

Brookline School Committee Ad Hoc Task Force on School Names
Voted March 22, 2018

Description and Charge

As we look forward to building and naming a new ninth elementary school in the near future, it is an opportunity to review the names of all of our buildings and spaces in the Public Schools of Brookline. Now is an especially opportune time for this reflection, given that the names of public and private spaces, statues, and monuments are being actively debated nationwide, within Boston, and here in Brookline. Whom we choose to honor with names reflects our values as a society, and we are keen to engage in this important discussion and reflection.

The process for naming or removing a name from a School Building will directly follow Town Meeting's own established policy *Town Meeting's Article 6.8 Bylaw on Naming Facilities*.

*[The process is also governed by the School Committee policy on naming, Section F. #2. Naming Spaces. It has been the School Committee's practice to direct the School Committee's Capital Subcommittee to review and recommend to the full School Committee a naming possibility. The full School Committee then may name **spaces** within School Buildings according to the criteria in the School Committee policy handbook.]*

With regards to a School **Building**, the School Committee makes a recommendation to the Town Naming Committee whose members then decide after going through their process whether to forward this recommendation to Town Meeting. Town Meeting then must vote to approve or reject the recommendation.

The Ad Hoc Task Force named by the School Committee will gather information and create a report to help inform the School Committee's recommendation. In addition to the public engagement carried out by the Task Force, the School Committee would in all likelihood also hold a hearing before voting on a recommendation.

The Ad Hoc Task Force to the School Committee's Charge is as follows:

1. Examine the names of all Brookline School Buildings in order to assure that they meet our School Committee policy criteria. Research the history of the people for whom the schools are named, and the circumstances under which the names were chosen, including but not limited to an understanding and explanation of the historical context in which the School Committee/Town operated under when making determinations about whether they are worthy of having the honor of a building named after them.
2. Solicit feedback from historians and community members, including students, teachers, alumni and citizens at large.
3. Review legal aspects of removing a name from a building, i.e., Deeds, Town Bylaws, etc. Where there is a difference between the School Committee policy and the Town Bylaw, the Ad Hoc Task Force should use the Town Naming Committee criteria.
4. Present their findings to the School Committee and provide a written report by Labor Day 2018, with an interim update to the School Committee in early May.

The School Committee's goals for this work are to:

- Establish a clear understanding of our shared history as it relates to the names of our school buildings;
- Bring our community including our students together in a dialogue about our past, our present, who we honor by naming our schools after someone, and why;
- Support the School Committee in making recommendations to the Naming Committee of the Town;
- And model for our students how local government engages in and makes difficult decisions
- If Town Meeting through the above process were to vote to rename, the School Committee would set up another process for vetting possible names.