

The Regional District 13 Board of Education School Naming Committee met in special session on Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. in the library at Coginchaug Regional High School.

Committee Members: Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Roraback, Mrs. Eddinger (attended remotely), Ms. Kahnke, Mrs. Longley, Ms. Lynch, Mr. Padilla, Mrs. Schlicker, Mrs. Marteka, and Mr. Moore

Committee Members Present: Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Roraback, Ms. Kahnke, Mrs. Longley, Mr. Padilla, Mrs. Marteka and Mr. Moore

Committee Members Absent: Mrs. Eddinger, Ms. Lynch, Mrs. Schlicker

Mrs. Cowan called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

### **Approval of Agenda**

*Mrs. Longley made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Marteka to approve the agenda as presented.*

*All in favor of approving the agenda as presented:*

*Motion passed.*

### **Approval of Minutes – March 4, 2026**

*Mrs. Longley made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Marteka to approve the March 4, 2026 meeting minutes as presented.*

*All in favor of approving the March 4, 2026 meeting minutes as presented:*

*Motion passed.*

### **Discussion of Voting Results**

Mrs. Cowan presented that the school naming vote results have been compiled and verified, with “Three Oaks” winning by about 75 votes. Voting participation was high, especially from the school community. About 1,153 votes came from students and staff, representing a large portion of the roughly 1,300 students in the district. Committee members noted that some negative feedback appeared on social media,

mainly questioning why the existing “Memorial” name was not kept and criticizing the voting process and accessibility. However, the board has received almost no direct complaints through official channels. Committee members emphasized that the process was designed to be fair and simple, avoiding digital voting because it would be difficult to verify identities and prevent duplicate votes.

The committee believes the outcome reflects community participation, especially as suggestions were submitted anonymously by residents.

### **Next Steps**

Mrs. Cowan has drafted a formal statement from the School Naming Committee to address concerns, which will be read at the next Board of Education meeting when the name is officially presented. The Board of Education will vote next week to adopt “Three Oaks” as the school’s name.

Mrs. Cowan identified that the next step will be selecting a school mascot, potentially something related to trees or birds (such as an owl or eagle). The committee discussed how to choose a mascot for the new “Three Oaks” school, with a strong interest in involving students in the process so their ideas are reflected in the final decision. One idea presented was to allow students to submit creative mascot suggestions and drawings, possibly through classrooms or during art classes. After collecting all suggestions, the committee would narrow the options down to about three finalists, similar to how the school name was selected, and then allow students to vote on the final choice.

The committee also discussed the process for choosing school colors, likely earth tones to match the “Three Oaks” theme, since the building committee needs colors soon for purchasing materials. Committee members noted the challenge of engaging a wide age range (K–5) and suggested teachers help younger students understand what a mascot is. Another presented idea was for classes to brainstorm mascot ideas together, submit them, and then the committee will identify the most common suggestions. Once a mascot animal is chosen, students could later help design what it looks like and possibly give it a name. The committee members suggested that elementary students (K–5) will primarily submit mascot suggestions, while older students (middle and high school) may participate in a design contest to create the mascot’s visual appearance. The plan is to collect ideas after spring break, then meet again at the end of April to review suggestions and narrow them down to three finalists. Students will vote in May, and the mascot will be announced near the end of the school year, possibly during a school assembly.

The committee also discussed naming spaces in the new building, specifically the library, gym, and cafeteria/auditorium (cafetorium), potentially after each of the three existing schools to preserve their history. There was consideration about where to place the Memorial plaque and how to incorporate historical elements, such as existing school murals or mascots, into the new building. The library will remain in the same location and structure as the current Memorial library, so some members suggested keeping it associated with Memorial to maintain that historical connection. Members plan to gather additional feedback and ideas from the community before finalizing these decisions.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Adjournment**

*Ms. Kahnke made a motion, seconded by Mr. Padilla to adjourn the meeting.*

*All in favor of adjourning the meeting:*

*Motion passed and the meeting adjourned.*

Respectfully submitted by Meghan Shortell-Fratantonio