

Correspondence received by the Concord Select
Board Week Ending – May 27, 2024

Amended June 3, 2024

1. Mark Martines – 66 Alford Circle
2. Joseph Laurin – 134 Southfield Road
3. Deborah Duggan – 115 Upland Road
4. Robin Baughman – 144 Southfield Road
5. Jennifer Couture – 71 Alden Road
6. Leslie Flinn – 125 Central Street
7. Joanne Gibson – 100 Newbury Court, #2217
8. Carolyn Schweitzer – 1235 Monument Street, #2
9. Kristin Martines – 66 Alford Circle
10. Lindsay and Scott Gillis – 80 Alford Circle
11. Gina and Mark Celi – 434 Old Marlboro Road
12. Maude Bigelow – 855 Barrett's Mill Road
13. Ted Bayne and Lea Delacour – 71 Assabet Avenue
14. Breht Feigh – 149 Spenser Brook Road
15. Beth Kundert – 182 Central Street
16. Chesley Chen – 196 Williams Road
17. Craig Awmiller – 27 Lang Street
18. Nika Engberg – 62 Church Street
19. Beth Baryames – 149 Central Street
20. Sven Weber – 50 Belknap Street
21. Polly Reeve – 429 Williams Road
22. Leslie Fisher – 43 Middle Street
23. Mark Moody – 62 Elm Street
24. Robert Furey – 95 Conant Street

25. Joe Palumbo – 90 Blackhorse Place
26. Michael Williams – 1284 Sudbury Road
27. Eric Van Loon – 95 Martha’s Point Road
28. Tooley Rogers – 30 Elsinore Street
29. Martin Schumacher – 25 Highland Street
30. Laura Johnson – 30 Elsinore Street
31. Dean Banfield – 73 Walden Terrace
32. Gail and Stephen Hire – 54 Nancy Road
33. Melissa Karczewski – 262 Monsen Road
34. Susannah Benner – 309 Musterfield Road
35. Kerry Anne Stone – 148 Wright Road
36. Wilson Kerr – 20 Damon Street
37. Erinn McNeill Prebil – 62 Blueberry Lane
38. Greg Creamer – 233 Elm Street
39. Adrienne and Mark Principe – 78 Nashoba Road
40. Katherine Taunton-Rigby – 67 Finigan Way
41. Katie Lyneis – 193 Nashoba Road
42. Helen Clancy – 286 Monsen Road
43. Alexandra Ruhmann – 10 Wood Street
44. Carrie Chaffee – 152 Deacon Haynes Road
45. Sue St. Croix – 32 Center Village Drive

From: Mark Martines <mjmartines@comcast.net>

Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 10:12 AM

To: Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>

Subject: This Morning's SB Meeting/Please Remove the Proposed Article 22 Ballot Question

Please vote to remove the proposed Article 22 question from the ballot and take this opportunity to applaud the School Committee for its hard work and recent decision to take a path forward to help heal a very energized, volatile and contentious situation.

From the beginning late last year, the Select Board has misjudged and mishandled this matter. Many believe the DEI Co-Chair or another citizen should have petitioned Article 22 as a citizen's petition. By supporting and effectively sponsoring Article 22 through its advisory DEI committee, the Select Board undermined and denigrated the authority, role and work of the School Committee. The Select Board's actions represent bad governance, poor judgment and potentially abuse of power. Further, despite Town Counsel's advice that naming a school is outside of the Select Board's authority, the Select Board and its advisory DEI committee continue to facilitate and encourage Article 22 Supporters to pressure and shame publicly School Committee members into reversing their February decision.

To make matters worse, the Select Board has failed and continues to fail to lead a compromise and path forward to heal and unify our Town. In fact, it has done the opposite. Many understand that concerned citizens met with members of the advisory DEI committee and members of the Select Board in late February and March to discuss alternate ways to honor Ellen Garrison following the School Committee's February decision to retain the CMS name. All such conversations and efforts apparently were rebuffed summarily by both members of the advisory DEI committee and members of the Select Board.

In addition to failures by the Select Board and its advisory DEI committee to encourage and to uphold principles of respect and civility owed to our public officials and fellow citizens, the Select Board and its advisory DEI committee have ignored and continue to ignore concerns for public safety. For example, the Select Board has known for months that Article 22 Supporters have threatened and intimidated the School Superintendent, elected School Committee members and fellow citizens in efforts to "win" their "name only", no-compromise campaign. In fact, many believe public intimidation and shaming as well as threats to smear our Town's reputation are core parts of the advisory DEI committee's plan and strategy. As the Select Board knows, or should know, the following events have surrounded this matter:

- After the Town's Council on Aging Candidate Forum in late March, four members from the audience surrounded, cornered and verbally abused a School Committee candidate for over 25 minutes. One of the Article 22 audience

members yelled at the candidate a number of times and told her she should be “ashamed of herself” for her vote to retain the CMS name.

- After the Article 22 presentation and discussion at the League of Women Voters forum in early April, the DEI Co-Chair and two-three Article 22 Supporters surrounded the School Superintendent in the hallway outside of the main room in the library and threatened her in an effort to intimidate her into changing her position on the CMS name.
- Following the Article 22 vote at Town Meeting, numerous Article 22 Supporters called fellow voters “racists” following their “NO” votes on the article. Unbeknownst apparently to the one Article 22 Supporter, the family of the voter he targeted and disparaged is bi-racial and the voter and his wife were understandably offended.
- After public comment at the School Committee’s meeting two weeks ago, and following a verbal altercation with an audience member, an Article 22 Supporter yelled at the audience member and his colleague sitting next to him, telling them “they” [the Article 22 Supporters] “know where you [they] live”. A few days later, another Article 22 Supporter, who is a neighbor of one of two targeted audience members, told him that she “really likes” him and his family, and warned him to “be careful.” I understand a Police Report was filed.
- Most recently, after public comment at this week’s School Committee meeting, it was reported that an elderly, African American Article 22 Supporter called one of the Metco Representatives an “oreo” after the representative’s support of the CMS name. An urban dictionary defines an “oreo” as a “black person who is regarded as having adopted the attitudes, values and behavior thought to be characteristic of a middle-class white society, often at the expense of their own heritage.” Whatever the definition, the term “oreo” is inappropriate and offensive, and is a racial slur. Thereafter, the Concord Police were called to Ripley School and took a statement from the Metco Representative.

The advisory DEI committee and Article 22 Supporters continue, and have intensified, their efforts to apparently extort a CMS re-naming based on threats and acts to further smear and damage Concord’s reputation by labeling our Town as “racist” and “racially isolated”. Recently, supporters convinced and misled two regional media outlets to report the CMS renaming as a rejection of social justice efforts and asserted racial discrimination incidents that plague allegedly our Town.

A ballot question on Article 22 appears to be a lose-lose scenario. If a majority of voters vote “YES”, does the Select Board believe the School Committee should reconsider for a third time its February vote as well as its recent decision based on a non-binding ballot question? What if a majority of the voters vote “NO” on the ballot question, will the Select Board lobby and pressure the School Committee to reverse its recent decision to name the building after Ellen Garrison with the same vigor as it has lobbied

and attempted to influence the CMS re-naming to date? Although it's neither scientific nor necessarily accurate, please note that more than 82% (186/228) of those polled by The Concord Bridge as of today support the CMS name.

The Select Board has the opportunity this morning to remove the proposed Article 22 question from the ballot and to move forward to help heal and unify our Town following the School Committee's recent decision. Please do so.

Mark Martines
Alford Circle

From: Joe Laurin <jlaurin978@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 10:15 AM

To: Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>

Subject: Action Requested: CMS Naming

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jlaurin978@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

I respectfully request that the Select Board remove the vote on “article 22 renaming of the Concord Middle School” from the proposed special election of June 25.

The school committee voted on a thoughtful compromise at their meeting on Tuesday night - a compromise that should be acceptable to any reasonable person.

We need to put this issue behind us. Yet another non-binding vote will accomplish nothing more than continued waste of tax payer money and Town leader time, and- God forbid- will end in drawn out lawsuits. Most importantly it will further divide our community.

You, as Select Board and leaders of our town, have the opportunity to lead and to make a wise decision. Please take it.

Joe Laurin
Southfield Road
978-866-9876

From: Deborah Duggan <deborah_duggan@hotmail.com>

Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 9:50 AM

To: Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; mhartman@concord; Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>

Subject: Naming of Concord Middle School

Dear Select Board Members,

I would like to say that I DO NOT feel that naming the new Concord Middle School should be any name other than Concord Middle School. I feel that the school committee did their jobs and followed the correct procedure and that this should not continue.

Best,

Deborah A Duggan
115 Upland Road
Concord

From: Robin Baughman <robinlynn@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 9:40 AM

To: Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>

Subject: In favor of REMOVING school naming question on June 25th ballot

Some people who received this message don't often get email from robinlynn@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Select Board,

In advance of your meeting this morning, I am reaching out to ask that you remove the School Naming question on the June 25th ballot. I believe the name voted on by the SC this past Tuesday is a great way to honor Ellen Garrison and achieves a fair and reasonable compromise.

Sincerely,
Robin Baughman
144 Southfield Rd, Concord

From: Jennifer Couture <jennifer.couture@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 9:39 AM

To: Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>

Subject: Leave the School Name alone

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jennifer.couture@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear all,

I am writing to lend my support to leaving the name of the Concord Middle School as Concord Middle School once and for all and stopping any future non-binding voting or binding voting. This has already occupied TOOOO MUCH of the town's time and energy. It is creating divisiveness that is not healthy.

Thank you for your continued efforts to support our town and children.

Kind Regards,

Jennifer Couture

71 Alden Road

From: Leslie Flinn <laflinn@gmail.com>

Date: Fri, May 24, 2024 at 9:18 AM

Subject: Please keep Article 22

To: <smcandrew@concordma.gov>

To Ms. McAndrew, on behalf of the Town Select Board:

I am writing to ask that the Select Board keep the wording in Article 22 as originally stated when it appears on the June 25 special election ballot, and not to allow the School Committee to alter, distort, or remove Article 22.

Please remember that the loudest voice is the collective voice of the Concord community, which voted overwhelmingly to name the school after Ellen Garrison. Please let us - your friends and neighbors - be heard!

Warm regards, Leslie Flinn, 125 Central Street, Concord, MA

May 24, 2024

Ms. Mary Hartman, Chair
Concord Select Board

Dear Ms. Hartman,

The divisive atmosphere around the naming of the new Middle School prompts this letter.

On May 21st the School Committee voted to compromise. I urge you to withdraw the Middle School naming question from June's Special Election ballot

In Ms. Hartman's words in the Concord Bridge and at Monday's Select Board meeting a compromise was urged. On Tuesday the School Committee did just that. They voted to name the new Concord Middle School building the Ellen Garrison building and retain the name the Concord Middle School (CMS).

I urge the Select Board to see this as a good compromise and to gratefully accept it and move on. Prolonging this issue is bad for Concord and puts undue pressure on the School Committee.

Mr. Palumbo issued an invitation to the local press to cover the naming controversy. The result has been some vitriolic denunciations of Concord. If this compromise isn't accepted and the warrant article withdrawn I fear he will invite the National press to feast on Concord.

You have the power to heal Concord and I hope and trust you will exercise it.

Sincerely,

Joanne Gibson

100 Newbury Court #2217
Concord, MA 01742

From: C. Schweitzer <cdschweitzer@hotmail.com>

Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 9:07 AM

To: Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>

Subject: Concord Middle School

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from cdschweitzer@hotmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Good Morning,

I understand that a decision will be made this morning regarding a vote on June 25th regarding the naming of Concord Middle School. The School Committee voted on a compromise at their meeting on Tuesday evening that addresses Ellen Garrison.

We have a number of other town issues such as the town's need for Wi-Fi that we should address. There is no need to have another non-binding vote on this subject.

Kind regards,
Carolyn Schweitzer
1235-2 Monument Street

Sent from my iPad

From: klmartines@comcast.net <klmartines@comcast.net>

Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 8:54 AM

To: Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>

Subject: CMS Naming

You don't often get email from klmartines@comcast.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

I am writing to ask you to remove the proposed ballot question from the June 25 special meeting, related to the naming of CMS. The School Committee (SC) voted on Tuesday night to name it The Ellen Garrison Building at the Concord Middle School. As Ms. Rovelli stated on Tuesday evening, the Select Board is less concerned about what the actual name is that's chosen and more concerned with "restoring the trust in all of our elected officials." If this is true, I cannot comprehend what putting another non-binding question on the ballot would do? What is the purpose? It appears it would be to further divide the town. As has been stated multiple times and stated publicly by the Select Board as being true – the School Committee has full authority to name the school. That is not in dispute. It does not matter what the results are of the town-wide ballot question. The SC made their decision and it is time to move on. As a matter of fact, the only result of the ballot question will be to further divide the town, no matter the result.

Many of you have individually stated that you want the town to unify and move forward. Never mind the fact that your committee completely overstepped by putting this on the town meeting agenda (it should have been a citizens' petition), but continuously undermining another elected body in this town is unconscionable. I expected you to come out with a statement after the SC meeting this week and support their compromise. The SC members have been harassed and threatened and most recently, the Concord police were called to the meeting due to the Ellen supporters calling people racial slurs and shaming them. This has to stop! One side has tried to compromise on many occasions and the other has put their foot in the sand like a toddler and said "name or nothing." For the second time, the SC named the building. End of discussion!

Do the right thing and let's move forward and put this behind us. You all were elected by the citizens of this town to act and make decisions for ALL of us – not only the DEI board and Joe Palumbo! Enough is enough.

Kristin Martines
66 Alford Circle

From: Scotthgillis <scotthgillis@comcast.net>

Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 8:51 AM

To: Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>;
Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Cameron
McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>

Cc: lindsaygillis@comcast.net; Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>

Subject: Today's SB Meeting

Dear Mary, Terry, Wendy, Mark and Cameron,

We urge you to remove the non-binding CMS naming question from the Special Election Ballot for the following reasons:

- 1) both parties have not agreed to accept and comply with the non-binding vote,
- 2) Town Meeting has already voted,
- 3) the Select Board appears to be lobbying for one side,
- 4) our Town is becoming divided and the division is being publicized,
- 5) the School Committee has compromised by naming the building to honor Ellen Garrison,
- 6) it is time to move on.

Thank you for your consideration of these points.

Sincerely,
Scott and Lindsay

Lindsay M. Gillis
Scott H. Gillis
Alford Circle

From: ginaceli@comcast.net <ginaceli@comcast.net>

Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 8:45 AM

To: Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>

Subject: Vote on June 25, 2024

You don't often get email from ginaceli@comcast.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

Good morning,

I am writing to request that the vote on June 25, 2024, be removed in regards to the naming of the CMS. It's time for this issue to come to an end and close the gap with this senseless division.

Thank you,
Gina and Mark Celi
434 Old Marlboro Road

From: Maude Bigelow <mmbigelow@me.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2024 10:35 PM
To: Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>
Subject: Next month's ballot

[You don't often get email from mmbigelow@me.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

I am writing to encourage you to keep the exact same wording on the June 22 ballot. Change NOTHING except the name of the new middle school for Ellen Garrison.

Maude Bigelow
855 Barrett's Mill Road
Concord MA 01742

Sent from my iPhone

From: Lea Delacour <leadelacour@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2024 10:03 PM
To: Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>
Subject: Addressing the issue of Article 22

You don't often get email from leadelacour@comcast.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

Both my husband and I hope you will support the name of the middle school that was voted on at our Town Meeting: The Ellen Garrison Middle School.

Sincerely,
Ted Bayne and Lea Delacour
71 Assabet Avenue, Concord

Select Board,

I would respectfully ask the Select Board not proceed with the subject of Town Meeting Article 22 on the ballot of the upcoming town election.

The Select Board is pitting neighbor against neighbor. This entire saga has should have been a citizen petition, not a Select Board committee with Select Board support. I certainly hope that there is never a situation in which the tables are turned or shoe is on the other foot and the School Committee acts officially in a similar manner.

The School Committee has authority on this subject and can manage the issue. The School Committee members are long time residents committed to our town, families and students. If voters don't like their decision, they can vote them out of office.

It's time for the Select Board and School Committee to come together to solve our town's serious fiscal issues. A town with population growth of less than 1% per annum for decades should not be facing 8% per annum increases in property taxes for the next six years.

Breht Feigh
Spencer Brook Road

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Think before you print. Please help protect our environment.

From: Breht Feigh <brehtfeigh@gmail.com>
Date: Tuesday, May 21, 2024 at 4:27 PM
To: townclerk <townclerk@concordma.gov>, Mary Hartman
<mhartman@concordma.gov>, Andrea Fountain <afountain@concordma.gov>,
concordschoolcommittee@concordps.org <concordschoolcommittee@concordps.org>
Subject: Town Election Ballot - Article 22

Hello

Under what legal authority does one of Concord's two elected bodies have the ability to place a question on the ballot of a town election that relates to the other elected body's responsibilities without authorization or support of the other body?

In the specifics, does the Select Board have the authority, without the support of the School Committee, to place the subject of Article 22 of Concord's most recent town meeting on the ballot of the upcoming town election?

In a hypothetical, could the School Committee request a ballot question about DPW's maintenance of town roads on the ballot of a town election without the support of the Select Board?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Breht Feigh
Spencer Brook Road

Please keep the exact same wording of Article 22, for next month's special election ballot. Thank you,

Beth Kundert
182 Central St

From: Chesley Chen <chesleychen@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2024 4:19 PM
To: Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>
Subject: Please keep the Article 22 wording for the Special Election Ballot

You don't often get email from chesleychen@comcast.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Select Board,

Thank you for your diligence, persistence, and even handedness in leading us through the new middle school naming process. Truly!

I am writing to encourage you to keep the exact same wording of Article 22 from Town Meeting for next month's Special Election ballot.

Thank you!

Ches
196 Williams Road

Chesley Chen (he/him/his)

To the Select Board:

I was present at the Select Board meeting when the proposition of putting forward a Special Election ballot measure that would address the issue of naming the new middle school for Ellen Garrison was put forward. I spoke at the time, and in some way remain, in opposition to the idea as the vote at Town Meeting--which is said to be the town's legislative body--had already expressed its will on this issue.

I listened and understood, however, the arguments made by the members of the Select Board for putting this question again to the voters. I have been informed that the Select Board is now, however, considering modifying the language of the initial Article 22 question as it will appear on the Special Election ballot. Or perhaps removing the question--in spite of the public becoming aware of the question--entirely.

You must stop behaving in this fashion. This is backroom, insider-only, mysterious dealing, far outside the common public eye. I must repeat: the town has already expressed its will. Asking the town again is dubious enough, but altering the ask even further invites yet further mistrust--a mistrust I am beginning to feel--in our town governance. I happen to know about the proposed language change because I am associated with the Friend of Ellen and received an email about this development. I am certain that most residents of Concord are not on any email list that is either for or against the naming of the school.

I have lived in many American communities in my life and I have never seen such sly, even if perhaps well meaning, manipulation of the democratic process which, as we well know, has become an all-too-common social norm. That is it occurring here, in Concord, a place that I was rightly raised to revere, makes the issue all the more demoralizing to the soul.

Thank you,

Craig Awmiller

27 Lang Street

From: Nika Engberg <nikaengberg@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2024 5:18:45 PM

To: Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>

Subject: Support for a vote on Ellen Garrison Middle School name

You don't often get email from nikaengberg@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Good afternoon,

I'm writing to encourage the Select Board, as previously discussed on Monday, to include language on the special election ballot scheduled for June that fully aligns with the language in the article voted on at town meeting requesting that the school committee reconsider naming the new middle school Ellen Garrison Middle School.

While I am disappointed that this specific question is being put on a town-wide ballot while other issues that were voted on at town meeting are not also being opened for reconsideration via ballot, I think it's extremely important to note that at town meeting, the citizens overwhelmingly rejected a proposed amendment to Article 22. It was clear that town meeting specifically was asking the school committee to reconsider the Ellen Garrison name for the school, and that anything less was not acceptable to town meeting.

In the event that the special election ballot consists of a watered-down proposal to the school committee asking them to name the school something other than Ellen Garrison Middle School, the results of the election will ultimately be inconclusive and will fail to reflect the support for the Ellen Garrison Middle School name that was demonstrated overwhelmingly at town meeting. Asking Concord citizens to vote on something other than the actual question that's in contention is disrespectful of our citizens' time and resources.

Thank you for your consideration,

Nika Engberg

62 Church Street

Concord, MA 01742

From: Beth Baryiames <bbaryiames@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2024 4:23 PM
To: Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>
Subject: In support of Ellen Garrison Middle School

You don't often get email from bbaryiames@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello,

For the special vote on June 25, 2024, please use the exact same language as town meeting in April. I support the name Ellen Garrison Middle School.

Thank you,

Beth Baryiames

149 Central St, Concord, MA 01742.
Beth

From: Sven Weber <sven.weber@me.com>

Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2024 4:20 PM

To: Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>

Subject: Letter to the Select Board

Dear Select Board,

First of all, thank you so much for all the time and work you do. Dealing with outspoken Concordians must be challenging but can hopefully also be rewarding.

I am writing today to express my concern regarding the ongoing conflict between the School Committee and key constituents of the Town. It appears that the School Committee has a rare talent to alienate significant parts of the town's citizens. The recent decision of the School Committee to name the new building the "Ellen Garrison building at the Concord Middle School" was not only the outcome of a chaotic, badly managed School Committee meeting but is also a slap in the face of all voters of the recent Town Meeting.

At the Town Meeting, an Amendment to Article 22 was proposed that would have allowed for the building or other parts of the school to be named after Ellen Garrison, but this Amendment was rejected at the Town Meeting by a significant majority. The citizens of the town made it clear that they prefer the school to be named Ellen Garrison Middle School and not just the building. Celebrating this as a "compromise" is disrespectful to the Town Meeting voters who explicitly rejected that idea.

But let's step back from this hot topic, which seems to be just a continuation of the trend of the last few years. It appears that over the course of recent years, the School Committee repeatedly went into a confrontational course with the Town, dominantly regarding financial & budget considerations. I want to believe that there is no ill will on the side of the School Committee for this. Watching the recent recordings of School Committee meetings, I can only conclude that the Committee itself is dysfunctional, and members are not properly prepared or trained for what they are supposed to be doing. Renaming a school is one of the most complicated processes to run and typically takes months of considerations, community involvement, and community education. Superintendent Hunter herself acknowledged at an LWVCC event that she just doesn't know how to name a school. Looking at budgets while student enrollment is declining is a very difficult task and requires careful analysis, priority settings, and hard decisions.

I strongly believe that we need to find a way to end the fighting. I do not know what the exact path is to achieve this, but I know that open communication combined with firm, clear red lines are important. Perhaps having a joint meeting between the Select Board and the School Committee could be helpful. I also know that the School Committee is in desperate need of a Board Consultant who would provide critical training for them but should also do a 360 review to help them understand their impact on the larger community - perhaps we need to fund a Board Consultant for this.

In summary, I hope we can find a way to make clear on one hand that the School Committee made a disrespectful decision but, on the other hand, offer help to get out of this gridlock - the gridlock on this specific topic and the gridlock on other topics. In the end, we are all neighbors, and we have to live together.

Respectfully,

Svenn Weber
50 Belknap St.

From: Polly Reeve <pcrossreeve@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2024 4:33 PM

To: concordschoolcommittee@concordps.org

Cc: Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>

Subject: Ellen Garrison Middle School

Dear Concord School Committee, with copies to the Select Board,
I am writing to express my strong support for naming our beautiful new middle school after our local heroine Ellen Garrison, and my dismay at the so-called "compromise" that has been proposed. To me, the contortions the school committee is going through (apparently) to avoid "giving in" and truly honoring Ellen Garrison are painful and, frankly, embarrassing to watch. I have tried, sincerely, but I cannot understand why the Committee is resisting joining so many in this town in truly celebrating this remarkable native daughter! Isn't she exactly the kind of person who should become a household name in this town that values liberty and justice for all? Isn't she someone we want our kids and grandkids to learn about and be proud of? And isn't finally having a high profile institution in town named after a person of color, and one who also happens to be female, something we will all be proud of helping to make happen? (Including, ideally, the School Committee?)

The School Committee has a chance to demonstrate real leadership by reconsidering your position and joining with the majority of Concordians who are seeking to honor an amazing woman by naming our school (and not just the building that houses it) after Ellen Garrison.

Thank you for your consideration, and for your service.

Polly Reeve
429 Williams Road

From: Leslie Fisher <leslifisher@treitman.com>

Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2024 4:29 PM

To: Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>; Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>

Subject: Select Board meeting Friday May 22

Some people who received this message don't often get email from leslifisher@treitman.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Board Members,

Please don't do anything to promote the idea of naming the *building* after Ellen Garrison.

I think naming a pile of bricks, steel and/or concrete after Ellen is insulting. Black people have been sidelined and getting crumbs for 400 years.

Sincerely,

Leslie Fisher
43 Middle St.

P.S. Although I would strongly prefer the middle school name be the Ellen Garrison Middle School, I can't imagine the school committee will bow to public pressure even though their rationale for not naming the school after Ms. Garrison is fishy. I would, however, think naming the middle school library after her would be a reasonable and appropriate compromise, and it would be a full honor, rather than a tacked on acknowledgement.

From: Mark Moody <mark.david.moody@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2024 4:20 PM
To: Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>
Subject: Support for the ELLEN GARRISON MIDDLE SCHOOL.

You don't often get email from mark.david.moody@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Members of the Select Board,

I am writing to thank you for your ongoing support for naming the new middle school the ELLEN GARRISON MIDDLE SCHOOL. I have learned that the Select Board is considering bringing Article 22 to a vote at a special election on June 25th, and I support the Select Board's approach.

On April 30, via an overwhelming vote the Town asked the School Committee to name the publicly financed and owned property at 923 Old Marlboro Road as ELLEN GARRISON MIDDLE SCHOOL. Unfortunately, the School Committee has chosen to ignore this vote (while happy to accept town meeting votes which provided the funding for the middle school and the Concord school system operating budget).

Ellen Garrison was born in Concord, educated in Concord, and became a courageous educator and civil rights advocate – seems like the obvious and wonderful choice to name our school the Ellen Garrison Middle School.

Best regards,

Mark Moody Ph.D.
62 Elm Street

From: bob furey <rfurey@aol.com>

Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2024 4:22 PM

To: Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; mhowell@concordma.gov; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>

Cc: creiss@concordma.gov; Laurie Hunter <lhunter@concordps.org>; alexabanderson@gmail.com; Letters <letters@theconcordbridge.org>; Eric Van Loon <vanloon.eric@gmail.com>

Subject: Citizen statement re 5/24 SB agenda

You don't often get email from rfurey@aol.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Members of the Select Board:

I am unable to attend tomorrow's meeting regarding the special election.

Would you please consider adding my thoughts to your deliberation.

Thank you.

Robert Furey

95 Conant Street

978.369.1610/603.493.2200

I am Bob Furey aka Doc. I have lived in Concord most of my life, either at 95 Conant Street, 161 Nashoba Road, or 500 Walden Street.

I began teaching and coaching at CCHS in 1968 and finally fully retired last year.

I grew up in New York, but Concord is my adopted home. I treasure the free exchange of ideas that has been the hallmark of this town and the schools.

In all those years only two events have truly upset me because of the way they divided the town.

The first was the Vietnam war, which left a festering animosity that was very slow to heal.

The second is the naming of the middle school, which also has created a significant rift in the body politic.

I would have been fine with either "Concord Middle School" or "Ellen Garrison School".

The school committee made a decision to name the school "CMS" based on the information that they had at that time. At town meeting, a large number of voters expressed unhappiness with the school committee's decision and asked the school committee to reconsider. The school committee did reconsider and, recognizing the historical importance of Ms. Garrison, came up with several possible compromises. On Tuesday night, they chose one that recognized both those in town who wanted "CMS" and those who wanted "EG".

As with most compromises, not all people are happy with the decision, but to revisit the issue again, now in a town-wide vote essentially in the same form as in the town meeting, is to reopen the wound and further divide the town instead of letting the healing, that must happen, take place.

Please remove it from the upcoming ballot.

Thank you.

Robert Furey

95 Conant Street #411

978-369-1610/603-493-2200

From: Joe Palumbo <joe.frank.palumbo@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 20, 2024 12:34 PM
To: Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>
Cc: Donna McIntosh <dmcintosh@concordma.gov>; Andrea Foncerrada <andrea.foncerrada@bostoncenter.org>; Kerry Lafleur <klafleur@concordma.gov>
Subject: ADL Sends Letter to School Committee in support of Ellen Garrison Middle School

Thought you might find this of interest. Shannon, Please share with the Select Board.

A powerful statement from the leadership of The Anti- Defamation League of New England.

Please share as you see fit.

May 17, 2024

Concord School Committee
120 Meriam Road
Concord, MA 01742

To the Members of the Concord School Committee:

On behalf of ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) of New England, we are pleased to write to you today in support of the naming of the newly constructed middle school after Ellen Garrison, a black Concordian, civil rights activist, and educator who dedicated her life to advancing social justice and equality for the Concord community and across the country.

Since 1913, ADL's mission has been "to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all." Dedicated to combating antisemitism, prejudice, and bigotry of all kinds, as well as defending democratic ideals and promoting civil rights, ADL is proud of its leadership in developing innovative materials, programs, and services that build bridges of communication, understanding, and respect among diverse racial, religious, and ethnic groups. ADL acutely understands the importance of representation and the profound impact it can have on shaping the attitudes and perceptions of students and community members. Not only is this essential for fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment in students of diverse backgrounds, but it also cultivates a culture of empathy and understanding within the broader community.

By naming the newly constructed middle school after Ellen Garrison, Concord can celebrate her incredible contributions, while also demonstrating that the stories and achievements of all Concord community members are deserving of acknowledgement. Concord can best serve its increasingly diverse population by fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion. This naming would also powerfully affirm that honoring individual legacies is not just to recognize the past, but also to strive for a future where every voice is valued, and every person feels empowered to contribute to the rich tapestry of Concord's identity.

ADL New England 40 Court Street, Boston, MA 02108 | t: 617.406.6300 | f: 617.406.6310 | boston@adl.org [2](#)

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you wish to discuss.

Sincerely,

Peggy Shukur, Vice President, ADL East Division

Rabbi Ron Fish, ADL New England Regional Director

Sara Colb, ADL New England Deputy Regional Director

Jim Wallack, ADL New England Regional Board Chair

From: cbw854@earthlink.net <cbw854@earthlink.net>
Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2024 12:50 PM
To: Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>
Subject: My Concerns over the June 25, 2024 Special Election Ballot

[You don't often get email from cbw854@earthlink.net. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

To the members of the Select Board,

It has come to my attention that the Board is considering modifying or retracting article 22 on the June 25, 2024 special election ballot. I would urge you not to do that. Over the open course of last evening's School Committee meeting, we watched its members struggle to find a way NOT to name the school for Ellen Garrison. The motion for the Ellen Garrison-Concord Middle School was amended to the Ellen Garrison Middle School, and not seconded. Then, the original motion for the Ellen Garrison-Concord Middle School was itself, not seconded. The Garrison building of the Concord Middle School was moved, seconded and passed. The Committee couldn't even place this woman's first name on the building! That had to be done by a subsequent amendment.

Removing or modifying the article on the ballot would, in my opinion, be a huge mistake. To date, the School Committee has failed to answer the town's request April 30th, to name the building now under construction, the Ellen Garrison Middle School. They have offered a whole host of names but none, has the town has requested. Removing or modifying the wording of the article to fit the Committee's name of the week, allows this name to stand while the Committee is allowed to avoid answering the town's request.

Last evening, those advocating for the Ellen Garrison Middle School name, were painted as partisans attempting to overrule an elected body's decision. The Committee's Chair, rued establishing a precedent where those opposing an elected body's decision simply overrule said decision by placing it on a ballot. I would submit that it is the School Committee who is setting a dangerous precedent, that an elected body can fail to heed a duly warranted request, overwhelmingly supported by the community that grants them their budget and their authority.

In closing, I implore you to retain the article as worded on the June 25, 2024 ballot to more clearly inform the School Committee on the wishes of the electorate. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Michael A. Williams
1284 Sudbury Road
Sent from my iPad

From: Eric Van Loon <vanloon.eric@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2024 8:10 AM

To: Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>

Cc: Andrea Fountain <afountain@concordma.gov>; Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>; Carmin Reiss <creiss@concordma.gov>

Subject: Citizen statement re 5/24 SB agenda

Mark, Mary, Terri, Wendy, Cameron -

Thank you for your service to the Town in these challenging times. And for scheduling tomorrow's special 1030 am meeting regarding the special election.

Although I hope to be one of the persons allowed to make a two-minute comment at the beginning of the meeting, I am submitting my statement in advance for your information in the event that does not pan out.

Thanks for your consideration,

Eric Van Loon

VanLoon SB Statement:

Eric Van Loon citizen comment re ballot question on new middle school naming:

[The School Committee vote "Stands Up For Ellen"]

There's a "Stand Up For Ellen" sign in my driveway, and I voted enthusiastically at Town Meeting to urge the School Committee to name our new middle school for Ellen Garrison.

Three weeks later, the Committee voted the name "The Ellen Garrison Building at the Concord Middle School."

Would I have preferred the simple "Ellen Garrison Middle School"? Yes. Is the new name clunky? Yes. Is the new name acceptable? Also Yes.

The School Committee vote is a clear victory for Stand Up For Ellen. A victory does not have to be 100% to be a victory. Three-quarters of a loaf should be acceptable in our Town, where respect for divergent views is fundamental and harmony an important goal.

At Town Meeting it was accurately said: there's not a single public building in Concord named for a woman or person of color. But now there is. And it's the newest, most expensive public building in Concord history.

For me, "The Ellen Garrison Building at the Concord Middle School" is "Standing Up For Ellen."

Our Town DEI Commission's long-term charge is "to increase cooperation ... and dialogue" and "facilitate ... unity." Its 23-24 Action Plan features an Inclusive Retailer program, Concord Pride, and developing a Town-wide incident reporting system. This important business merits renewed energy.

I urge others, who like myself want to Stand Up For Ellen, to support the School Committee action and urge our Select Board to drop the non-binding referendum question from our June ballot.

Let's recognize the new name for the victory it is, and join together in planning an exciting, unified opening ceremony that celebrates Ellen Garrison.

Eric Van Loon
Marthas Point Road
5/23/24

From: Tooley Rogers <tooley@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2024 2:45 PM
To: Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>
Subject: Compromise isn't a Compromise if...

You don't often get email from tooley@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Select Board,

The School Committee vote to name the new middle school the Ellen Garrison building at the Concord Middle School is really naming the new middle school the Concord Middle School, as the School Committee has always determined to do. All the school jersey's, stationary, banners, events - in short all that carries the name forward will be "Concord Middle School" with no hint of Ellen Garrison.

A compromise is not a compromise if only one party is involved - the School Committee has never allowed for an open discussion or acknowledgement of the Town Meeting vote - of this small but important issue. It seems that holding the vote on the June 25th special election is now more important than ever.

The fact that so many voices - the voters at Town Meeting included - have been shut out - ignored — from this discussion, and then been "included" in a "compromise" that we had no part in, feels, well... you can imagine how it feels.

This has all been so remarkably difficult to participate in – no that is the wrong word. This has all been so difficult to view, as there has been no real participation.

Please go forward with the vote at the special election on June 25th.

Sincerely,
Tooley Rogers
30 Elsinore Street

From: Martin Schumacher <mschumacher607@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2024 3:16 PM

To: Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>

Subject: Keep the Article 22 wording as is

You don't often get email from mschumacher607@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Select Board,

First of all, many thanks for your ongoing efforts to listen to your fellow citizens while working to improve our town. Your sacrifice is greatly appreciated.

Before you meet tomorrow (5/24) in your special session I wish to say simply – PLEASE keep the exact same wording as Article 22 for the June 25 special election ballot. The wording is clear and unambivalent.

As you well know, during last month's Town Meeting our citizens voted overwhelmingly to ask the School Committee to name our new school the Ellen Garrison Middle School, a specific ask that the School Committee never truly responded to. It seems a shame to have to conduct this exercise again, but if it helps to bring peace and harmony to our community, then so it shall be.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Martin Schumacher
25 Highland Street

From: laura johnson <catbird06@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2024 3:17 PM
To: Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>
Subject: June 25 special election

You don't often get email from catbird06@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Concord Select Board,

I am writing to express my full support for naming the Concord Middle School after Ellen Garrison. Ellen Garrison is an inspirational person to many in our community, and I believe that naming the new school after her would be a wonderful way to honor her legacy.

I urge the Select Board to proceed with the town vote on June 25 to solidify this decision. I wholeheartedly support this initiative and hope that the Select Board will proceed with the original language of Article 22, not the “compromise” proposal of the School Committee.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Laura Johnson

30 Elsinore street

From: Dean Banfield <dean.banfield@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2024 9:12:01 PM

To: Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>

Subject: Please allow citizens to vote on the Ellen Garrison Middle School

Hi Select Board,

Although today this seems like an issue which will roil the community forever, and furthering the debate will only exacerbate the problem, I am confident that the town will move beyond this dispute. However, I think it is still an important exercise of our democratic levers to allow all citizens to voice their position in private, in the voting booth, rather than what we have had to endure, which is that the most ardent grab the microphones, sign petitions and write letters to which they sign their names. A secret ballot on an important matter that is particularly charged with public discord will allow citizens to freely express what they want without having to craft a public statement for why they want it, and best of all, nobody else will need to know how they voted.

Please do not remove the advisory ballot question that you have already authorized for the June election. Thank you for considering this letter.

Best,
Dean Banfield
73 Walden Terrace

From: [Mary Hartman](#)
To: [Shannon McAndrew](#); [Andrea Fountain](#)
Cc: [Mark Howell](#)
Subject: Fwd: Please vote to remove ballot question for CMS
Date: Tuesday, May 28, 2024 4:18:13 PM

Pls post. I will send a response.

Mary Hartman
Select Board, Town of Concord

From: Gail E. Hire <gail.hire@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 3:40:03 AM
To: Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>
Subject: Please vote to remove ballot question for CMS

You don't often get email from gail.hire@comcast.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Members of the Select Board,
We are writing in support of the School Committee's vote to name a building at CMS for Ellen Garrison, and to request that this action by the School Committee means that the Select Board **need not propose a ballot question** regarding the school's name.

The name **Concord** Middle School is inclusive of all our citizens - past and present. Naming a building for Ellen Garrison will allow teachers and students to honor her memory without the confusion of adding a personal name to the only public middle school in Concord. Putting this issue to another non-binding vote simply draws out the negativity and drama surrounding this topic, and shows disrespect for elected representatives. The School Committee has made its decision and that should be that.

Thank you,

Gail & Stephen Hire
Nancy Road, Concord

From: [Mary Hartman](#)
To: [Shannon McAndrew](#); [Andrea Fountain](#)
Cc: [Mark Howell](#)
Subject: Fwd: CMS naming and ballot issue
Date: Tuesday, May 28, 2024 4:43:00 PM

From: Melissa Karczewski <melissahun@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 4:29:29 AM

To: Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>

Subject: CMS naming and ballot issue

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from melissahun@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Dear Select Board Members,

I am writing to ask you to remove the recently-added school naming question from the upcoming ballot vote on June 25.

As a matter of pure procedure and out of respect for the election process in our town and in our country, allow the School Committee, which clearly has naming authority, to name the school. Furthermore, given the meetings and multiple proposed compromises, allow the Committee to use the name that has been proposed in the most recent compromise.

Moreover, as the outgoing President of the Alcott School Parent Teacher Group I wish more effort and time could be spent by the School Committee focusing on strengthening curriculum in school about Ellen Garrison and other crucial people in our local history who fought against slavery then debating a name on a building.

I worked so hard on the METCO program this year and there is work to be done in this town for that program. Let's focus our efforts as citizens in the right place.

As the leaders of the Town Government I think it's imperative for you to take the right stand, respect the law, respect our town election process and move on with the most recent proposed compromise presented at this week's school Committee meeting.

Thank you,

Melissa Karczewski
262 Monsen Road

From: Susannah Benner <shsheppard@mac.com>

Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 4:31:43 AM

To: Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>

Subject: Please stop this posturing

[You don't often get email from shsheppard@mac.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Warning: This email was sent from outside the Town and it has the same display name as someone inside our organization. This is probably a phishing mail. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are certain that this email is safe.

I am writing to urge the Select Committee to remove the vote on June 25th regarding the middle school renaming. This week, the School Committee named the building "Garrison", which is what I heard asked from the microphone at town meeting - "No black person has a building named for them in Concord". Now they will.

This is a fair and respectful gesture from the school committee, who has not been treated fairly or respectfully during this process, and should be seen as a success all around. This whole badgering of the school administrators and members of the school committee, the lack of cooperation and compromise, the escalating to the Boston media and national radio, calling people racists and misrepresenting the entire process is unfair and disrespectful. And the most alarming sign of posturing is that the SUFE supporters are widely the same people who vote against funding the school, harassed and opposed Dr. Hunter, the school committee members and the public school students and families during the campaign to build it, and now suddenly feel entitled to rename it.

It seems the majority of the SUFE supporters are out of touch with middle schoolers and many are oblivious to current trends in DEIB. For example, it is alarming that so many think that renaming the school will make kids open-minded, or inspire them. Most kids who attend Willard couldn't name anything factual about Simon Willard. What makes a difference in middle schoolers' lives is the DEIB work being practice at CMS, like the playbook initiative and the extended homebase programing on this topic. What inspires kids is curriculum and stories about courageous people, with examples of heroes, both famous and those brought out of obscurity. No doubt Ellen Robbins Garrison Jefferson Clark was a remarkable lady. I have no objection to elevating her profile and using her story as an illustration of bravery and inspiration. She was indeed a pioneer for her time, and from what seems to be known about her, she lead an exemplary life. And now she has her name (or one chosen for her) on a building. It is my understanding that at the time of her death, she was known at Ms. Clark.

Unlike any of the SUFE supporters, I am inside the middle school building weekly. I am a parent volunteer, three year member of the CMS PTG board, the last two as co-president, and I work hours every week to better our community and inspire our kids. I was part of the team that created the new, very successful, multicultural event at the middle school, where we had families from 22 countries showcase their culture. I doubled the METCO family friends budget for special enrichment events. I tirelessly work to fundraise for the support of the students. I created 4 social clubs for parents to connect within our community and find a place of belonging. I brought in a collaboration with a Lebanese American author to lead an enrichment program for students. We transitioned our weekly newsletter and website to a platform which may be translated into 80 different languages. I am part of a team that is producing the first service day for middle school students where the entire 7th grade will serve their community for a day. My board created and funded a grant program for faculty new initiatives, and were instrumental in funding the highly celebrated and attended Lunar New Year event this year at CCHS. I am confident that all of these endeavors inspire and educate the students. I have coffee one on one with numerous parents- the new mom arrived from China with limited English language skills, a Syrian mother whose family is living through the war, Nepalis, Danish, Swedish, and Guatemalan, plus plenty of American moms all feeling a little adjustment as they make a new home in Concord. I am an advocate and friend to people who feel like outsiders, and I strive to make them feel welcome. And I'm called a racist for not supporting SUFE's agenda.

I collaborate with the DEIB director, the METCO director, and the CMS DEIB faculty. Together we are illuminating a bigger world for the students. My PTG board just guaranteed funding to ensure EVERY student who asked for financial support will be able to attend the DC 8th grade trip. We took a leap of faith from a place of passion and commitment, and will figure out where all the money will come from. My 7th grade class went to DC without me, as my mom couldn't afford it. There was no scholarship option. What if the money that has been spent on SUFE mailings and their campaign were instead spent on 8th grade scholarship, or if the district could budget in more money for scholarships without their requests being belittled and denied? This unique, life changing experience will educate and inspire students, and its future is in jeopardy. Funding this is a way to meet a true need, and tangibly give a kid an experience they will remember forever.

The CMS student body is incredibly diverse with Dominican, Haitian, Chinese, Taiwan, Indian, Korean, Nepalis, Central and South American Latino, Eastern European, Japanese, Turkish, Iranian, Saudi, Moroccan, Tunisian, Singaporean, Kenyan, South African students and many other nationalities. None of these students sees themselves reflected in the likeness created to represent Ellen Robbins Garrison Jefferson Clark. They all may find inspiration from her story, but her African-American experience from 200 years ago does not reflect theirs. She is as "other" to them as Alcott or Thoreau. Naming the building is fine, and it is a compromise for all sides. But what I hope to see is that every kid at CMS connects as collective representatives of their town, Concord. To keep the name of the school CMS creates a space for every kid to be an ambassador to the town. They are proud of Concord, and they wear their "CMS" and "Concord" gear. In my 3 years at CMS, we have sold over \$16,000 of spiritwear - t-shirts, hats, sweatshirts, pants all with the CMS logo on it. These kids want to be known as Concord kids. It's not lame or unoriginal, it is their town.

Concord Middle School has been divided physically for as long as the Sanborn and Peabody buildings have been opened. It has been a dream and vision to have a unified Concord Middle School. For clarity, continuity, and celebration, CMS just wants to be CMS. Should the vocal pressure of a minority of Concord residents actually result in the school changing names, I can already imagine the finance committee and the SUFE supporters voting against funding for new branding, signage, letterheads, school jerseys and shirts for basketball, cross country, track, band, soccer, and beyond. I suspect the SUFE interest in CMS starts and ends with a self-satisfied bullying effort to name a school they opposed being built and will likely never have reason to enter.

I believe the Select Committee has enormous and important tasks at hand, but I do not think

badgering the SC to change their vote should be on their agenda. I am very interested in the new dense housing measures, new low income housing, how the MCI land will be developed, and how all the new housing will change our student populations in our town. I am eager for the SC to focus on some really important issues like the unlevelled math at CMS. How is this new policy working out? Should it be tweaked or is it working as desired? What trends are we seeing in reading at the elementary level? They were elected to fulfill a big and important role, and this drama should not continue to take up their time.

I also find the timing of the vote disturbing. June 25th is when those most affected by this change are not in school. Families tied to staying home all school year will now have the opportunity to travel. I don't know if this is intentional or an oversight to hold a vote when public school families are out of school.

Please accept this Garrison building compromise, and let's put an end to this. We are dividing our town and using our resources poorly. Our time and energy can be redirected. For anyone interested in actually inspiring our kids, the CMS PTG has many suggests on how you can tangibly support kids of all colors and backgrounds. Feel free to join me in donating to the PTG annual appeal or DC 8th grade scholarship fund. Together we are making a difference.

With sincerest respect,

Susannah Benner
309 Musterfield Rd
parent to 3 CPS students

From: [Mary Hartman](#)
To: [Shannon McAndrew](#); [Andrea Fountain](#)
Cc: [Mark Howell](#)
Subject: Fwd: Request to select board members
Date: Tuesday, May 28, 2024 4:44:30 PM

Pls post and respond....

Mary Hartman
Select Board, Town of Concord

From: Kerry Anne Stone <kerryanne.stone@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 4:54:08 AM
To: Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>
Subject: Request to select board members

[You don't often get email from kerryanne.stone@comcast.net. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Dear Members of the Select Board,

I am writing to request that you decide to remove from the upcoming town ballot the recently added question related to what to name the new middle school in Concord. This issue has divided our special community for far too long. The School Committee has voted on a compromise on this issue and it is time for us all to accept this compromise and move forward. I urge you to support this effort and let us all start to heal from this.

Thank you,
Kerry Anne Stone
Wright Road
Concord

From: Wilson Kerr <wilsonlkerr@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 11:30:03 AM

To: Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>

Cc: concordschoolcommittee@concordps.org <concordschoolcommittee@concordps.org>

Subject: Honoring Ellen through Compromise

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from wilsonlkerr@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

> Concord Select Board,

>

> As you likely know from my motion to amend at TM, I have long-seen compromise as the key that will open the “polarity trap” we are in, as a town.

>

> On Tuesday night, our elected School Committee worked hard to honor the wishes and sentiments of two parts of their constituency at the same time. This is the definition of compromise. By naming the building for Ellen Garrison they are honoring a heroine of Concord. By retaining the CMS name, they are honoring the initial feedback, process, and vote they took.

>

> I urge you to embrace this compromise and help to start the healing process by pulling the ballot question for the June 25th special election. Prolonging this with another non-binding vote will serve no one well. We need to join together as a town and get ready to have 3 grades of children and their teachers walk through the doors of the new Ellen Garrison Building in February 2025. My daughter is one of them.

>

> Please help open the lock on this trap we are in and embrace the real, meaningful compromise to honor Ellen Garrison that was voted for on Tuesday night.

>

> Thank you,

>

> Wilson Kerr

> 20 Damon St.

From: Erinn McNeill <erinmceill@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 1:26:53 PM

To: Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>

Subject: Remove CMS Ballot Question for June 25th

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Hi

I can't believe this issue is still being debated - since the School Committee, 70% of middle school kids, the majority of parents and the school superintendent **have all agreed that the Concord Middle School should remain the name of CMS** - but please remove the ballot question for June 25th. The fact that a small, well-funded group that is a tiny slice of this town of over 17,000 people continues to drive this debate is absurd. The majority of them don't have children who will ever even go to middle school (most are retirees or don't have kids) - and most actual parents don't have the time or resources to deal with this. Please do the right thing and remove the ballot question so we can all move on with our lives.

Thank you,

Erinn McNeill Prebil

Willard PTG VP-Elect

From: Greg Creamer <gcreamer1971@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 2:24:45 PM
To: Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>
Subject: Fwd: please remove school naming from ballot vote

You don't often get email from gcreamer1971@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Sorry, meant to include you on this last night!

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: gcreamer1971@gmail.com
Date: May 23, 2024 at 8:02:52 PM EDT
To: wrovelli@concordma.gov, cmckennitt@concordma.gov, tackerman@concordma.gov, markhowell@concordma.gov
Cc: Greg Creamer <gcreamer1971@gmail.com>
Subject: please remove school naming from ballot vote

Dear Select Board Members,
I am writing to urge you to remove the recently-added school naming question from the upcoming ballot vote on June 25.

This issue has been incredibly divisive to our town. Its sad. The School Committee, which clearly has naming authority, has proposed multiple compromise solutions.

I think its unacceptable that a vocal minority has refused to accept any sort of compromise. Why should we give credence to people who will not bend? They are acting worse than some of the MAGA Republicans in Congress.

Let's just please accept the most recent compromise and move on.

Remember that there's a large population in Concord that has a strong

historical affinity to CMS. Many of the most vocal opponents either don't have kids and/or didn't send their kids through the public schools.

And please don't forget that an unelected member of the DEI committee is trying to overturn a legitimate decision of our elected officials. That goes against every aspect of representative government. You, as Select Board representatives, should be particularly concerned about this, and you absolutely should not allow this to happen. Good government requires compromise.

As a town, we obviously want to give more recognition to the role that Black women played in our town's history. I'm fully supportive of these efforts. But I find it ironic (and pretty flabbergasting) that a bunch of well-funded White liberals are completely discounting the opinion of the ONLY black woman on the School Committee. That seems pretty paternalistic to me.

In my view, the School Committee's compromise gives very prominent (and appropriate!) recognition to Mrs. Garrison which, coupled with the annual town celebration day in her honor (let's not forget about that!), is more than sufficient. There are dozens of other Concordians who gave their lives fighting against slavery, and they are not getting nearly the same level of recognition.

Again, I ask you to remove the school naming from the ballot vote. Let's move on, so we can begin to heal from the significant harm this issue has brought to this town.

Respectfully,
Greg Creamer

PS - As an aside, I continue to be amazed by the amount of money that has been spent by the Ellen Garrison camp. It looks like they have a professional website, an advertising agency, yard placards, etc. And each townwide mailing must cost thousands of dollars! Where does all that money come from?? In my view, it would be much better spent on the METCO program or other school enrichment programs. Whoever it is, I hope someone can "hit them up" for the Concord Ed Fund donations next year...

Greg Creamer
617-645-0349 - mobile

-----Original Message-----

From: Adrienne Principe <adrienne.principe@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2024 10:46 PM

To: Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt

<cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Mark Howell

<markhowell@concordma.gov>; Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>

Cc: Aa Steve Principe <steven.principe@ms.com>

Subject: Remove the middle renaming question from the ballot and let's move on!

Dear select board,

I was encouraged to see the school committee come to a compromise regarding the renaming of the middle school. Frankly, I think this conversation should have ended when they voted on the name a few months ago. I am very disappointed that the DEI committee refuses to compromise. Why is that? And why are you allowing this behavior to continue? Do you really think this behavior is in the best interest of our town?

You, as the select board, have overstepped your bounds by allowing article 22 to go to town meeting and by deciding to put the question on a ballot. These decisions undermined the authority of the school committee and use up valuable time that should be spent addressing other issues. You have allowed one special interest group to continue to bully the rest of the town about this issue and that is completely inappropriate. Spending thousands of dollars on this campaign, sending out press releases and harassing school committee members and other people in our community is disappointing

and embarrassing. This is a bit reminiscent of Trump's refusal to accept the election results, and his supporters storming the Capital.

A compromise has been reached. A compromise that completely ignores the 21 other names that were submitted for consideration.

Stop this madness! Special interest groups cannot be allowed to continuously challenge the school committee's authority. This sets a terrible precedent. Please remove the school renaming question from the June ballot. Enough is enough. It is time to move on and bring the community together instead of allowing this issue to divide us. It is time you respected the school committee and the work they are doing.

Adrienne and St
78 Nashoba Rd

From: Katherine Taunton-Rigby <ktauntonrigby@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 3:42:51 PM

To: Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>

Subject: Concord Middle School

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from ktauntonrigby@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Good morning!

I am writing from a preop room at Emerson Hospital, where my 10 year old daughter is about to have surgery to remove hardware from a fractured arm. I'm going to keep my focus on her, but wanted to take a moment to let you know how pleased I was to hear that in the face of the school committee decision to name the new building after Ellen Garrison, the Select Board intends to remove the vote at the June 25th meeting.

Thank you so much and keep up the good work.

Katherine Taunton-Rigby
67 Finigan Way
Sent from my iPhone

From: Katie Lyneis <katiesand@hotmail.com>

Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 3:53:05 PM

To: Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>

Subject: Remove CMS Naming from Town Vote

Some people who received this message don't often get email from katiesand@hotmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Warning: This email was sent from outside the Town and it has the same display name as someone inside our organization. This is probably a phishing mail. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are certain that this email is safe.

Select Board,

I'm writing to ask you to remove the CMS naming topic from the town vote on June 26th. The School Committee reached a compromise on Tuesday night and it's time to put this to rest.

Please do the right thing and remove this from the town vote.

Katie Lyneis

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Helen Clancy <hsk617@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 4:08:32 PM

To: Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>

Subject: Removal of June ballot item regarding Concord Middle School

Some people who received this message don't often get email from hsk617@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Good morning,

I am a Concord resident and parent of four public school students.

I thank you for your time and service to Concord. I must note, however, that over the past several months, your actions as a Select Board to undermine the February 2024 naming of Concord Middle School have been disrespectful to this town and unproductive for our community.

I hope that you will (1) finally act responsibly by **removing the recently added ballot question regarding Concord Middle School from the June ballot** and (2) desist from entertaining or initiating any further ambiguity as to Concord Middle School.

Finally, I note that it has been puzzling to witness your vigorous efforts to force another town committee to invalidate their own town-researched work and decision, when it would seem fully within your jurisdiction to honor Ellen Garrison, and rightfully so, on a widely-viewed and visited structure within the town center of Concord.

Thank you,
Helen Clancy

From: [Shannon McAndrew](#)
To: [Andrea Fountain](#)
Subject: FW: CMS Naming
Date: Friday, May 24, 2024 10:06:23 AM

Already sent to Board, file with correspondence for week ending May 27

Shannon McAndrew (she/her/hers)
Management Analyst

From: Alexandra Ruhmann <alexandra.ruhmann@mac.com>
Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 9:58 AM
To: Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>
Subject: CMS Naming

You don't often get email from alexandra.ruhmann@mac.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

I am writing to ask that you **not** put the naming of the middle school up for a vote on June 25. The School Committee went through a transparent process and decided to name the school the Concord Middle School. That should have been the end of it.

It is my understanding that they reached a more than fair compromise, given that the decision had already legally been made, to have the school named the Concord Middle School and the building after Ellen Garrison.

A vote is not needed.

Support of our elected School Committee is needed.

Alex Ruhmann

From: [Shannon McAndrew](#)
To: [Andrea Fountain](#)
Subject: FW: CMS naming - remove the vote
Date: Friday, May 24, 2024 9:41:04 AM

Already sent to Select Board, to file with correspondence for week ending May 27

Shannon McAndrew (she/her/hers)
Management Analyst

From: Carrie Chaffee <carriechaffee@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 9:38 AM
To: Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>
Subject: CMS naming - remove the vote

Some people who received this message don't often get email from carriechaffee@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello,

I'm writing to you this morning with a strong recommendation to remove the vote on June 25 tied into the naming of the new middle school building. Please stay true to the school committee responsibilities and allow the CMS name to be determined by that very loyal, very qualified group of Concord and Carlisle residents.

Thank you,
Carrie Chaffee

From: [Shannon McAndrew](#)
To: [Andrea Fountain](#)
Subject: FW: Middle School naming question on the June 25th ballot
Date: Friday, May 24, 2024 8:50:54 AM

Shannon McAndrew (she/her/hers)
Management Analyst

From: sue@suestcroix.com <sue@suestcroix.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2024 8:51 PM
To: Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>
Subject: Middle School naming question on the June 25th ballot

You don't often get email from sue@suestcroix.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Please keep the wording for the town ballot question on the middle school name the same as the warrant article (#22). It is confusing enough without changing the words for the ballot.