

**Delegation to the city:**

Thank you Mayor Meed Ward and for giving both Vice Chair Ehl Harrison and I the opportunity to give some background the the school board's decision to move forward with our motion:

[M21-0117](#) [M. Shuttleworth / T. Rocha](#)

Be it resolved that the Board initiate the renaming process for Ryerson PS, located at 565 Woodview Road, Burlington, Ontario, to be completed by November 30, 2021; and

Be it resolved that the Chair of the Board write a letter to the Mayor of Burlington informing her of the initiation of this renaming process, and reminding her of the city park bearing the same name adjacent to the school property.

We have heard from many voices in the community and had many conversations which culminated with formal requests from community members, including those who are survivors of residential schools to consider a change in name of our school on Woodview Drive. Of course, we have also heard from some who feel we are discounting the positive contributions of Egerton Ryerson to the Canadian education system. He did indeed create school boards, making textbooks more uniform, and making education free. He also advocated for the separation of Church and State within education..... apart from the education for Indigenous children. For Indigenous students he drafted a [Ryerson Industrial Schools Report](#) (NSRC 5th floor, E 96.5 S655 1898) which supports the creation of industrial schools. These schools have been called manual labour schools, industrial schools, boarding schools, and residential schools. They included religious instruction which Ryerson felt necessary to assimilate and civilize Indigenous children, . We need to be accountable to the legacy that Ryerson also left behind and the trauma and hurt it causes our students and their families to feel. We must be compassionate to the hurt and trauma that has been part of his legacy.

I am going to read for you an overview of [The Ryerson Experiment](#) compiled by *Nishnawbe Aski Nation ( Nishnawbe Aski Nation Indian Residential Schools in Ontario, 2005 )*. This group represents 49 First Nation communities within northern Ontario with a population of membership (on and off reserve) estimated around 45,000 people.

In 1845, a report to the Legislative Assembly recommended that industrial boarding schools be adopted for the education of Indian children. In 1847, Dr. Egerton Ryerson, the Chief Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada (Ontario) suggested a method of establishing and conducting the industrial schools for the benefit of Indian children.

Their purpose should be to “give a plain English education adapted to the working farmer and mechanic” and in addition “agriculture, kitchen-gardening and mechanics so far as mechanics is connected with the making and repairing the most useful agricultural implements”. To attain their objective, it would be necessary for the students to reside together, with adequate provision being made for their domestic and religious education. Dr. Ryerson especially deemed the latter essential. “With him (the Indian) nothing can be done to improve and elevate his character and condition without the aid of religious feeling”. For this reason he insisted that the animating and controlling spirit of each Industrial School “should be a joint effort of the Government and of the religious organization concerned. Decisions on the appointment of the School Superintendent, buildings to be erected and conditions for admission of pupils were also to be made jointly. The Government would be responsible for inspection and the laying down of general rules and regulations as well as making financial grants to support each of the operating cost, and provide spiritual guidance for the pupils.

It was these experiments that lay the foundation for residential schools. Ryerson’s approach was to separate Indigenous children from their parents in order to achieve assimilation and although it can be recognized that he made many contributions to the education system, this piece of his legacy has had a traumatic and harmful impact on a part of our school community.

The name Ryerson, for many, brings up experiences of trauma and mistrust of the education system. We value all students who are part of our HDSB community and we must live up to our commitments in recognizing the harm that some of our school names may have.

Thank again for your time and I am now going to pass it over to Vice Chair Ehl Harrsion to give an overview of policy and links to our Multi Year Plan

I am going to discuss the policy overlay at the Halton District School Board that compels this renaming process.

The Board adopted a new strategic multi year plan in late 2020.

- The [Multi-Year Plan \(MYP\)](#) is a strategic four-year plan created collaboratively for the Halton District School Board (HDSB). The purpose of the MYP is to set direction and prioritize the collective actions of all stakeholders to ensure our efforts as an organization are aligned and coordinated to support the more than 65,000 students 9,000 staff and the broader HDSB community.
- Five Key Areas & Commitments
  - Equity & Inclusion
  - Mental Health and Well-Being

- Learning and Achievement
- Environmental Leadership
- Indigenous Perspectives and Awareness
- The Board motion touches on a number of these commitments, including equity and inclusion, mental health and well being and Indigenous Perspectives and Awareness.
- Specifically the commitment related to Indigenous Perspectives and Awareness includes:
  - Provide opportunities for a whole community approach to understanding the **impacts of colonialism, past and present.**
  - Foster engagement with Indigenous peoples, communities, practices, perspectives and realities to build awareness, **mutual respect and shared responsibility.**
  - **Enhance learning about** Treaty relationships, Indigenous rights, **residential schools** and Indigenous peoples' contributions to Canada to **fulfil the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action for education.**

With this as our backdrop, as Trustee Shuttleworth indicated that the Board received a number of requests to rename Ryerson Public School. We also received a number of messages indicating that we needed to do research to understand the positive contributions Ryerson has made to public education. When the renaming requests were received, the School Naming and Renaming [Policy](#) and [Governance Procedure](#) and [Administrative Procedure](#) were followed. These were updated in January 2021, to reflect the new MYP and the current social context. One of the guiding principles of the policy is to “Consider equity, diversity and inclusion in the school community;”. The Governance Procedure details what is under the purview of Trustees, while the Administrative Procedure details staff responsibilities, and the two dovetail. In summary:

Renaming requests are submitted to the Director’s office, and the Chair and Director determine whether or not to bring forward a report to the Board. According to the Procedure, the renaming of a school shall be considered if: a) the current name constitutes a significant departure from generally-recognized standards of public behaviour which is seen to undermine the credibility, integrity or relevance of the HDSB’s contemporary values; or b) the current name was appropriated from a culture or community without the necessary recognition or awareness process.

In this case, a report was brought forward to initiate the renaming, and it was unanimously supported by the Board. Next steps include:

- Forming an ad hoc committee, involving staff, Trustees, and members of the school community.

- Notifying and seeking public input and ideas from the whole community (staff, students, community) which are narrowed down by the committee, and vetted to ensure the uphold the MYP and the criteria of the policy.
- A short list of up to five, fully researched names, are submitted to the Board of Trustees for discussion and ultimate selection of one name.

This process for the current school under consideration, is to be wrapped up by the end of November 2021.

The discussion at the Board table was not an easy one, and certainly there are complexities. At the end of the day, the Board must uphold the commitments of the MYP. It's development reflects the ideas and values of thousands of people in the HDSB community. Now is our time to be true to those commitments, not only to the words, but to the actions that as a community we decided will make a positive impact on this and future generations.

During the discussion at the Board table, it was noted that the adjacent park has the same name, and as such, the Board wanted to alert you to the process that is going to be undertaken for the school. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to delegate to you this morning to share our experiences so far. It is very much appreciated.