



June 3, 2010

**RECOMMENDATION**

**TO:** Sherrie Brown, Acting Superintendent  
**FROM:** Tanya Rowe, Director of Communications and Community Relations  
**SUBJECT:** Future Elementary School Naming Task Force Recommendation

The Future Elementary School Naming Task Force met on June 1 to review 128 submissions for 69 possible school names. The ideas for school names were submitted through a public process in May 2010 by students, families, community members and staff.

The Task Force appreciated the high level of interest in this process and all of the ideas, especially from those who took the time to research and provide extensive background for their suggested name.

Task Force members reviewed and screened each idea using the school-naming criteria in School Board policy and [procedure 9250/P](#):

1. The name will be known to, and significant to, the people of the district.
2. The name submitted will not conflict with names of other schools in the district or surrounding districts.
3. The name can relate to a local neighborhood; a relevant geographic area; or a person, a group of persons, or a place of historical, geographic or cultural significance. The name of a person or place can reflect national, state, local or Pacific Northwest history.
4. The name of a deceased person should reflect someone who has attained national or local prominence in the fields of education, arts and sciences, or statesmanship. The name of a living person should be avoided.

The Task Force also screened ideas against a [list of schools](#) in Whatcom and Skagit counties to avoid names of current schools or names that are similar.

The goal of the Task Force was to narrow the ideas to a list of three to five for the School Board to make a selection, as outlined in School Board policy 9250.

I am pleased to present this recommendation on behalf of the Task Force for the School Board's action at the June 10 meeting. The Task Force was unanimous in recommending the following three names for the future elementary school on Aldrich Road:

- **Aldrich Elementary School**
- **Cordata Elementary School**
- **Salish Elementary School**

The recommended names are listed in alphabetical order, but have not been ranked in accordance with the 9250 procedures. The rationale/background for each recommended name that is included below comes from a compilation of reasoning provided by those who suggested the name and from the Task Force's discussion and research.

#### **Aldrich Elementary School Rationale/Background**

The Task Force is recommending this name because it was the name submitted the most number of times – 23 – through the public process. It is easy to remember and relates to its geographic location on Aldrich Road. According to the “History of Whatcom County,” F.W. Aldrich was a Whatcom County carpenter and poultry farmer of the Ten Mile township at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century whose “life history has been distinguished by the most substantial traits of character and...high standing in the community has been well merited.”

The Task Force reviewed many other name suggestions for well known community members and ruled them out because members felt it was important that the name also have a local neighborhood or geographic connection. While the Task Force is recommending this name as one of three possibilities, members expressed concern about potential confusion due to the name Aldrich being similar to Alderwood Elementary, which is located nearby.

#### **Cordata Elementary School Rationale/Background**

The Task Force is recommending this name because of its connection to the future school's local neighborhood. The school site is currently located in the Cordata/Guide Meridian neighborhood, which the city plans to change to Cordata Neighborhood as the official neighborhood name by the end of 2010. A future city Cordata Park will be developed adjacent to the school site. Task Force members discussed that many city residents relate the name Cordata to the suburban business park for which the neighborhood was originally developed. Over time, the area has changed to include a significant amount of residential housing and communities. No retail stores or companies in the neighborhood currently use Cordata as part of their name.

Eight of out 24 neighborhoods in the Bellingham area have an elementary school that shares the same name (Alderwood, Birchwood, Columbia, Geneva, Northern Heights, Roosevelt, Silver Beach and Sunnyland). Cordata is a Latin name used in botany and describes a plant with heart-shaped leaves. Cordatus means heart-shaped.

### **Salish Elementary School Rationale/Background**

The Task Force is recommending this name because of its connection to the local geographic area – Salish Sea is the new geographic name for Puget Sound or the inland waterways in our Northwest region. It is complimentary to school names in the Bellingham area and of neighboring school districts such as Nooksack, Mount Baker, Whatcom, Kulshan and Squalicum. According to Wikipedia, the name Salish Sea was first known to be used in 1988 by Bellingham resident and marine biologist Bert Webber. He created the name for the combined waters in the region, intended to supplant the names Georgia Strait, Puget Sound and Strait of Juan de Fuca to raise consciousness about taking care of the region's waters and ecosystems. Coast Salish refers to a cultural or ethnographic designation of the First Nations in British Columbia, Canada and Native American cultures in Washington, and Oregon in the United States who speak one of the Coast Salish languages. Coast Salish languages are part of the Salishan language family but there is no one language or people named “Coast Salish.”

Task Force members noted that several submissions for school name ideas, including this one, referenced a desire to honor under-represented groups in our community and the diversity of students who will attend the future elementary school.

### **Task Force Members**

I would like to acknowledge and thank the members of this Task Force for their hard work:

Nash Bruner, Shuksan Middle School student

Adrienne Lederer, community representative and president of Guide Meridian/Cordata Neighborhood Association

Robin Baker, Birchwood Elementary School parent representative

Dave Adams, Birchwood Elementary School principal

Mary Anne Stuckart, Sunnyland Elementary School principal

Helena Quigley, Birchwood Elementary certificated staff member

Diane Kindle, Sunnyland Elementary certificated staff member

Amy Carder, English Language Learners’ (ELL) program facilitator

Matthew Read, classified staff representative from Buildings and Grounds

Also, a special thank you to Jeff Jewel of the Whatcom Museum of History and Art, and Bernie Thomas, director of the Lummi Nation K-12 school system, for providing historical and cultural information regarding the names.