



# Staff Analysis and Report to the Board

**Board Meeting/ Work Session Date:** June 11, 2019

**Senior Lead:** Stephanie Cameron

**Staff Lead:** Cameron Vaughan

**SUBJECT: Franklin High School Mascot Identification**

## **I. BACKGROUND**

The Board of Education received several complaints from community members regarding the name Quakers being used as the name for the Franklin High School mascot and school identification. The Board determined that the name “Quakers” as used by Franklin High School violates Policy 2.20.010-P, II(1)(b)(iii) because Quakers is the name of a religious group.

The Complainants sought a change to the name of the Franklin High School nickname, “Quakers,” asserting that the name “Quakers” is the name of an organized religion and, as such, is inappropriate, offensive, and unconstitutional. In response to the Complaint, the Superintendent submitted to the Board a request for review of PPS’s “Naming School District Property” Policy 2.20.010-P.

The Board of Education conducted a comprehensive review of the “Naming School District Property” Policy 2.20.010-P, and made numerous changes to the policy including revised criteria for the naming of school district property, including schools, mascots, symbols and other images considered for representation of a school or district.

The Board of Education had a first and second reading on the revised policy, a public comment period, and the Policy was formally adopted by the Board. The revised Policy says that names shall not be a person, location or character whose primary identification is of a religious nature or be a name of a religious group or members. When considering renaming, the renaming shall take into account the District’s focus on eliminating systemic discrimination.

Following this change to District Policy, the Board directed district staff to commence a public committee review process to determine a new mascot/identification for Franklin High School.

## **II. RELATED POLICIES/BEST PRACTICES**

Because the name Quaker is directly related to a religious organization, this issue prompted a review and update to the District’s Naming Policy 2.20.010-P Naming School District Property.

- (b) Names submitted for consideration shall not:
  - (i) conflict with the names of other schools or programs in the School District or surrounding School Districts.
  - (ii) reflect the names of specific cities with the exception of “Portland”.

*(iii) be a person, location or character whose primary identification is of a religious nature or be a name of a religious group or members*

District staff applied the Racial Equity and Social Justice Lens during the committee meetings and in all interactions with the school, alumni, and surrounding community, to ensure staff and committee members considered all of the viewpoints, opinions, and ramifications of the new name.

### **III. ANALYSIS OF SITUATION**

As the Board and Superintendent directed staff to commence and complete a public process to determine a new name for the school identity and mascot by June 2019, the Superintendent is to recommend to the Board which name forwarded by the committee will be the new mascot name so that facilities, communications, athletics and other district departments can commence changing the Quakers name to the new mascot name and school identification. The district has until summer 2020 to complete the changes.

### **IV. FISCAL IMPACT**

There are a number of items which will need to be replaced, the most notable will be the scoreboard on the Franklin field. The District will pay for all of the replacements and the school will have no financial responsibility for the changes.

- The panel on the scoreboard will be under \$1,500 to replace.
- Four wall wrestling mats in the gymnasium will need to be rebranded, at a cost of approximately \$1,400
- A portion of the floor in the cafeteria is under repair and the Quaker logo will be removed when the repair is done. No new logo is planned for that site.
- Several banners throughout the school have the old mascot name, approximate cost will be \$500 to replace them

### **V. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

A committee was formed and included 8 Franklin students, two from each grade. The Committee also included members of the Franklin Alumni Association, as well as Franklin staff, Franklin current and former parents and Franklin community members. A survey was distributed to Franklin students, staff and parents, as well as bordering neighborhood association and neighbors. In addition, Principal Frazier reached out to and met with Franklin affinity groups. The school's Alumni association posted information on their Facebook page. The district posted a link on the main page which directed people to information regarding the history, policy and actions taken by the Board. All committee meeting dates, times and location were posted on the district website, as well as in outreach to all feeder schools.

### **VI. TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Per the November 2018 report to the Board and Superintendent, the district has until summer 2020 to make the changes to school property where the Quaker mascot appears.

### **VII. COMMITTEE'S FINAL OPTIONS FORWARDED TO THE SUPERINTENDENT**

After six weeks of leaving the survey up in order to garner a larger amount of participation, the committee reviewed all of the community votes and nearly 100 name recommendations for additional ideas. The committee ultimately chose a name they felt best embodied the history and spirit of Benjamin Franklin, who was a scientist, ambassador, philosopher, statesmen, writer, businessman and celebrated free thinker and wit. Franklin is often referred to as 'America's

Renaissance Man' and he played a pivotal role in forging a united American identity during the American Revolution. The committee's agreed upon and forwarded final name for Franklin's mascot is:

**Lightning**

In 1752, Benjamin Franklin flew a kite during a thunderstorm and collected a charge in a Leyden Jar when the kite was struck by lightning, enabling him to demonstrate the electrical nature of lightning. Franklin conducted many experiments having to do with lightning and invented the lightning rod, which was used to protect buildings and ships.

**VIII.SUPERINTENDENT'S FINAL RECOMMENDATION**

After reviewing that a representative committee observed the outlined process for considering community stakeholder input, and the forwarded preference for a new mascot name, as Superintendent, I am recommending the Board approve the school community's popular choice: "Lightning" as Franklin's new mascot.

---

**Guadalupe Guerrero**  
**Superintendent**  
**Portland Public Schools**

---

**Date**

**ATTACHMENTS**

- A. District Naming Policy
- B. Franklin High School Mascot Identification Committee charter, timeline and outline
- C. Resolution

***PPS District Priorities FY 2018-19***

- 1. Set a clear Vision and Strategic Plan*
  - 2. Create equitable opportunities and outcomes for all students*
  - 3. Build management and accountability systems and structures*
  - 4. Allocate budget, funding and resources focused on improving outcomes for students*
-