



THE EDUCATION CENTRE - AURORA

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To whom it may concern:

The York Region District School Board invites students, staff, school and Indigenous community members and families to submit names for consideration in the renaming of the Unnamed Elementary School in Markham (formerly Sir John A. Macdonald Public School).

At the July 6, 2021, Board Meeting, York Region District School Board trustees voted to rename the school following the presentation of a [report on renaming the school](#). As a Board, we are committed to taking every opportunity to champion equity and inclusivity and addressing the recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Report.

The renaming of the school confirms the Board's ongoing commitment to eliminate all forms of racism, hate, and discrimination. Though Sir John A. Macdonald holds a place in Canadian history as the first prime minister of Canada, we must also recognize the injustices that his policies created for Indigenous and Chinese peoples.

Many policies created under his leadership negatively impacted Indigenous peoples, and his greatest injustice was that of the establishment of the residential school system for Indigenous children.

Sir John A. Macdonald also created policies that negatively impacted people of Chinese descent. In particular, in 1885 'the right to vote was taken away from men racialized as Chinese on the grounds that they were biologically different from "Canadians" and that their presence threatened "the Aryan character" of Canadian society.'

The York Region District School Board acknowledges the hardships bestowed upon Indigenous and Chinese peoples under the leadership of Sir John A. Macdonald and the renaming of the school is one way for the Board to demonstrate its commitment to racial justice and eliminate harmful reminders of injustices.

The renaming of the school will be initiated in accordance with [Board Policy #445.0](#). The Local Trustee is responsible for bringing forward a final name for consideration by the Property Management Committee and approval by the Board of Trustees, in consultation with the school community.

Step 1: Submission of names for consideration

- Stakeholders and community members will be invited to provide input to the renaming process through the submission of names for consideration.
- Outreach will include: students, staff, families and school community members of the Unnamed Elementary School, YRDSB Indigenous families and the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation.
- As per [Board Policy #445.0](#), names that are submitted for consideration need to represent the criteria within the policy.

- Names submitted for consideration will be received through a form submission beginning October 12 and closing on October 22, 2021. The details for the process of submitting a name for consideration will be communicated shortly.

Step 2: Shortlist of names

- Name submissions received during Stage 1 will be reviewed by the Local Trustee in order to determine a shortlist based on the renaming criteria defined in the policy.
- Stakeholders and community members will have the opportunity to provide input on the shortlist of names being considered.
- After full consideration, the Local Trustee will select the new name for the school from the shortlist of names.
- The final name chosen by the Local Trustee will be brought forward to the Board for approval in December 2021.

Our intention is to ensure that this is a meaningful and inclusive consultation process. We look forward to selecting a new school name which represents the input from the school community, the YRDSB Indigenous community and the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation, and aligns with the Board's Mission, Vision and Values. Your voice matters!

Sincerely,

Ron Lynn
Trustee of Unnamed Elementary School in Markham

Michael Cohen
Superintendent of Education