

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

MEMORANDUM #98 (2006-2007)

November 13, 2006

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION OF THE NAME FOR THE MULDOON AREA  
MIDDLE SCHOOL

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the School Board approve the Superintendent's recommendation to name the new middle school in the Muldoon area the Nicholas J. Begich Middle School.

PERTINENT FACTS:

School Board Policy 745 - Naming of Schools and Facilities, Fields and Other Areas (Attachment A) establishes the process to be followed when a school or facility is to be named. In accordance with this policy, the appointed committee was to identify a name to be recommended to the School Board for the new Muldoon Area Middle School.

The Naming Committee member list is shown as Attachment B. The committee included representatives from the Northeast Community Council, St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Muldoon Community Assembly Church, parents, students and community members from the feeder schools of Chester Valley, Creekside Park, Muldoon, Scenic Park, Susitna, Clark, Wendler and Bartlett. Leslie Vandergaw, Executive Director, Middle School Education, chaired the committee. Jeanne Fischer, Principal of the new middle school attended committee meetings.

The committee met three times. In those meetings, members identified the process and timelines that would be used to make their selection, and they proceeded to narrow the nominations to a single recommendation for the Superintendent. The District advertised on the School District Webpage from August 28, 2006 until September 29, 2006, for name submissions. Nomination forms were sent to all feeder elementary, middle and high schools (Attachment C). These included Chester Valley, Creekside Park, Muldoon, Scenic Park, and Susitna Elementary Schools, Clark and Wendler Middle Schools, and Bartlett High School. Forms were also available at the Administration Building. The *Anchorage Daily News* printed a story on September 30, 2006, about the process of naming the new middle school.

At the first Naming Committee meeting on October 12, 2006, the process for the selection of names was discussed and a PowerPoint presentation was shown. This presentation reviewed the timelines for the meetings, ground rules, and policy. The committee was given a packet of the 516 nominations along with a petition from the faculty and staff of Bartlett High School. A summary of the nominations is attached (Attachment D).

At the second meeting held on October 19, 2006, the process was reviewed. Each member had the opportunity to present two nominees and their justification for each of their selections. A two-minute time limit was placed on each presentation.

The committee members were given ballots to list their top four choices in order from first choice to fourth choice. First choice selections were given a rating of four points, second choice received three points, third choice received two points, and their fourth choice was awarded one point.

Because of a tie vote there were five choices identified. The five top selections, in alphabetical order, by last name were: Begich, Butcher, Hammond, Peratrovich, and Stears. Prior to the final meeting, committee members were to choose one of the five nominees and prepare to present their rationale for that choice to the rest of the committee.

At the final meeting on November 9, 2006, the committee members gave their individual presentations. A three-minute time limit was placed on each presentation. After the presentations, the committee members discussed the five choices prior to taking the final vote. A majority of the committee selected Begich Middle School on the November 9<sup>th</sup> naming committee ballot.

A notebook containing all minutes and supporting material is located in the Board office for review.

#### SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMENTS:

I met with the committee at the first and last meeting to review the history of the high school/junior high school names. It should be remembered that all of the junior-senior high school complexes in the late sixties and into the early eighties were given two names; one for the junior high school and one for the senior high school. Previous school boards made a decision in the late seventies and early eighties to change all these complexes into high schools, and to build junior high schools as facilities could be constructed; they are now middle schools. In all cases, the names moved with the new buildings: Chugiak-Gruening, East-Benny Benson (now an alternative school), Service-Hanshew, Dimond-Mears, West-Romig, and now, with this recommendation, Bartlett-Begich.

In addition, when the facility now named Benny Benson was being designed, the Begich family was asked if they would prefer to have the facility named after Nick Begich because there was not a junior high school planned at that time or in the near future. It was widely understood by many in the community and in the district that the family asked that the name remain on Bartlett High School until a new junior high school could be built in the northeast Anchorage area where the family lived and continue to live today. They assumed that the Begich name would then be transferred to the new school. The new alternative school then took the name of Benny Benson from the East-Benson complex. In subsequent years, the Begich name has not been used at Bartlett High School on diplomas, official documents, or by the district, and the only remaining remnant of the official name is on the southeast wall of the building. If the School Board accepts my recommendation, and that of the committee, the Begich name will be restored as the name of the middle school in the Muldoon area.

The road to this decision has been difficult. Unfortunately, some have focused on the fact that Representative Begich was the father of the current Mayor; I can say unequivocally that this is NOT about the Mayor, it is about Nick Begich's long career of public service in education in Anchorage and as part of the former State Operated School System, as an Alaskan legislator, and the Congressman for Alaska. Among his many contributions, he was instrumental in supporting the Alaska Native Land Claims Act in Congress before his tragic death, and he was a stalwart supporter of public education for all of Alaska's students.

I firmly believe that Nick Begich deserves this recognition, and naming this wonderful new school after him will allow many generations of current and future students and the community to recognize his contributions. His family has been waiting a very long time for this to be done as promised almost twenty years ago.

In addition, the other four names of distinguished Alaskans chosen by the committee as finalists deserve future recognition. If the School Board desires, I will ask various school communities who have schools named after geographic areas, if they would be interested in renaming their school after a prominent Alaskan. I have also met with some of the Stears family representatives, and have committed to them to try and find a way to officially recognize Sheri Stears' contributions to education at Clark Middle School when it is finally renovated.

CC/LV/JF/sm  
Attachments

Prepared by: Leslie Vandergaw, Executive Director, Middle School Education  
Jeanne Fischer, Principal, Muldoon Area Middle School, Principal  
Carol Comeau, Superintendent

Approved by: Carol Comeau, Superintendent

**School Board Policy 745**

**Naming of Schools and Facilities, Fields, and Other Areas**

a. When a school or facility is to be named, the Superintendent will appoint a District wide committee. The committee will include a central office administrator as chairperson, a principal, and at least five other citizens in the community. Citizens, Board members, students, PTA's and/or other parent groups, School personnel, community councils, and community members-at-large may submit names for consideration by the committee. The Superintendent will make the final recommendation to the Board.

In selecting names, special consideration will be given to those names that have special meaning to students and will enhance educational values.

Schools or facilities may be named for national, state or local leaders as well as for community locations.

No two schools in the District will be given the same name nor will schools or facilities be named after living people.

b. Fields and/or other specific areas on a school campus or within a school building, may be named by the Board.

In selecting names for these areas, special consideration will be given to those names of individuals or organizations that have special meaning to the students and/or staff and the community, and which will honor commitment and dedication to that particular field, or area of the school.

Requests for naming such areas will be submitted through the building principal to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will review the request and will submit the suggestions to the Board with a recommendation for action.

*Muldoon Area Middle School*  
(Name to be determined, Fall 2006)

MAMS NAMING COMMITTEE

**Leslie Vandergaw, Executive Director Middle School Education**  
**Jeanne Fischer, Principal Muldoon Area Middle School**

**Vanessa Salinas**  
Northeast Community Council member

**Kent Redfearn, Pastor**  
Muldoon Community Assembly Church

**Cindy Breslin**  
St. Patrick's

**Carolyn Graham**  
Community Member.

*Feeder Schools:*

Chester Valley

**Heather Breslin, student**  
**Jan Davis, parent (ASD)**

Creekside

**Meghan Wake, 6<sup>th</sup> grade student**

Muldoon Elementary

**Pam Vandenburg, PTA president**  
**Sammy Vandenburg, 6th grade student**

Scenic Park

**Kathleen Davila, parent**  
**Zachary Davila, student**

**Jennifer Kueter, parent**  
**Taylir Kueter, student**

Susitna

**Christie Shulenski, parent**  
**Justin Shulenski, 5<sup>th</sup> grade student**

Clark

**Nicole Abbott-Sutton, 6<sup>th</sup> grade student**

Wendler

**Steve Carlson, parent**  
**Steven Carlson, student**

Bartlett

**Wendy Baker, teacher**

*As of 10/20/06*

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
School Name Nomination Form  
for the  
Muldoon Area Middle School

You are invited to help name the new **Muldoon Area Middle School** which is located at 7440 Creekside Center Drive. Nominations will be taken through September 29, 2006. School names can be based on community history, culture or geographic location. Schools can also be named for deceased individuals who were local, state or national leaders.

The completed nomination forms may be turned into the School District Administration Building, at the Superintendent's Office, or at the Middle School Education Office on 4600 DeBarr Road. You may also complete the nomination form by accessing it through the Anchorage School District Web Page at [www.asdk12.org](http://www.asdk12.org) or faxed to 333-5030. For more information, please call 333-5042.

Please submit only one nomination form per person.

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent: \_\_\_\_\_ Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Community Member: \_\_\_\_\_ ASD Employee: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax/e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Suggested school name: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for choosing this name: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Muldoon Area Middle School

## Name Nomination Summary

(Final Totals)

<b>Name</b>	<b>Count by Name</b>
Abraham Lincoln Middle School	1
Akisu Middle School	1
Alfred Brooks Middle School	1
Anchorage Borealis High School	1
Arctic Middle School	1
Balto Middle School	1
Bartlett/Begich	1
Beatrice (Bea) (LAST NAME NOT KNOWN YET)	1
Bell Benton Middle School	1
Captain Cook Middle School	1
Carl Eielson Middle School	1
Carol Comeau Middle School	2
Chester Creek Middle School	1
Chilkoot Middle School	1
Cliff Hartman Middle School	1
DeBarr Middle School	1
Don Sheldon Middle School	1
Dr. Keith Taton	1
Elizabeth Peratrovich Middle School	9
Elmer Rasmussen Middle School	1
Fireweed Middle School	1
Frank Moolin jr	1
Heritage Middle School	1
Iilammna Middle School	1
Jay Hammond Middle School	24
Joe Reddington Middle School	2
June DeArmoun	1
Majestic Middle School	1
Maniilaq Middle School	1
Mayberry Middle School	1
McKinley Middle School	1
McKinley View Middle School	1
Midnight Sun Middle School	2
Mike Shaw Middle School	1
Moose Pass Middle School	1

**Muldoon Area Middle School**  
**Name Nomination Summary**  
(Final Totals)

<b>Name</b>	<b>Count by Name</b>
Mount Susitna Middle School	1
Mt. McKinley Middle School	1
Muldoon Community Middle School	1
Muldoon Middle school	20
Nicholas Begich Middle School	292
Norman Vaughn Middle School	5
North Star School	1
Northern Lights Middle School	1
Officer Justin T. Wollam	1
Parlersin Middle School	1
Peter J. Seeganna Middle School	1
Rick Rydell Middle School	1
Russell Merrill Middle School	1
S.R. Irwin Middle School of Nature	1
Sharon Stears Middle School	84
Sheldon Jackson Middle School	1
Shem Pete Middle School	1
Sheri Stears Muldoon Middle School	1
Shida Middle School	1
Stears Memorial Middle School	1
Stears Muldoon Middle School	2
Stears-Begich Middle School	1
Stevens Middle School	1
Sunrise Middle School	1
Susan Butcher Memorial Middle School	1
Susan Butcher Middle School	20
The Warrior Middle School	1
William A. Egan	1
Wolf Middle School	1