents the aspirations and vision of the school community, the Coolidge Corner School community must first do some work to name the characteristics that embody its core values of Work Hard, Be Kind, Help Others. This work to identify a common vision is especially important given the reunification of the upper and lower schools after three years of being separated. Once this initial reunion is complete, the school community's common

vision will help guide the Nomination Committee's work in reviewing names and ensuring they fulfill the established criteria of the Town's Naming process.

While students will take a significant role as part of the Nominations Committee, adults will continue to be a major and necessary part of the process by submitting nominations, providing input through public meetings and hearings, and participating in Town Meeting. In addition, School Committee members will ultimately decide on the recommended name and the members of the Town Naming Committee will have to vote on whether or not to approve the School Committee's recommendation before it goes to Town Meeting for final consideration.

### **STEPS OF THE NAMING PROCESS**

1. Coolidge Corner School community works together to identify the characteristics of a name that will reflect their school community.
2. Significant public outreach so parents, guardians, community members, students, Town Meeting Members, and others understand the naming process and can submit nominations for a new name. Names submitted by completing online or paper submission with explanation of how the suggested name fits the selection criteria.
3. Nominations Committee of 12 students supported by staff from Coolidge Corner School and from the Superintendent's Office lead a process with the Coolidge Corner School community to narrow down all nominations. Nominations Committee selects no more than 10 names as "semi-finalists."
4. The School Committee Capital Subcommittee and members of the Nominations Committee hold public meetings and gather input on the semi-finalist names before recommending a small number of finalists to the full School Committee.
5. School Committee holds a Public Hearing and considers the finalists before selecting one name to be recommended to the Town's Naming Committee.
6. Town Naming Committee holds public hearing and considers School Committee recommendation for school name. If Town Naming Committee approves recommendation, Warrant Article is submitted for May 2019 Town Meeting.
7. Town Meeting considers and votes on Warrant Article.

# COOLIDGE CORNER SCHOOL NAMING PROCESS

## SUMMARY TIMELINE

### August

- Outreach about Naming Process to staff and families in the Coolidge Corner School community, members of the Town Naming Committee, the Select Board, the Ad Hoc Task Force on School Names, and the petitioners who created Warrant Article 20 to rename the school, and Devotion School alumni to get additional input on the process before it is finalized.
- Finalize Naming Process after review of input
- Finalize process for submitting nominations for the new school name

### September 1 - October 15

- Who Are We - The Coolidge Corner School community works together to identify the characteristics that embody the school's core values of Work Hard, Be Kind, Help Others
- Creation and Organization of the Nominations Committee
- Public Outreach about Naming Process and solicitation of nominations

### October 15 - November 15

- Nominations submitted by public, PSB students, Coolidge Corner School community

### November 15 - December 15

- Nominations Committee considers all nominations and selects semi-finalists

### December 15 - January 15, 2019

- Joint Committee made up of School Committee Capital Subcommittee and members of the Nominations Committee reviews semi-finalist names, seeks public input, deliberates and decides on a small number of finalists to be forwarded to the full School Committee

### January 15 - February 1

- School Committee holds Public Hearing on finalists names, deliberates, and decides on one name to recommend to the Town's Naming Committee

### February 1 - March 1

- Town Naming Committee considers name recommended by School Committee
- Warrant Article submitted for Town Meeting to consider and vote on a new, permanent school name

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**COOLIDGE CORNER SCHOOL NAMING PROCESS**  
**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**1. Will students be able to play such a significant role in such an important process?**

Yes. Just like our students are supported and guided to do incredible and inspiring work in Brookline's schools everyday, these student leaders will be fully supported to do the work of the Nominations Committee. Students will take the work very seriously. They will be fair and thoughtful, and they will inspire us with their commitment and judgement. The adults who support them will create structure and provide guidance all along the way, be there to answer questions, and help them figure out how to make difficult decisions when necessary.

**2. The rationale for changing the Devotion School's name was rooted in the fact that Edward Devotion held another person in slavery. How will this fact be addressed during the naming process?**

Openly and honestly in a way that educates both students and adults in the community. At the Coolidge Corner School, all students will learn about the process by which Town Meeting decided to change their school name including presentations made by the original petitioners of the warrant article. Students will also learn about slavery in Brookline, the extent of it, and the efforts by townspeople to eradicate slavery. Adults in the school community who are current or past parents of the school's students or alumni will be able to participate in forums about the name change and the impetus behind it.

**3. If students make up the Nominations Committee, what role will adults have in identifying and selecting a name?**

Any person in town will be able to nominate a name or names to be considered for the school. Like any naming process or policy decision made by the School Committee, community members will be able to advocate, support, and share their ideas during public meetings. At Town Meeting, Town Meeting Members and other community members can speak in support of or in opposition to a warrant article. Also, depending on the nominations, significant research may be needed on some of the proposed names to ensure they support the values of the Coolidge Corner School community and the criteria established in the Town's Naming Process.

**4. How many students will be on the Nominations Committee?**

There will be up to 12 students on the Nominations Committee and it will include as many as nine students across grades 3-8 and two or three Brookline High School students who attended the Devotion School.

**5. How will students be selected for the Nominations Committee?**

Any Coolidge Corner students who are interested will complete an application that will be reviewed by a group of school administrators and interested teachers. Each student will be asked to explain their interest and answer a few questions in writing or through video. The group of administrators and interested teachers will select the students. The goal is to have a diverse group of students who represent the Coolidge Corner student body.



**6. Will other students have the chance to participate in the selection of a name?**

Yes, students from across town will have the ability to participate in a variety of ways. All students will be able to nominate names. Each class at the Coolidge Corner will work in age appropriate ways to nominate a name or names. Students can also advocate for a name they support during the public meeting process and with the School Committee as it considers finalists.

**7. What role will the Brookline High Schools students who are on the Nominations Committee have?**

While the specific work and function of the Nominations Committee are still being worked out, in addition to being full, participating members of the committee, the BHS students would also work with the faculty/staff advisors to help facilitate and organize the committee. They could support the other students and also be a conduit to students at BHS to keep them informed of the process.

**8. Why is it important for students to play such a significant role in this process?**

At the May 2018 Town Meeting Ada Goldstein, who was then a 3rd grader at Devotion stood up and spoke in support of the name change. She also made three requests on behalf of her classmates:

1. Give us students a chance to talk about all our feelings around the name change. We may feel excited, happy, sad, angry, annoyed, or stressed about the change. Help us manage our feelings.
2. Teach us more about Edward Devotion and slavery and racism, and why taking his name off our school now is important.
3. Give us students a humongous say in what the new name will be. I don't want random grown-ups coming into our classrooms, and announcing, "Hello students. Your school is now named 'The Swedish Chef School.' Goodbye." Give us the right to explore, offer, and vote on a new name.

All three of Ada's suggestions are wise, and the school is already working on incorporating the first two into the beginning of the school year. Including students and the school community in the process will help to identify a name that is based on the values of the school community, allow the school community and students have ownership in the process, and lead to a name that can be celebrated and honored going forward.