



# SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION

Agenda Item# 9.4

**Meeting Date:** June 8, 2023

**Subject:** Recommend the Renaming of Peter Burnett Elementary, Kit Carson International Academy, and Sutter Middle School

- Information Item Only
- Approval on Consent Agenda
- Conference (for discussion only)
- Conference/First Reading (Action Anticipated: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Conference/Action
- Action
- Public Hearing

**Division:** Facility Support Services

**Recommendation:** To receive information on the recommended renaming of Peter Burnett Elementary, Kit Carson International Academy, and Sutter Middle School.

**Background/Rationale:** Sacramento City Unified school District strives to create a warm and welcoming environment for all students, staff, and community members. The renaming of these school sites is part of the District's work in dismantling racism from within our system. School names, structures and symbols that up holds a legacy of racism, oppression, and exclusion shall not be tolerated. The names of our schools are a powerful symbol of our community values.

The Board of Education approved the creation of an ad hoc school renaming committee during the fall of 2020 to review the school names of Peter Burnett Elementary, Kit Carson International Academy, and Sutter Middle. These sites were recommended by staff and selected by the Board because they were viewed as having the most egregious school names within the District. The committee was charged with bringing forward new school names for the Board's consideration. Unfortunately, due to ongoing COVID challenges, renaming efforts had been delayed until December 2022. Since December, the committee has convened six meetings to form name recommendations for these three sites for the Board's consideration.

**Financial Considerations:** the estimated cost of renaming these three sites is \$550,000.

**LCAP Goal(s):** College, Career and Life Ready Graduates, Safe, Emotionally Healthy

and Engaged Students, Family and Community Empowerment, Operational Excellence

**Documents Attached:**

1. Executive Summary
2. Bio Sketches of Peter Burnett, Kit Carson, and John Sutter
3. Committee Renaming Process

**Estimated Time of Presentation:** 15 minutes

**Submitted by:** Rose Ramos, Chief Business and Operations Officer

Nathaniel Browning, Director I of Facilities

**Approved by:** Jorge A. Aguilar, Superintendent

# Board of Education Executive Summary

## Facilities Support Services

Recommend the Renaming of Peter Burnett Elementary, Kit Carson International Academy, and Sutter Middle School  
June 8, 2023



### I. Overview/History of Department or Program:

Sacramento City Unified school District strives to create a warm and welcoming environment for all students, staff, and community members. The renaming of these school sites is part of the District's work in dismantling racism from within our system. The school names of these three sites and symbols within these sites that up hold a legacy of racism, oppression, and exclusion shall not be tolerated. The names of our schools are a powerful symbol of our community values.

#### Background:

The Board of Education approved the creation of an ad hoc school renaming committee during the fall of 2020 ([September 3, 2020 Board meeting](#) and [October 15, 2020 Board meeting](#)) to review the school names of Peter Burnett Elementary, Kit Carson International Academy, and Sutter Middle. These sites were recommended by staff and selected by the Board because they were viewed as having the most egregious school names within the District. The committee was charged with bringing forward new school names for the Board's consideration. Unfortunately, due to ongoing COVID challenges, renaming efforts had been delayed until December 2022. Since December, the committee has convened six (6) meetings to form name recommendations for these three (3) sites for the Board's consideration.

#### Committee Composition:

The renaming committee was made up of one (1) appointee from each Trustee area, two (2) student members (including the Student Board Member), three (3) individuals specifically representing the local native community, one (1) principal and one (1) staff member from each site, two (2) District staff members that oversee the Indian Education Committee, and various non-voting District support staff. The committee was specifically designed to incorporate community voices from throughout the District and to uplift the native voice since Peter Burnett, Kit Carson, and John Sutter led the systematic killing and enslavement of large numbers of California native peoples.

There was intersectionality within the assigned committee membership. For example, there were three (3) Native community members enlisted for the committee due to their role within the community, but there was also one (1) student, one (1) staff person, and one (1) community member that also represented the native community. The percentage of each subgroup is represented below (most individuals represented more than once):

- 30% Site and District Staff
- 26% Community At-Large
- 22% Native
- 9% Students
- 18% Non-voting Support Staff

#### Refocusing on the Renaming Effort:

The District restarted the renaming effort in December 2022, and there have been six (6) committee meetings in total. Those dates include:

# Board of Education Executive Summary

## Facilities Support Services

Recommend the Renaming of Peter Burnett Elementary, Kit Carson International Academy, and Sutter Middle School

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- December 12, 2022—Kickoff meeting
- January 30, 2023—Community building within the committee
- February 15, 2023—Peter Burnett renaming recommendation
- March 22, 2023—Sutter Middle renaming recommendation
- April 12, 2023—Kit Carson renaming recommendation
- May 24, 2023—Confirm renaming recommendations

The District contracted with [RSS Consulting](#) (RSSC) to help objectively facilitate the school renaming process and lead committee meetings. They developed a process for sharing, collecting, vetting, and voting on name recommendations for each site, and adhered to that process for each meeting. As a reminder, RSSC was the firm that assisted the Facilities team in developing the award-winning equity-based facilities master plan.

### II. Driving Governance:

#### Board Policy 7310- Naming of Facilities

- The Board adopted revisions to the Naming of Facilities policy (BP 7310) on [December 15, 2022](#) in order to better align the policy with best practices and provide the renaming process with improved policy guidelines based on those best practices. The revised policy, and the direction to recommend names for these three (3) facilities that are not the names of other individuals served as the driving governance for this effort.

#### Committee Renaming Process

- Staff and RSSC developed the attached Committee Renaming Process document to guide the committee's proposal and selection process of names to be recommended to the Board of Education.

### III. Budget:

District and site staff have compiled a list of objects and items that will have to be replaced at each facility pending Board approval of the new site names. Items to be replaced include murals, gym floors, athletic jerseys, letterhead logo, marquees, and more. Peter Burnett has the fewest items that would need to be changed, whereas Sutter will require much more attention and focus in order to scrub the site of the Sutter name. Staff have identified a few items that can be addressed at each site immediately following Board action. However, many items will not be addressed until the beginning of the 2024-25 school year due to procurement requirements, lead times, and scheduling.

Staff have identified \$550,000 in next year's fiscal budget for the renaming of these three (3) sites.

### IV. Goals, Objectives and Measures:

The renaming of school sites is part of the District's work in dismantling racism from within our system.

### V. Major Initiatives:

#### District Core Value:

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We recognize that our system is inequitable by design and we vigilantly work to confront and interrupt inequities that exist to level the playing field and provide opportunities for everyone to learn, grow, and reach their greatness.

### VI. Results:

Staff will be recommending the below proposed name changes on behalf of the committee:

- Su Yu Elementary for Peter Burnett. Su Yu (pronounced “suu you”) is the Miwok name for hawk. Peter Burnett site leadership engaged their students, communities, and staff to gather recommendations that the principal brought forward to the committee for their consideration. One of those names recommended by the community was Red Tail Hawk Elementary, and the committee selected that name, but recommended the site use the Miwok name for hawk instead.
- Umoja International Academy for Kit Carson. Umoja is the first principle of Kwanzaa and means *to strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race*. This was recommended by the school community for the committee’s recommendation, and the committee selected this option as their recommendation to the Board.
- Miwok Middle School for Sutter. Sutter Middle School has been a focal point for the native community surrounding Sacramento due to the extreme brutality their communities faced by John Sutter and his followers. Sutter staff engaged the school community and brought forward Oak Middle School for the committee’s consideration. However, committee members did not find the recommendation to be adequately restorative and selected Miwok Middle School instead.

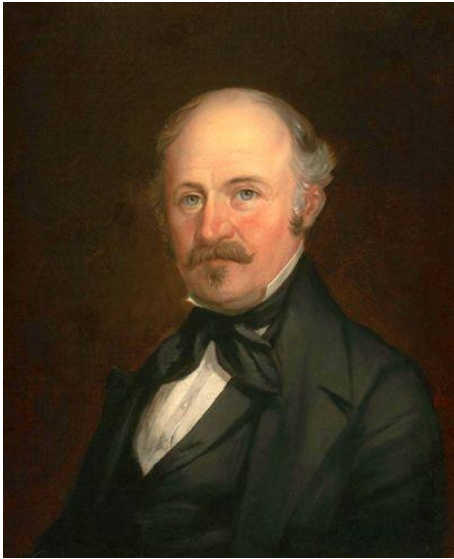
### VII. Lessons Learned/Next Steps:

- Come before the Board of Education on June 22, 2023 for Board action on the recommended names for Peter Burnett Elementary, Kit Carson International Academy, and Sutter Middle School.
- Begin addressing facilities needs and artifacts for each of the sites immediately after Board action.

## John Sutter, Kit Carson, and Peter Burnett

Prepared by Diane White and Pcyeta Stroud  
Renaming Committee Meeting - January 30, 2023

## John Sutter



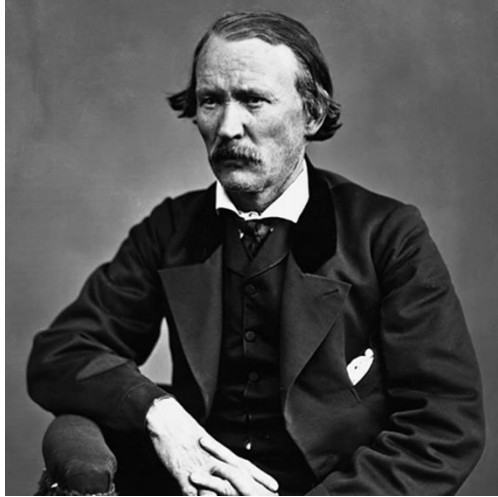
John Sutter, a Swiss immigrant, came to California in 1834 fleeing from debtors' prison, leaving behind a wife and five children to face his creditors. Sutter convinced Juan Bautista Alvarado, the governor of Mexican California, to grant him 48,400 acres, which he called "New Helvetia." His land grant also gave him absolute political, legal, and judicial authority in exchange for preventing further American settlement and controlling the indigenous communities in the region. Contrary to his promises, Sutter promoted American settlement to this Mexican territory, but made good on the agreement to control the Native population by decimating local indigenous communities. As historian Albert Hurtado notes, the destruction of ancient oaks, grasses, and animals -

major food supplies for Miwoks and Nisenans - "troubled him not at all."

Sutter enslaved Native peoples by making war on local tribes, which provided him with a steady source of free labor for his enterprises as well as a source of income by which to reduce his debts through the sale of orphaned children (Hurtado). According to UCLA professor Benjamin Madley in his book, *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe*, Sutter kept "600 or 800 Indians in a state of complete slavery" and reportedly had them eat out of livestock troughs (Madley 2016).

Having been weakened by the impact of European diseases, attacks by fur-traders, and capture and enslavement by Spanish missionaries and Mexican rancho owners, some Miwok and Nisenan residents were drawn to Sutter's trading post for the security that Sutter offered them. However, once working for Sutter, the threat of violence prevented indigenous people from leaving, which meant their permanent enslavement (Hurtado).

## Kit Carson



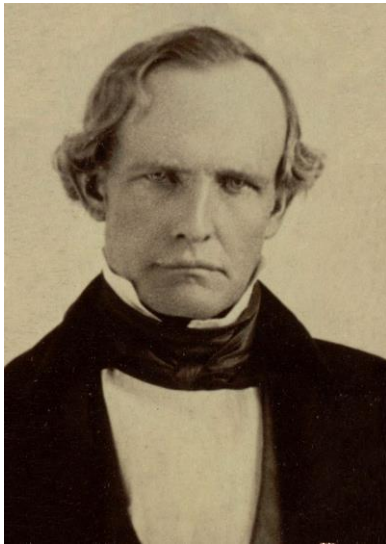
Kit Carson was perhaps the most famous trapper and guide in the West who traveled with John C. Frémont's expeditions in the 1840s. Frémont's wife, Jessie Benton Frémont is largely responsible for creating a flattering portrayal of Carson through her reports, which were widely published in the east.

Serving as Colonel John C. Frémont's scout in California, in 1846 Kit Carson and Frémont's men destroyed a village on the Sacramento River with artillery and rifle fire and then descended upon the village with swords, pistols, axes, and knives. Anyone attempting to escape was chased down and murdered by mounted soldiers wielding

tomahawks. Estimates of victims ranged from 150 to over 700, with perhaps another 300 people killed trying to escape. According to expedition member Thomas E. Breckenridge, the purpose of these mass killings of tribal communities in California was to teach survivors not to challenge whites. Frémont's expedition established Anglo-Americans' approach to California Indians: killing them or removing them by placing them on reservations or rancherias where whites could control and exploit them.

Carson went on to become even more famous for his 1863 campaign against the Navajo when they refused to removal to reservations. Carson commanded an expedition, which killed all Navajo men wherever they were found, burned crops, destroyed villages, slaughtered livestock, and allowed his Ute allies to keep their Navajo captives while selling the women and children to Mexican households (Guild and Carter).

## Peter Burnett



California's first governor, Peter Burnett, came from a slaveholding Missouri family. He migrated to the Oregon Territory to escape his debtors and ultimately became the Supreme Judge of Oregon's territorial government. He advocated for the total exclusion of all African Americans from the territory and authored what became known as "Burnett's lash law," which authorized the beating of any free Black people refusing to leave the territory.

As the Gold Rush began in 1848 Burnett migrated to California. While serving on the state Supreme Court, he ordered the extradition of Archy Lee (a slave who the California Court had ruled was a free) back to Mississippi. Burnett, who owned two slaves that he kept in California, advocated for the total exclusion of African Americans in

California, as he had in Oregon.

Regarding California's tribal communities, Burnett gave state money to local militias to exterminate the indigenous peoples and worked with the US government to obtain the resources needed to carry out this genocide. Consequently, with support from the U.S. Army, local militias raided tribal settlements and murdered Native people. Local governments paid bounties to settlers for Native scalps and for the horses of the tribal people they killed. According to the historian Benjamin Madley, about 100,000 Natives in California died during the first two years of the Gold Rush alone; by 1873, only 30,000 Indigenous people remain (Madely 2016). At least 16,000 murders of Native Indians of California are documented during this time (Blakemore, 2019).



## Sources and Additional Information

- Blakemore, E. (2019). California's little-known genocide. *History Stories*. Retrieved from <https://www.history.com/news/californias-little-known-genocide>.
- Castillo, Edward D. 2010. Short Overview of California Indian History. Sacramento: State of California Native American Heritage Commission.
- Guild, Thelma S., and Carter, Harvey L. *Kit Carson, A Pattern for Heroes*. University of Nebraska Press, 1984.
- Hurtado, Albert L., *John Sutter, A Life On the North American Frontier*, University of Oklahoma Press, 2006.
- Lindsay, Brendan C. 2012. *Murder State: California's Native American Genocide 1846-1873*. Lincoln: University of California Press
- Madley, Benjamin. 2016. *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe, 1846- 1873*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Madley, Benjamin. 2008. "California's Yuki Indians: Defining Genocide in Native American History." *Western Historical Quarterly* 39(3):303-332.
- Madley, Benjamin. 2013. "The Genocide of California's Indians." Pp. 17-53 in *Centuries of Genocide: Essays and Eyewitness Accounts*, edited by Samuel Totten and William S. Parson. Fourth Edition. New York and London: Routledge.
- Nokes, Gregory R., *The Troubled Life of Peter Burnett, Oregon Pioneer and First Governor of California*. Oregon State University Press, 2018.
- "Reexamining the American Genocide Debate: Meaning, Historiography, and New Methods," *The American Historical Review* 120:1 (February 2015), 98-139.
- "Understanding Genocide in California under United States Rule, 1846-1873," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 47:4 (Winter 2016), 449-461.
- "'Unholy Traffic in Human Blood and Souls:' Systems of California Indian Servitude under U.S. Rule," *Pacific Historical Review* 83:4 (November 2014), 626-667.

## Describe the process to be used to make a school renaming recommendation.

### Purpose

To make a recommendation to the SCUSD (Sacramento City Unified School District) Board Members on the renaming of three school sites that have been identified by the board, that currently bear the names of persons who perpetuated injustices against historically marginalized peoples. The three school sites are Kit Carson International Academy, Sutter Middle School, Peter Burnett Elementary School.

### Outcome

To have the SCUSD Board select new school names, based on committee recommendations, for each of the three sites. Those new names will assist in creating safe learning environments that are welcoming, inclusive, and inspiring for all of our students, staff, and community members.

### Process

- ❑ SCUSD will:
  1. Determine the financial impact of renaming the three school sites.
  2. Issue a webpage dedicated to providing the community with more information on the renaming effort.
  3. Assemble Advisory Committee.
  4. Schedule and facilitate the advisory committee meetings.
- ❑ Advisory Committee will:
  1. Meet to establish an understanding of goal, background, context, and Board policy.
  2. Focus on addressing historical and current harm posed by the names of the three sites.
  3. Communicate with constituents and stakeholders,
    - School sites may engage students, parents, partners to recommend names within the context of Board policy—with the exception of proposing new names after other individuals. The site principal may bring those recommendations forward for the entire committee’s consideration.
    - Develop a brief list of recommended names.
  4. Individual committee members are to come prepared to each meeting dedicated to each specific school site to present up to 3 recommended names.
    - Researching Possible Names
      - Do your own personal research to develop your name suggestions.

- For community members, please refer to the *Community Committee Suggestions for Selecting Your Name Recommendations* at the bottom of this document for engaging peers as desired.
  - For school site staff and principals, please refer to the *School Site Committee Suggestions for Selecting Your Name Recommendations* at the bottom of this document for engaging your school site staff.
    - Reminder: all names suggested are recommendations to the committee for their consideration.
  - Presentation of the three names
    - Be ready to present your name recommendations, in ranked order, to the entire committee.
    - When presenting, be prepared to:
      - Describe process for arriving at the names.
      - Describe who was involved in the development of the recommended names.
  - 5. The committee will receive all individual committee member school name recommendations and prioritize the presented names using a facilitated consensus exercise.
  - 6. The committee will meet to review the final name recommendations for all three school sites that will be presented to the Board.
- ☐ SCUSD will:
1. Present a name recommendation for each of the three school sites to the SCUSD Board during a series of two Board Meetings. The first meeting will be an information item on the recommended renaming of the three sites. The second meeting will be an action item for the Board’s consideration. Budget impacts of the name change will also be provided during the same board meeting.

## Guidelines

### Committee Considerations

- Though the Board Policy allows the naming of school sites after individuals, it is strongly discouraged that individual names are recommended for the three school sites during this process.
- Based on the historical information available, consider names that would remedy or restore the harm that was created in the process of colonization.
- Consider names that reflect the history of the land that the school sits on (I.E. [San Jose USD renamed Peter Burnett Middle School to Ohlone Middle School](#)).
- Select names of Geographic land features of the surrounding area (I.E.- Kum Mayo River, the original Nisenan name of what is now called “American River”).
- Select names that work with the current academic focus of the site (I.E.- International Academy).

- Please consider that the names recommend may not be those chosen by the committee or the board.

## Suggestions for Selecting Your Name Recommendations

### Community Committee Members

Every community leader has the freedom to select the process you will adopt to decide on your name recommendations. These are some suggested ideas to make your process simple yet meaningful and effective if you decide to further engage fellow community members.

- Have a community meeting.
- Host a virtual coffee chat.
- Invite your friends and family to a zoom meeting.
- Engage with community members in places of congregation.
- Survey the community.
- Reach out to the community.

### School Site Committee Members

Every school site has the freedom to select the process you will adopt to decide on your name recommendations. These are some suggested ideas to make your process simple yet meaningful and effective.

- Engage the community in the process!

Send out a form to survey the school community for open suggestions, narrow down the responses to the top 10, then send out a form again with the 10 names for a final vote.

- Empower your teachers!

Give teachers the freedom to come up with a name in whichever way they want with their students, then hold a school-wide vote for the top 3 recommended names.

- Keep it anonymous!

Create “Name suggestion” boxes and place them throughout the campus. Collect the entries and narrow them down to 10, then have a school-wide vote.

### Research Sources:

- Native Land Digital is a Canadian not-for-profit organization that provides an interactive digital globe depicting Native territories, languages, and treaties of the world. The map

is designed to educate the world about Indigenous peoples. The map is available at <https://native-land.ca/> (source: Native-land.ca website)

- American River Wikipedia Page [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American\\_River](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_River)
- Sacramento California Wikipedia Page [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacramento,\\_California](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacramento,_California)
- Lone Band of Miwok Indians website <https://ionemiwok.net/>
- Nisenan website <https://www.nisenan.org/>
- Wilton Rancheria website <https://wiltonrancheria-nsn.gov/>
- Bio Sketches Document: [https://www.scusd.edu/sites/main/files/file-attachments/sutter-burnett-carson-biosketches-w\\_sources.pdf?1675394371](https://www.scusd.edu/sites/main/files/file-attachments/sutter-burnett-carson-biosketches-w_sources.pdf?1675394371)

## Board Policy

The Sacramento City Unified School District Board of Education believes all schools should be welcoming, inclusive, and inspiring places for all students. The Board desires to ensure that the names of District facilities reflect the District's vision and mission. School facilities names shall consider the diverse community they serve.

The Board of Education should use the following criteria in considering naming a school or school facilities:

1. Individuals who have been deceased for one year or more. In the case of a proposed name of an individual, criteria include:
  - a. Individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the county or community, or have made contributions of state, national, or worldwide significance.
  - b. The individual's "primary legacy" (i.e., the key activities, advocacy or accomplishment for which the individual is most known) aligns with or reflects Sacramento City Unified School District's vision and mission.
2. Geographical area, landmark, cultural relevance, or historical event.
3. Flora and Fauna of Significant importance to the region
4. Other naming criteria, including:
  - a. School/facility names that articulate aspirations of the educational outcomes for District students.
  - b. School/facility names that reflect the instructional focus of the school.
  - c. School/facility names should consider the diverse community that they serve.
  - d. When possible, proposed names should avoid duplicating names of other schools in the region to prevent possible confusion.

District facilities that might be named could include, but are not limited to, schools, theaters, building wings, libraries, cafeterias, multipurpose rooms, choice programs or schools, labs, maker spaces, sports complexes, fields, gymnasiums, swimming pools, administration offices, and honor walls.

The Board encourages community participation in the process of selecting names. The Superintendent or appointee shall oversee the appointment of a citizen advisory committee to review name suggestions and submit recommendations for the Board's consideration.

The Board of Education has the discretion to change a facility's name at any time if they deem it appropriate for the benefit of the District. Specifically, the Board of Education will consider renaming facilities to reflect the mission, vision and/or values of the district. The Board of Education will take the name and history into account and include an exhibit that represents the history of the name.

### Related Legislation/Law

**ARTICLE 3.5. The California Racial Mascots Act**, specifically **CA Ed. Code 221.2.(a)(d)** under which the Legislature finds and declares the following:

- (a) The use of racially derogatory or discriminatory school or athletic team names, mascots, or nicknames in California public schools is antithetical to the California school mission of providing an equal education to all.
- (d) No individual or school has a cognizable interest in retaining a racially derogatory or discriminatory school or athletic team name, mascot, or nickname.