

The Regional District 13 Board of Education School Naming Committee met in special session on Wednesday, March 4, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. in the library at Coginchaug Regional High School.

Committee Members Present: Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Eddinger, Ms. Kahnke, Mrs. Longley, Ms. Lynch, Mr. Padilla, and Mrs. Schlicker

Committee Members Absent: Mrs. Marteka, Mr. Moore

Mrs. Cowan called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Approval of Agenda

Mrs. Schlicker made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Eddinger, to approve the agenda as presented.

All in favor of approving the agenda as presented: Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Eddinger, Mrs. Longley, Ms. Lynch, Mr. Padilla, Ms. Kahnke, and Mrs. Schlicker. Motion passed.

Approval of Minutes – February 18, 2026

Mrs. Eddinger made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Longley, to approve the February 18, 2026 meeting minutes as presented.

All in favor of approving the February 18, 2026 meeting minutes as presented: Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Eddinger, Mrs. Longley, Ms. Lynch, Mr. Padilla, Ms. Kahnke, and Mrs. Schlicker. Motion passed.

Finalizing Voting

Mrs. Cowan presented an update on her research. She spoke with a representative from DEEP, the assistant director, who confirmed there are no state-level issues with using the Wadsworth name for the school, and this confirmation was sent in writing to the superintendent for record-keeping. Research clarified that the correct Wadsworth, Clarence Wadsworth, had no controversial history, primarily contributing to conservation efforts. A Google Doc was drafted to provide information about the name choices to parents, to be shared via ParentSquare, community forums, and displayed next to ballot boxes

at schools. Voting is planned to start the week of March 16, with students and community members participating. Ballots will list three school name options with instructions to “circle one,” and there will be space for optional voter names to prevent duplicates. The meaning of each proposed school name will be displayed at the ballot box. Two ballot boxes, one per town, will be decorated and collected Monday after voting closes at noon on Friday. It was discussed that high school students can volunteer to help collect and count ballots, providing them with service hours. Totals from each school will be collected and summed in a Google Sheet to determine the winning name. Students have been engaged in the process, showing excitement for voting and providing feedback, and the plan aims to balance transparency, community input, and student involvement throughout the naming process.

Next Steps

The Google Form is finalized. The ballots will be created and each town will be given 200 individual ballots to start, with more available if requested. Middle and high school students, in addition to staff members, will vote via google form, and 2 committee members will go into each elementary classroom to poll students and take votes. Ballot boxes must be given to Mrs. Cowan by Friday, March 13.

Additional steps include publicizing the vote via town sandwich boards (Middlefield does not have one but Durham does; however, a permit is required to use it), newsletters, ParentSquare notifications, and online postings, ensuring families are informed while maintaining orderly voting. It was also suggested that for the high school, the opportunity to vote can be mentioned in the morning announcements.

There will be a meeting on March 25 to identify the winning name, which will go to the full Board for approval. Beyond naming, the committee is considering ways to honor school heritage, such as incorporating artwork reflecting past mascots, like the dragon, lion, and Mustang, through mosaics or murals created by students, similar to prior projects at Brewster and Memorial. Mascot voting will occur after the school name is finalized, with students primarily responsible for design decisions, ensuring both continuity and community participation while celebrating student creativity.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Adjournment

Mrs. Kahnke made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Lynch, to adjourn the meeting.

All in favor of adjourning the meeting: All in favor of approving the February 18, 2026 meeting minutes as presented: Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Eddinger, Mrs. Longley, Ms. Lynch, Mr. Padilla, Ms. Kahnke, and Mrs. Schlicker. Motion passed. Motion passed and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Meghan Shortell-Fratantonio