

**Committee of the Whole (PUBLIC)**

**13 June 2023**

**Report No. 23-049**

**Naming of the New Elementary School in Half Moon Bay**

**Key Contact:**

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**PURPOSE:**

1. To make a recommendation for the naming of the new elementary school in Half Moon Bay.

**STRATEGIC LINKS:**

2. The naming of the new elementary school in Half Moon Bay is connected to the OCDSB Strategic Plan. Specifically, in the pillar of Culture of Caring, the District will improve equity of access, opportunities and outcomes for students. A new, modern and accessible school for the students residing in the Half Moon Bay area meets this desired outcome.

The community based process for school naming is an expression of the District's commitment to engagement with the community. The school naming committee was very successful in reaching out and engaging members of the community in the school naming process.

**CONTEXT:**

3. The OCDSB is building a new elementary school in Barrhaven, specifically in the development of Half Moon Bay. A key step in establishing a new school is the school naming process. The OCDSB has an established process for school naming which is documented in Policy P.107. SCO and Procedure PR.630.SCO-Naming of Schools and Educational Support Facilities (attached as Appendices A and B). In establishing a recommended name for this school, there was a focused effort to bring an equity lens to the process. Working with staff in the Equity Division,

Indigenous Education Committee, and an Algonquin Elder, in addition to the school community, we have been able to bring forward a recommended name.

## **KEY CONSIDERATIONS:**

4. A New School for the Half Moon Bay Community

Half Moon Bay is a fast growing residential area in the southern part of the District. The new JK-6 school located at 989 Kilbirnie in Barrhaven is dual track English and Early French Immersion, scheduled to open with approximately 645 students. Construction on the new school began in the summer 2022. The students who will attend the school are drawn from the community presently serving Half Moon Bay Public School.

5. School Naming Policy and Procedure

Policy P.107. SCO and Procedure PR.630.SCO-Naming of Schools and Educational Support Facilities establish the process and criteria for naming new schools. A key step is ensuring that each new school establishes a School Naming Committee to consult with the community on possible names, review the suggestions and make a recommendation for the new school name.

6. Criteria for School Naming

Selection of the names for all new schools is made as follows:

- i. in honour of a famous Canadian event, achievement of individual; or
- ii. in recognition of an individual for outstanding lifetime contribution to the educational community; or
- iii. in recognition of a local historical contribution by a resident or family; or
- iv. the street, road, major thoroughfare or geographical feature on which, or near to where, the school is located; or
- v. the village, town, subdivision or community in which the school is located.

7. School Naming Committee

In April 2023, the school naming committee was created with 7 community members, 4 staff members, 1 Indigenous Education Advisory Committee Member, an Indigenous Elder, the new principal, superintendent and area trustee.

At the outset, the members were provided with an overview of the process, background information, and were encouraged to avoid names which are similar to existing school names, names of a politically partisan nature, and were encouraged to consider land based and geographic based names. The committee was asked to develop a community based, consultative process for selecting names for the new school.

The School Naming Committee considered and shared the following names, in order of priority, with the Director's Executive Council.

i. **Wazoson Public School:**

Wazoson is the Algonquin/Anishinaabe word for nest ([link to pronunciation](#)). A nest is a safe place to nurture the young. Birds of all types, sizes and shapes begin life in a nest. As there is a place for all those different kinds of birds in the natural world, there is also a place for every student in our school. Wazoson Public School aligns with the OCDSB Strategic Plan of social responsibility and well being and embodies care and belonging to our community. This name encourages engagement and connection with the natural world around our students.

ii. **Wawatie Public School:**

Wawatie is the Algonquin/Anishinaabe word for Northern Lights or Aurora Borealis (Wawa-tee). It reflects the theme of inspiration through nature and celestial bodies. The name reminds us we are located on Algonquin territory and celebrates a move forward in reconciliation. Wawatie Elementary School embodies the spirit of innovation.

iii. **Polaris Public School:**

Polaris represents the North Star, a bright star that appears above the North Pole. For Half Moon Bay's partner school, the theme of celestial bodies would remain. Our students are proud and ambitious, each unique, yet part of a larger community. All of our students will shine bright! Polaris Elementary School becomes the beacon in the community.

Members of the School Naming Committee indicated that it was an important step towards reconciliation by selecting a name of Algonquin background. An Algonquin named school will provide significant learning opportunities for students and the school community as they learn more about the history of the Algonquin people.

The School Naming Committee is recommending that the new elementary school in Half Moon Bay be named Wazoson Public School. The alternate name presented is Wawatie Public School.

## **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

8. The promotion and consultation associated with the school naming process was completed at no cost except for human resources. There will be costs associated with signage for the new school once the name is established. This cost is included in the budget for all new school

construction.

## **COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION:**

9. In order to engage the students and the new school community, the school principal met with students during regular visits to Half Moon Bay PS as well as engaging parents and members of the school community in providing naming suggestions.

An initial survey was shared with students in Grade 4 at Half Moon Bay, parents/guardians and the community in early March and April to solicit potential names for the new elementary school. On 12 April 2023, the committee met to review the approximate 45 school name submissions made by students, parents, staff and community members. Upon consideration of the submissions and names generated through conversations with Algonquin elder Albert Dumont and Algonquin Knowledge Keeper Monique Manatch, coupled with the OCDSB guidelines for school names, the committee started the process of short listing names.

Based on the survey feedback, it seems that many parents preferred the name Polaris. Comments shared about the name Polaris was that it would maintain the theme of celestial bodies in Half Moon Bay and was easy to pronounce. Students also shared that Polaris was easy to say. However comments were also shared about the fact that there is a nuclear missile named Polaris, which could lead to some misinterpretation about the name.

After deliberation, the committee opted in favor of an Indigenous name as the recommendation for the new elementary school in Half Moon Bay.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT the new Half Moon Bay elementary school located in Ottawa at 989 Kilbirnie in Barrhaven be named Wazoson Public School, effective September 2023.

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Shawn Lehman  
Superintendent of  
Instruction

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Michele Giroux  
Director of Education and  
Secretary of the Board

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A Policy P.107.SCO

Appendix B Procedure PR.630.SCO-Naming of Schools and Educational  
Support Facilities

Appendix C Transition Team Membership