

## Kids will get to decide name for new School 41

### Name

Input from Parent Advisory Council members and school staff has persuaded the Rochester City School District to delay a planned vote on a name for the school that will replace School 41.

School 41 was closed in June due to low test scores. A new school will open in its spot in three weeks.

There had been plans to present a shortlist of names to the district school board for a vote Thursday evening.

Teachers would like it to be called the RISE Community School. This had been the district's placeholder name for the new school, but it has caught on with the school's staff and some parents.

Principal Christine Caluorie-Poles said that teachers have invented RISE hand games and chants and printed their own RISE T-shirts. They like the idea of a name that reflects their desire to help the kids rise to their potential.

Caluorie-Poles relayed this information to the district's chief of schools, Elizabeth Mascitti-Miller, who came to a sparsely attended "Name-Our-School" meeting at the school on Tuesday night.

One parent, Makita Saloane, and one grandparent, Addie Sturgis, showed up. Neither have a child who will attend the yet-to-be named school but they are members of the Parent Advisory Council and both believed the name of the school was settled as RISE. That's what it's being called on the "neighborhood gossip line," said Sturgis.

And at the state Education Department, where the school is registered as RISE Community School. Commissioner MaryEllen Elia referred to it as the RISE school when she spoke about her hopes that it would break Rochester's trend of replacing failing schools with other failing schools. Spokesman Jonathan Burman said in a statement, "We are optimistic that RISE will be a new and satisfactory educational environment for students when it opens this September."

The problem was that RISE was not on the list of three names that the superintendent had planned to present to the board. Through various outreach efforts, the district came up with these three names: 1. Dr. William J. Knox Jr. Community School. This name would honor Knox, a pioneering African-American chemist and educator who worked in support of the Manhattan Project and later earned many patents at Kodak. He was also a major figure in the Rochester civil rights movement and a founding member of the local Urban League.

2. Innovation 104. This name references the school's location on state Route 104. And the innovative pod structure that creates learning groups of 60 students with five teachers.

3. Kodak Community School. This name would honor the legacy of Kodak Park School 41.

But the teachers like RISE. When Caluorie-Poles asked for a vote in advance of the name-the-school meeting, "every single staff had their hand up for RISE Community School."

The RISE name actually refers to a new framework for closing failing

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**Christine Caluorie-Poles, top left, leads a presentation on naming options for the new school. JAMIE GERMANO/ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE**



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Columnist Rochester Democrat and Chronicle

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schools and opening new ones. Since 2002, the district has closed 26 schools (including School 41) and opened 18, according to state data. All of this reform has yielded little progress. The RISE model is a framework that the district hopes will lead to better results.

Saloane, the Parent Advisory Council president, said the rush to pick the name mirrors the rush to open the school. “I don’t feel like it’s enough time. Everything they are saying sounds good but this is just a practice for the next school that will close. Our kids are like lab rats.”

Saloane likes RISE Community School, and Knox Community School as a second choice. However, she says the name doesn’t ultimately matter.

She said she is sick of the district changing the names of schools in the name of reform that hasn’t worked. Her alma mater, John Marshall High School, is among the many schools that have been closed and replaced with schools with different names. “I don’t care what you call it,” she said. “It’s still gonna be Marshall to me.” District official hope that things will be different with RISE, a framework that requires the district to incorporate best practices when creating new schools. “The RISE model is a structure to build from,” said Mascitti- Miller. The school that will replace School 41 will be the first to use the RISE framework.

At Tuesday’s meeting Saloane said she believed the decision should be put off until after school starts so that the kids and families could help make the decision.

On Wednesday afternoon Machetti-Miller confirmed that the district would take more time to gather input from the students who will attend the school and their parents. Saloane is pleased. "I am glad that the students and parents will have an opportunity to weigh in on the name. It's their school," she said. "Let's start off on the right foot." For now, the flyers announcing the upcoming orientations say RISE Community School. The kindergarten orientation will take place from 5 to 6 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 23, at 279 W. Ridge Road. The orientation for grades one through six will take place from 5 to 6 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 28, at 279 W. Ridge Road.

*Erica Bryant is a columnist for the Democrat and Chronicle. Contact her at EBRYANT@Gannett.com.*

**Addie Sturgis attended a meeting as part of the discussion process to name the new school.**

JAMIE GERMANO/ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE

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Parent