



THE SCHOOL BOARD OF SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA

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Elementary School "I" Committee Recommendations

The school-naming committee met and reviewed all of the names submitted. They narrowed the selection to five possible names: Atwater, Pine Forest, River Haven, Sandhill, and Whispering Pines.

The committee members, by closed ballot, voted for their first and second choice. As such, the committee's recommendations for naming Elementary School "I" are:

First Choice: Atwater Elementary School

Second Choice: Sandhill Elementary School

The committee's research revealed the following information:

The first choice, Atwater Elementary, is derived from a street name. Atwater Drive is located to the east of the school and is the school's nearest major road. Atwater Drive is a good identifier as to the location of the school in the city of North Port. In addition, it follows the precedent of naming North Port elementary schools after nearby streets.

When looking for information regarding Atwater, a local search utilizing both Sarasota and Charlotte counties' historical databases was unsuccessful, so an extended historical search was conducted and determined the following:

The Atwater family arrived in Boston from England in 1637, settling in the New Haven Colony of Connecticut. A New Haven commemorative "Founders Day" on its 250th anniversary recognized that "Six men, under the direction of Joshua Atwater, a merchant from Kent, England, encamped near this spot in the winter of 1637-8". One famous person with the Atwater name is Wilbur O. Atwater, an American physiologist, who perfected the technique for calorimetric measurement of metabolism in the late 1800's. No other information was obtained from the search. There was no indication that the Atwater family had any historical relevance to this area.

After determining our top two name suggestions, the committee received an additional comment from a community member that a gang called ADK (Atwater Drive Krew) was present in the area. This citizen, who believes one of the ADK members may have been involved in the hit and run death of her son, felt, "These teens probably have younger brothers, sisters, cousins, that would attend the school." She added, "I think they could pass this gang name down to school members. They might think it "cool" to go to Atwater Elementary, and it might be a bond they have, same as sharing the main street they live on."

Upon receiving this information, contact was made with the North Port Police detective responsible for gang activity, Detective Olivo. According to the detective, ADK is no longer a gang in this area. Most of the members have moved away or are incarcerated. Detective Olivo also noted that ADK is not active, and she did not believe they would pose any threat to the school. The campus has not had a single incident of graffiti, theft, or vandalism during the construction process.

The naming committee reconvened to review the information from the community member and the North Port Police. Based upon the information provided by the North Port Police Department, the committee feels that Atwater Elementary should remain the top recommendation for the school name.

The second choice, Sandhill Elementary, is a reference to a pair of Sandhill Cranes that are often seen near the school location. The city of North Port recognizes the importance of the Sandhill Crane to the region, as it displays symbols of the cranes on both the entrance sign to the city and on the city logo. Cranes are also known for their loyalty and are fabled as omens of good fortune and long life in the Japanese culture.

The committee feels Atwater Drive is a good identifier as to the location of the school in the city of North Port, and it follows the precedent of naming North Port elementary schools after nearby streets. For these reasons, the committee recommends Elementary School "I" be named **Atwater Elementary School**.

Committee Members

Kirk Hutchinson, Elementary "I" principal
Kris Mitchell, Toledo Blade parent
Fran Chippendale, Toledo Blade parent
Jason Swift, Jon F. Swift, Inc. Construction
Emily Norris, Toledo Blade teacher

Sandee Coward, Toledo Blade teacher
Chris Renouf, Toledo Blade principal
David Waring, Publix Supermarket, Inc
Gene Matthews, community member
Lisa Evon, Elementary "I" Admin. Asst.