

MEETING MINUTES

ATTENDEES

Committee Members Present

Ms. Deborah Napper, Committee Chair
Ms. T. Dianne Bellamy Small
Ms. Deena Hayes
Ms. Bettye Jenkins

Staff Present

Dr. Sharon L. Contreras, Superintendent
Mr. Marshall Matson, Chief of Schools, Committee Liaison
Ms. Mayra Hayes, Director of English Learners
Ms. Michelle Thigpen, Principal of Southwest Elementary School
Mr. Christian Walter, Principal of High Point Newcomers School

Call to Order

Committee Chair Napper called the meeting to order at 10:36 a.m.

Approval of March 4, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Motion was made by Ms. Jenkins to approve the March 4, 2022 meeting minutes.

Motion made by: Ms. Bettye Jenkins

Voting:

Ms. T. Dianne Bellamy Small – Yes
Ms. Deena Hayes – Yes
Ms. Bettye Jenkins – Yes
Ms. Deborah Napper – Yes

The motion passed unanimously.

Nominations for Renaming

Newcomers School, High Point

Chairperson Napper called on Superintendent Contreras to present the nomination to name the High Point Newcomers School in honor of Sylvia Mendez.

Superintendent Contreras stated that Sylvia Mendez is a civil rights activist of Mexican and Puerto Rican heritage. Born in Santa Ana, CA, her parents moved the family to nearby Westminster, CA. When her parents tried to register her and her siblings at a nearby public school, they were denied enrollment and told the children would have to enroll at a school specifically for Mexican-Americans. This prompted her parents to file a federal lawsuit, *Mendez v. Westminster*, which was the precursor to *Brown v. Board of Education*, the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision establishing that racial segregation in public schools is unconstitutional.

Principal of High Point Newcomers School Christian Walter and Director of English Language Learners Mayra Hayes both served on the naming committee. Mr. Walter stated that one of the reasons Sylvia Mendez was chosen was because Guilford County Schools has close to 20-percent Latino enrollment, and having a school named for someone of Latino descent is important for those students to see a reflection of themselves. Also,

Newcomers School serves recently arrived immigrants and refugees who are novice English speakers; Mrs. Mendez's father was an immigrant to the United States, and her parents fought for their rights. Ms. Hayes stated that if this nomination is approved, it would be the first school in the state named for a Latina.

Motion was made by Deena Hayes to move the nomination forward to the full Board for its consideration.

Motion made by: Ms. Deena Hayes

Voting:

Ms. T. Dianne Bellamy Small – No

Ms. Deena Hayes – Yes

Ms. Bettye Jenkins – Yes

Ms. Deborah Napper – Yes

The motion passed by a vote of 3 to 1.

Southwest Area K-8 School

Chairperson Napper called on Superintendent Contreras to present the nomination to name the new Southwest Area K-8 school in honor of NASA mathematician Katherine Johnson.

Superintendent Contreras stated that Mrs. Johnson was an African-American mathematician whose calculations of orbital mechanics as a NASA employee were critical to the success of the first and subsequent U.S. manned spaceflights. The new school is expected to have a science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) component.

Southwest Elementary Principal and naming committee chair Michelle Thigpen stated there are no schools in the district that are solely named for an African-American female, and given that the school is expected to a STEM component, Mrs. Johnson's name quickly rose to the top of the list of names being considered.

Motion was made by Bettye Jenkins to move the nomination forward to the full Board for its consideration.

Motion made by: Ms. Bettye Jenkins

Voting:

Ms. T. Dianne Bellamy Small – Yes

Ms. Deena Hayes – Yes

Ms. Bettye Jenkins – Yes

Ms. Deborah Napper – Yes

The motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

Superintendent Contreras provided an update on the nomination to name the Middle College at Bennett in honor of Carolyn Q. Coleman. This item has been pulled from the April 12, 2022 Board of Education meeting agenda. Because there may not be enough students to run the school next school year; fewer than 30 girls applied. After this graduating class, there will not be any more students because Bennett College has not been able to house the school for the last couple of years, and while it has been co-located at the Middle College and NC A&T it can accommodate only a certain number of students.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:58 a.m. by unanimous consent.