

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

October 13, 2009

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jerry D. Weast, Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Renaming of the Mark Twain Facility

At its business meeting on August 27, 2009, the Board of Education addressed the renaming of the Mark Twain facility and recommended for consideration the name Blair G. Ewing Center for Alternative Programs. In accordance with Montgomery County Public Schools Regulation FFA-RA: *Naming Schools*, Mrs. Lauree C. Hemke, building administrator of the Mark Twain facility, led discussions and received input from a diverse group of stakeholders on the renaming of the facility. Additional names were considered during these discussions and stakeholders overwhelmingly agreed to recommend Blair G. Ewing Center as the preferred name for the facility.

As you know, the Mark Twain facility is located in a wooded area near the intersection of Gude Drive and Avery Road in Rockville. Its nearest neighbors are the RedGate Golf Course and other recreational areas maintained by the City of Rockville Department of Recreation and Parks, and Avery House, a group home and outpatient treatment facility. The students who attend the alternative programs housed within the Mark Twain facility reside throughout Montgomery County. In order to ensure school and community participation in the renaming of the facility, the stakeholder groups involved in discussions and recommendations of facility names included parents of students currently enrolled in alternative programs, the alternative programs leadership team, and representatives from the City of Rockville Department of Recreation and Parks and Avery House. Attached is a memorandum from Dr. Frieda K. Lacey, deputy superintendent of schools, which provides additional background information on the process used to discuss and recommend a facility name.

Present at the Board table today are Mrs. Chrisandra A. Richardson, acting associate superintendent, Office of Special Education and Student Services; Mr. Stephen M. Zagami, director, Department of Student Services; and Mrs. Lauree C. Hemke, supervisor, Alternative Programs.

The following resolution is submitted for your consideration:

WHEREAS, A memorandum dated September 30, 2009, was submitted describing the process used to gather program stakeholder and community input on the renaming of the Mark Twain facility and the recommendation of a new facility name, Blair G. Ewing Center; and

WHEREAS, The stakeholder group reached consensus on this recommendation to name the facility Blair G. Ewing Center; and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to Montgomery County Public Schools Regulation FFA-RA: *Naming Schools*, the final responsibility for officially naming a school building rests with the Board of Education; now therefore be it

Resolved, That the Board of Education name the school building heretofore known as Mark Twain as follows:

(TO BE INSERTED AT BOARD MEETING)

JDW:gh

Attachment

Office of the Deputy Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

September 30, 2009

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Jerry D. Weast, Superintendent of Schools
From: Frieda K. Lacey, Deputy Superintendent of Schools
Subject: Naming Process for the Mark Twain Facility



In accordance with Regulation FFA-RA, *Naming Schools*, Mrs. Lauree C. Hemke, building administrator of the Mark Twain facility, led discussions and received input from a diverse group of stakeholders on the renaming of the Mark Twain facility. Stakeholders included alternative programs staff, other unit staff members who work in the building, parents whose children attend an alternative programs housed in the Mark Twain facility, and representatives from the community.

Discussion about the possibility of renaming the Mark Twain facility commenced immediately upon the decision to co-locate the alternative program high school programs to the site was made. Students and parents shared their interest in a new name for the school building that would reflect that the building now contained the alternative high school program, including the Phoenix program; Fleet Street; Randolph Academy; the two Level 3 alternative programs; and the 45-Day Interim program, an educational setting for students with disabilities.

At its August 27, 2009, meeting, the members of the Board of Education addressed the renaming of the Mark Twain facility and recommended for consideration the name of Blair G. Ewing Center for Alternative Programs. Mrs. Shirley Brandman, president of the Board of Education, requested that a school building committee consider this name and recommend up to two additional names for Board member consideration.

The Mark Twain facility is located in a wooded area near the intersection of Gude Drive and Avery Road. Unlike many school buildings, it is not surrounded by a neighborhood of homes. Its nearest neighbors are the Redgate Golf Course, other recreational areas maintained by the City of Rockville Department of Parks and Recreation, and Avery House, a group home for women and children impacted by substance abuse as well as an outpatient treatment facility. The students who participate in the programs housed in the Mark Twain facility come from all areas of Montgomery County.

On September 8, 2009, Mrs. Lauree Hemke, in her capacity as supervisor of alternative programs, discussed the renaming of the facility with the leadership team of alternative

programs. This team represents all alternative program sites in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). Alternative Program Leadership Team members are as follows:

- Mr. Jerome D. Addis, resource teacher, Hadley Farms
- Mrs. Deborah S. Buchanan, resource teacher, Glenmont
- Mrs. Andrea B. Carter, resource teacher, Randolph Academy
- Ms. Elle E. Edmiston, pupil personnel worker, Alternative Programs
- Mr. Emanuel C. Fisher, staff development teacher, Alternative Programs
- Dr. Andrei E. Ghelman, coordinator, Needwood Academy
- Mrs. Lauree C. Hemke, supervisor, Alternative Programs
- Mrs. Donna J. Hinkle, transition coordinator, Alternative Programs
- Mrs. Joy M. Jackson, instructional specialist, Alternative Programs
- Dr. C. Brent Myers, school psychologist, Alternative Programs
- Mr. Carthel R. Russell, resource teacher, Fleet Street
- Ms. Martha J. Young, instructional specialist, Alternative Programs

To ensure that all members of this unique school community were represented in discussions regarding the renaming of the school facility, Mrs. Hemke and the alternative program leadership team led a discussion on renaming the facility at the Back-to-School Night parent meeting held on Thursday, September 10, 2009. Two flyers notifying parents of this meeting and the agenda were sent home with students before the meeting date. Additionally, a telephone message via Connect-Ed. was sent to each family and the information was included on the Needwood Academy website.

Representatives from both the City of Rockville's Department of Parks and Recreation and Avery House were invited to participate in this discussion but did not attend that meeting. On September 15, 2009, Ms. Joy Jackson, instruction specialist, Alternative Programs, contacted Mr. Burt Hall, director of Recreation and Parks, City of Rockville, and Ms. Patricia Prather, supervisor, Avery House to discuss the renaming of the facility and to gather input and ideas.

Information on the facility name proposed by the members of the Montgomery County Board of Education was shared, including background information on Blair G. Ewing. Other names that were suggested by stakeholders were F. Scott Fitzgerald, Avery Academy, Redgate, and Journeys. However, stakeholders overwhelmingly agreed with the recommendation of renaming the facility in honor of Blair G. Ewing, with one significant change from the wording put into consideration by the Board members. The stakeholders recommended that the facility name be Blair G. Ewing Center and not Blair G. Ewing Center for Alternative Programs. The stakeholders believe "for Alternative Programs" brought unnecessary attention to the needs of the students and that such a title was not used on other school building in MCPS that house specific programs for students.

Feedback on this process was very positive. The parents appreciated that the discussion and collection of input on the renaming of the facility was open to all parents at the Back-to-School

Night meeting. The City of Rockville staff associated with the Department of Parks and Recreation and Redgate Golf Course, as well as the staff at Avery House, were pleased to have been involved in the renaming process.

FKL:la