

# DSST School Name Change Process

## Introduction

This process is to help provide guidelines and steps for the School Director as well as DSST's Senior Leadership Team and Board to transparently work with students, staff and community. This document is not a guarantee or contract for how the process must work in every situation because there may be reasons to adapt it based on the circumstances of the particular school. The outcome of this process focuses on changing a school name, it is NOT the process or steps for changing a building name. The owner of the building makes that decision, and in most cases those decisions must be taken up by the school district's School Board.

## Phase 1: Request for a Name Change

- A. **Initial Phase** - If there are a significant number of students, school staff, parents, and/or community voices to consider a potential name change for the school, they will contact the School Director and submit by email a summary of the reasons for changing the name as well as any metrics to capture the size of the perspective.
- B. **School Director's Power to Terminate** - If at any point the School Director feels proceeding with the name change process is no longer feasible, legitimate reasons no longer exist, or is counter to school culture, the School Director can terminate the process. The School Director must communicate with the student body and school community the reasons for terminating the process.
- C. **Approval of DSST's Senior Leadership Team** - The School Director must notify and provide appropriate time for approval from DSST's Senior Leadership Team **before** initiating the name change process and **before** terminating the process.

## Phase 2: Public Meeting & School's Representative Body Vote to Determine if Name Change Should Occur

- A. **Legitimate Reasons** - The School Director will reasonably determine if the summary of the reasons submitted from the Initial Phase are legitimate to warrant the name change process.
  - 1. If the School Director determines that the arguments are not legitimate, the School Director will communicate the rationale for why (see above, School Director's Power to Terminate).
  - 2. If the School Director determines the reasons are legitimate and require more exploration, the School Director will begin working on scheduling a public meeting for further discussion (see above, Approval of DSST's Senior Leadership Team).
- B. **The Public Meeting** - If the School Director decides the name change should proceed and DSST's Senior Leadership Team approves, there will be scheduled a public meeting for the school community. The purpose of the meeting is to hear the reasons on whether or not to change the name and to begin fielding potential new names for the school.

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1. *Determining representatives* - The School Director works with the school community to determine up to 2 representatives for each side, to present the pros and cons of the name change reasons. These individuals can be students or staff members but cannot be anyone outside of the DSST school.
  2. *One-page summary* - Each side is allowed to produce a one-sided, one-page summary of their position which they can give to all attendees at the meeting.
  3. *Presenting arguments* - The representatives are each given a 5 minute period of time (10 minutes per side of the argument) to explain their rationale.
  4. *Community questions and comment period* - At the conclusion of presenting arguments, the public is afforded an opportunity to ask questions and make comments for as long as the School Director deems appropriate. The School Director will also determine the order of questioning and speaking for the meeting.
  5. *Surveying the audience* - At the conclusion of the community questions and comment period, surveys will be handed out to all attendees with the goal of gauging people's opinion on changing the school's name and offer an opportunity for the public to propose possible names.
- C. The Vote By The School's Representative Body**
1. After the Public Meeting, the School Director must gather the School's Representative Body to administer an additional vote of specific DSST school stakeholders.
  2. *School's Representative Body* - The School Director will gather the recommendations of each representative body in regards to a name change and, if appropriate, what the name could be changed to (see below, NOTE: Parameters for New School Name). It is incumbent upon the School Representative Body to accurately represent the perspective of their group. The School Director assembles at least two (2) members of each of the following, assuming they exist:
    - a. The equivalent of a parent organization;
    - b. The school's leadership team;
    - c. The teaching staff; and
    - d. The student council.
  2. *Sharing results from the public meeting* - The School Director is responsible for bringing forth the reasons made at the Public Meeting, including each side's one-page summary and the results from the survey. They present these findings to the School's Representative Body.
  3. *Discussion and vote* - The School Director will facilitate at least one meeting regarding the name change with the School's Representative Body. Once the discussion has come to its conclusion, the School Director asks for a silent vote of all the representatives on whether to change the school name. Each

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representative writes “change” or “do not change” on a slip of paper and gives it to the School Director, who will tally the votes and report the results.

3. *Possible New Names* - If the representative body votes to change the school's name they will discuss the options for new school names (see below, NOTE: Parameters for School Name Change). The School Director will push for a consensus around several favored possible new names for the school from the School's Representative Body. The School Director creates a final list of at least three (3) options.

## Phase 3: Final Decision and Network-Level Communication

- A. **One-Page Report** - The School Director drafts a one-page report with all relevant information to date including the results of all voting (both at the Public Meeting and with the School's Representative Body), any additional information or factors to consider, a comprehensive list of proposed names for the school (if applicable), and the School Director's final recommendation. The one-page report is shared with DSST's Senior Leadership Team for input.
- B. **DSST's Board of Directors Approval** - The Chief Executive Officer with the assistance of the Chief External Affairs Officer and Chief Equity Officer repackages the one-pager, and submits the one-page report to DSST's Board of Directors who will determine if the name should be changed. The Board Meeting will be open to public comment and will be posted on DSST's website. The President of the Board, in collaboration with the CEO, will decide how public comment will proceed at the Board Meeting. After public comment, the Board will vote on whether to change the school name or not, and, assuming they determine it is prudent to change the school name, will decide on the final school name.
- C. **Notification of Final Decision**
  1. *Notifying the School* - The School Director will notify their student body and school community of the Board vote. If a name change is approved, the School Director will begin the process of changing the name in any and all places where it is written - this process should not exceed the period of six (6) months.
  2. *Notifying the Network* - DSST's Chief External Affairs Officer will notify the network if there will be a school name change, and will work with DSST's Director of Marketing and Communications to begin the process of changing the name in any network-focused documents and digital assets - this process should not exceed the period of six (6) months. The marketing and communications team will also create any new and applicable logos and make them available to the school for immediate use.
  3. *Notifying the School District* - DSST's Director of Marketing and Communications will notify the applicable school district of the name change so that they can begin to change the school name in all of their materials and systems.

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4. *Continued Branding* - To be purposeful with future branding efforts, it is imperative that the school and network continually use the new name in favor of the old name consistently to successfully rebrand the school over time.

## **NOTE: Parameters for New School Name**

### **A. Standards for all DSST Sites**

1. *Preference not to name after people (living or dead)* - avoid naming after people it can create issues because people are imperfect and may have left a legacy that does not align with the values of DSST. For living people, this issue becomes more poignant as there is a chance that a person does something not aligned with DSST's values in the future.
2. *Location (not named after a person)* - naming DSST schools after a location can usually help to ensure that families and communities are clear on where the school is located, and locations (not named after a person) are less likely to have the issues associated with people or a symbol.

- B. Denver DSST Sites** - to ensure clarity amongst Denver families and community members each DSST school within Denver will start with "DSST:" (referred to as the "DSST moniker"). This helps to ensure that each of our schools are clearly linked in people's minds to one another, creating a stronger brand that highlights the success of our collective efforts.

### **C. Non-Denver DSST Sites**

1. *Preference for DSST moniker at all locations* - with DSST's growth, we want to ensure that Colorado families and community members see the link between our various campuses in different communities. This ensures strong brand awareness and helps to highlight our shared success and collective efforts as a network.
2. *Aurora exception* - to ensure clarity amongst Aurora families and community members each DSST school within Aurora will start with "AST:" This helps to ensure that each of our schools are clearly linked in people's minds to one another, creating a stronger brand that highlights the success of our collective efforts.