



April 15, 2015

Dear Schmitz Park Community and Neighbors.

This month, framing starts on our new building at Genesee Hill, and we are all starting to envision what coming years will be for our school community and the neighborhood. I am writing to urge you to participate in the next stage of determining the name for the new building.

Last month, we invited the community to nominate names for consideration. Nearly twenty names were submitted that sought ways to honor the geography and history of the Genesee-Schmitz neighborhood, the West Seattle community, and education in Seattle in general. Following the process laid out by School Board policy, our Naming Committee reviewed these proposals and forwarded them to our Building Leadership Team, comprised of staff and parents, to select the "finalists." This next stage is a poll to determine the preferences of the community.

The Building Leadership Team has forwarded four names for consideration in this [preference poll](#):

- **Genesee Hill Elementary School:** Genesee Hill is the name of the original building, which opened in 1949.
- **Genesee-Schmitz Elementary School:** Genesee-Schmitz recognizes the shared identity and history of the neighborhood and the two schools.
- **Dietrich Schmitz Elementary School:** Dietrich Schmitz was the longest-serving member of the Seattle School Board in history, serving 32 years and multiple times as President.
- **Thelma DeWitty Elementary School:** Thelma DeWitty was the first African-American teacher in Seattle, working first in West Seattle at the Cooper School.

More information can be found about each of these names on the survey created for this poll. To register your preference (vote), please follow this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/66G5VXW>. You may also drop off or mail a hard-copy of your preference to Schmitz Park School, 5000 SW Spokane St., Seattle 98115. We ask for just one vote per household.

This survey will close at midnight on April 26, 2015, and the results will be used to finalize a recommendation for the Superintendent's report to the School Board of Directors. Please note that while we would like to move forward to finalize the naming of the new building, we are also continuing to watch enrollment numbers that could affect the long-term plans for both our current and future school sites.

The Building Leadership Team made a point of requesting that we ensure that the Schmitz Family legacy, which has inspired Schmitz Park Elementary School to be a flagship elementary program in the Seattle School District, will continue to be recognized and honored. If enrollment trends continue to the point that our program could be needed to operate at both sites, we will recommend to the Superintendent that the new building be opened as Schmitz Park School at Genesee Hill. Regardless, we will not change the name of the school building we currently occupy, which is officially named by the School Board as "Schmitz Park School." This is a promise made by the District to the Schmitz Family, who donated the land for the Schmitz Park Preserve and school site. Important Schmitz Park traditions and our fox mascot and logo will continue at the new building.

This will be an exciting year as we plan and prepare to open our new building in September 2016. Thank you very much for your support and participation.

Best wishes,

Gerrit Kischner
Principal, Schmitz Park Elementary School
Planning Principal for the new building at Genesee Hill