

Summary of Input on New Names for [Le Conte] School

Following is a timeline and summary of the school name deliberations and input. For ease of reading in the narrative below, the **bolded** names indicate the **top 3** ranking in each round. A summary table is at the end.

Please note: in addition to the summaries, numbers and percentages, there are links to qualitative comments in several sections. To read more about each of the top names, please see the [Top 20 Names document](#).

Full Committee Online Straw Poll - Feb 22-26

The full committee of 13 people went through all 118 name submissions, and [rated each](#) on a scale of 0 to 5. There were eight names with strong ratings, three of which had particularly strong support:

- **Mendez** was most highly ranked, with 9 of 13 giving an enthusiastic “excellent-5” score, and the other four scores were either “good - 4” or “may be appropriate - 3.”
- **Acty** and **Tape** rated next highest, with 6 to 7 top ratings, and one dissension.
- *Chochenyo* (name of Ohlone language/peoples) had general agreement, but somewhat lower scores overall, and only 4 raters who rated it as 5.
- *Huerta* had the same average rating as *Chochenyo*, but 2 dissenters.
- *brown* came next, with 6 proponents and two dissenters.
- *Sotomayor* had 3 proponents, 2 dissenters.
- *Arcoíris* had 5 proponents, 2 dissenters, and a mix of scores.

NAC Meeting - March 6 and 7

On March 6, a Sorting Subcommittee of six people reexamined the entire list in more detail, using a rubric as one discussion tool. They came up with a top 20 list for full committee review. The full committee of 13 members met to discuss the top 20 names, and were given 10 dots to distribute to their preferences. (It was permissible to put more than one dot on a name.) The results for the top 3 were similar to the initial full committee straw poll, with Mendez having the strongest response.

- **Mendez** (20)
- **Acty** (16)
- **Tape** (14)
- *Arcoíris* moved up to a three-way tie for 4th place with *brown* and *Lisjan*¹ (12)
- *Huerta*² was added as a seventh option to the final list.

March 14 - PTA + Community Meeting

The top seven school name choices were shared at a community meeting. At this point the word *Ohlone* was used as a placeholder for the idea of a name representing indigenous peoples.

¹ Scores and preferences for *Lisjan/Chochenyo/Mukwema/Ohlone* were combined under the premise that people voted for these with the same intention – honoring indigenous people – and did not have specific knowledge or preference for the culturally appropriate word.

² While the goal had been a short list of six names, *Huerta* was included for a number of reasons, including (1) uncertainty as to whether the **Lisjan/Chochenyo/Mukwema/Ohlone* concept would stay in the running if there was not timely direction from tribal representatives, (2) many members of the school staff and parent committees had in prior discussions expressed an interest/expectation that *Dolores Huerta* would be among the top names considered, and (3) the score of 11 dots for *Huerta* was not that different from 12 earned by *Arco Iris*, *brown* and *Lisjan*. (Next was *Sotomayor* with 9 dots, *Ruby Bridges* with 8, and *In Lak'Ech* with 6.)

Committee members described each name, and then there were table discussions.

In addition to NAC members, there were **37** students, parents, neighbors, staff and community members. Everyone was given three dots to affix to a tally/notes sheet to note their preferences, and doubled dots were allowed. (NAC members were not included in the tally.) A few people split their dots to give half dots. There was a strong favorite:

- **Arcoiris**, with 27.5 dots, very far ahead of:
- **Huerta** (17), **Ohlone** (16.5) and **Mendez** (16) in a virtual tie for 2nd place.

Of the 37 in attendance, 26 tally sheets came from parents, 2 of whom were also neighbors, 3 from students, 1 neighbor, 1 teacher, and 6 did not identify their affiliation. The only useful statistic to relate in terms of disaggregated voting is the parent group:

The tally of those who identified as parents, was:

- **Arco Iris** - 20
- **Huerta** -17
- **Mendez** - 12
- *Ohlone* - 10, *Acty* - 5.5, *Tape* - 5, *brown* - 4.5

[\[Please read comments from PTA meeting here\]](#)

English Learning Advisory Committee (ELAC) Meeting - 4/17

Eight members of the *English Learner Advisory Committee* (ELAC) discussed the seven top names. ELAC members mentioned being inspired by the stories of Mendez, Huerta and Acty, and liked “the names of people who made big gains in education.” Given 3 dots, and allowed to double up, the results were:

- **Mendez = 10**
- **Huerta = 7**
- **Acty = 5**
- *brown*, *Ohlone* and *Tape* each = 1

[\[Please read comments from ELAC here.\]](#)

Parents of Children of African Descent (PCAD) Meeting - 4/19

Eight members (adults and children) of *Parents of Children of African Descent* (PCAD) discussed the seven top names. The PCAD families mentioned they liked “the names of women who made a direct impact on education.”

- **brown = 6**
- **Acty, Mendez, Ohlone** each 2
- *Huerta* = 1

[\[Please see comments from PCAD meeting here\]](#)

Staff Survey - 4/24 to 4/26

School staff were given an online survey to complete. For staff and student surveys, “Ohlone” was omitted from the choices, as there had not been sufficient progress with tribal representatives by that time to feel confident that the name would be sufficiently vetted. Of the six choices, staff were asked to select three names; all but 2 staff did so. Unlike the dot exercise, there was no way to state stronger preferences, except in the comments.

There were 37 staff responses (actually 38, but one was an accidental duplicate due to a partial submission). Two certificated staff members who are members of the NAC submitted survey responses, so to be consistent, they could be removed from the count, though it doesn't actually change things that much - below are the percentages, both with and (without) the NAC members. Overall, the staff had a very strong favorite, **Mendez**, followed by two other contenders.

- **Mendez**, with 78-(80)%
- **Acty** with 60-(66)%
- **Huerta** with 51%
- Arcoiris had 43%, brown 30-(34)%, and Tape 23-(24)%.

Disaggregating by 22 certificated and 13 classified staff that were counted, there are some differences, but mostly consensus, at least around **Mendez** and **Acty**. For the 15 classroom teachers who responded, there was an interesting difference. Mendez was still the top choice, but Arcoiris came second, and Acty third. Three teachers also mentioned they preferred a hyphenated name, **Tape-Mendez**, to recognize both stories and the links between them.

Classified staff:

- **Mendez** 92%
- **Acty** 69%
- **brown** 46%
- Huerta 38%, Arcoiris 23%, Tape 15%

Certificated staff:

- **Mendez** 72%
- **Acty** and **Huerta** tied with 59%
- Arcoiris 50%, Tape 32%, brown 27%

Classroom Teachers

- **Mendez** 80%
- **Arcoiris** 67%
- **Acty** 53%
- Huerta 47%, Tape 33%, Tape-Mendez 20%, brown 20%

[Please read comments from Staff Survey here](#)

Student Survey 4/24-4/26

The TK-2nd-grade children provided teachers with their preferences. These young students favored **Huerta** (63%) followed by a tie between teachers **Acty** and **brown** (54%), and *Arcoiris* came in with 50%, *Mendez* with 44% and *Tape* with 26%. Perhaps not surprisingly, **Arcoiris** was the favorite of the youngest (TK-K); 62% chose it.

The 3rd-5th grade students responded to a Google poll online, and there is not a by-grade breakdown. There were 169 (anonymous) responses, and it appears there were (probably unintentional) duplicates, as there are only 155 student enrolled. (It is easy to accidentally enter a response twice in Google Forms, depending on how the form is set up.) A comment was made twice with exactly the same wording, and there were some duplicate or partial votes entered within seconds of each other, so the student voting might not be entirely reliable - there might be a 10% variance. Most students selected three names, as requested. Five selected just one name, and 6 chose just two names, in a variety of combinations.

So, with the caveat that student numbers may have a 10% margin of error, the preference tally from older students is **Huerta** with 76%, followed by **Mendez** with 63%. *Tape* and *brown* each had 41%, *Acty* 39%, and *ArcoIris* last place with 27%.

[Please see 3rd-5th grade student comments here](#) (no comments from younger students.)

School Governance Council (SGC) Meeting 5/2/18

The 12 member SGC was not asked to determine preferences, as half of the members are already on the NAC. However, those not on the NAC provided positive comments about the process and the range of names chosen, and stories represented. A teacher commented: *“It was fun teaching, and I enjoyed learning along with the students about the names. Students took the Google poll very seriously, and were very engaged with the names. It’s created community with everyone learning together. Students were picking up books on their own. I was enjoying the learning too. Even for myself, I went on a jog with a friend in the cemetery and we saw the Tape headstone! I would not have known their story before this.”*

[Please see SGC comments here](#)

SUMMARY TABLE:

This table summarizes each group’s top three choices. Subgroups with significant variations are shown in parentheses. With the caveat that the input was not intended as a “vote” but rather a “preference,” and there were different ways to provide input - rating 0-5, or providing a number of dots, allowing double dots or not, answering a paper survey or an online survey...and sometimes “Ohlone” was in the mix, sometimes not, there were different variations on names (Mendez Family, Sylvia Mendez, Tape Family, Mary/Mamie Tape, etc.), and there may have been overcounting in the student poll, etc...nonetheless there appear to be trends toward consensus across many groups:

Group	1st	2nd	3rd
NAC straw poll	Mendez	Acty	Tape
PTA meeting	Arcoiris	Huerta / Ohlone / Mendez	
(Parents @ PTA)	Arcoiris	Huerta	Mendez
ELAC	Mendez	Acty	Huerta
PCAD	brown	Acty, Mendez, Ohlone (tie)	
TK-2nd Students	Huerta	Acty/brown	Arcoiris
(TK students)	Arcoiris	Mendez	Tape/brown
3rd-5th Students*	Huerta	Mendez	Tape/brown
All Staff	Mendez	Acty	Huerta
(Classified Staff)	Mendez	Acty	brown
(Certificated Staff)	Mendez	Acty	Huerta
((Classroom Teachers))	Mendez	Arcoiris	Acty

REVIEW OF INPUT and PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

It is gratifying that there was wide interest and support for so many compelling possibilities. This process fostered an appreciation for our local and California history, recognized the importance of honoring native history and presence, considered words and images that celebrate diversity, recognized strong women - including many dynamic, trailblazing women of color - and discovered connections between many people who have fought for access for all to a quality public education.

In reviewing the many discussions and polls, **Mendez** appears to be the best candidate for the community as a whole: this name has consistently risen to first or second place with almost every group. It is a very strong choice among school staff in particular, and was rated very highly by the advisory committee in its straw poll.

MELENDEZ

The story of **Sylvia Mendez** meets many of the key criteria: of being *inspiring* and *enduring*, with a young *Latina girl* at the center of a landmark case for access for all to *public education* (*Mendez v. Westminster, 1947*). The compelling Mendez story also tells of *children, women, families, and neighbors* fighting for their rights, and lifts up an *under-recognized* piece of California history.

Mendez is also at a “sweet spot” of intersection with many other important stories that were embedded in other top name suggestions. For example, the *Mendez* case connects to the local Chinese-American *Tape Family* story, at the center of prior school integration case (*Tape v. Hurley 1885*) and to the national integration story which includes *Ruby Bridges*. There is a deep connection to Japanese-American history such as that of nominees *Chiura Obata* and *Mine Okubo*, because of the Mendez friendship with the Aki Munemitsu family, who were interned (*a story told in Sylvia and Aki*). In addition to Mendez, the committee also considered local education heroes *Ruth Acty*, *Carol Sibley* and *Eleanor Carlisle*, and Latina women role models *Dolores Huerta*, *Sonia Sotomayor*, *Eleanor S. Martinez*, as well as words like *Arcoíris*, and *In Lak'ech* which recognize our diversity and common humanity.

Variations on Name: The consensus favorite, **Sylvia Mendez Elementary School**, has the advantage of increasing the number of schools in BUSD named for women (of the 11 schools named for people, only 2 carry a woman's name), and also reflects the experience of a child going to school. Some have liked “*Mendez Family*” as an option to expand the story and inspire a sense of school family; others have advocated for consideration of Mendez-Tape or Tape-Mendez; three staff members mentioned this idea - with the reasoning that it “*Recognizes the work of the families (not individuals). Shows that positive change is a process over time that involves the work of many people, and that the smaller successes and even failures are connected in struggle.*”

Alternatives: Second and third place options, **Ruth Acty** and **Dolores Huerta**, represent compelling stories. *Ruth Acty* was the trail-blazing teacher who integrated the teaching force in Berkeley, and her story celebrates her accomplishments and dedication. *Dolores Huerta* has many admirers in Berkeley, and she has also come to wider attention due to a recent documentary. However, for those who care deeply about the connection to the two-way-immersion and Latinx connection, *Acty* does not fit as well, and for those who want a strong education connection, *Huerta* isn't as compelling, and there are also already several schools named for her.

Naming Advisory Committee Meeting 5/2/18

The full (13 member) committee met one last time on May 2, 2018; this was the 7th meeting of the full committee. The members reviewed the input summary with the intent of coming to agreement on a committee recommendation.

After discussion, the committee was polled on forwarding the name *Sylvia Mendez Elementary School* as the first place choice, with *Ruth Acty Elementary School* and *Dolores Huerta Elementary School* as 2nd and 3rd choices for Board consideration.

Initially, 10 out of 13 members supported the proposal, with three preferring a variation, such as "Tape-Mendez" to recognize the connections across time, and across communities, as well as include a very local story.

After further discussion, the name "**Sylvia Mendez Elementary School**" was selected, with approval of 12 out of 13 members, pending confirmation with Ms. Mendez herself that it would be acceptable to use her name. (In a prior contact she had mentioned wishing to honor her parents instead of her own name. The committee was uncertain as to whether she would accept the recognition.)

The committee was asked for a preferred variation on "Sylvia Mendez" as a fall-back. Six members indicated a preference for "Tape-Mendez Elementary School" (one of whom had preferred that choice to "Sylvia Mendez"). Four members indicated a preference for "Mendez Family" as a fall-back.

The committee agreed to forward "Ruth Acty" and "Dolores Huerta" as second and third choices in case the board wished to discuss other options.

Follow-up: Ms. Mendez was contacted the day after the committee meeting, and indicated she would be honored if the name "Sylvia Mendez" were to be selected for the school. She was happy to hear of the extensive process and the recognition of many other important stories and ideas along the way. She was very pleased to hear of the connections within the Berkeley community (such as the Tape and Acty stories) and she feels those connections are important. She spoke of the role of Thurgood Marshall, and how through *Mendez v. Westminster*, California lead the way for the nation in *Brown vs. Board of Education*. She mentioned that she and Louise Brown spoke together at a conference a little while ago about the links between their cases. She also feels the Mendez connection to Japanese-American history is very important - she is going to New York to make a speech with the niece of Aki Munemitsu about the intersection between Japanese-American and Mexican-American histories. Last but not least, she spoke of her love for Berkeley and her memories of coming to speak the prior year at Longfellow for the 70th anniversary of the court case, when *Mendez v. Westminster* was the topic of the *Chavez-Huerta* celebration in Berkeley.

Carrying the Learning Forward: While there was general agreement on the appropriateness of the *Mendez* name for this school, many committee and community members also feel strong connections to other name possibilities, and have expressed the desire to ensure that other stories and ideas are not lost after the school name selection. The committee discussed including suggestions about how to "Carry the Learning Forward" at both the school and district level, and that will be part of the report to the Board.