



SANTA MONICA - MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

May 22, 2019

Superintendent's Message: Proposing The Barack and Michelle Obama Center for Inquiry and Exploration

The SMMUSD Board of Education discussed naming the recently renovated facility that will house SMMUSD's new Project-Based Learning pathway at its May 16, 2019 school board meeting. We would like your opinion on the proposed name: The Michelle and Barack Obama Center for Inquiry and Exploration.

The Board of Education has previously approved the implementation of two specific high school Project-Based Learning models: Personalized Project-Based Model and Interest-Based (Capstone) Model. Both models, along with Olympic High School and the Adult Education Center, will be housed at the newly-renovated learning facility located at 721 Ocean Park Blvd. Olympic High School, as noted, will continue as currently structured, as an integral part of the newly named center.

The PBL models will take four years to roll out, starting in the 2019-20 school year with the Personalized Project-Based Model and a cohort of 100 ninth grade students. We held several parent and student meetings in early spring and have met our application expectations for the program. There are still a few additional spots available.

During the board discussion on naming the facility, Board Member Ralph Mechur remarked, "Barack and Michelle Obama are icons for the fundamental right to a bright future for all humanity. Our naming the center in their honor is intended to inspire our community and youth to engage in educational excellence for all of our students. Michelle and Barack Obama promote equity, fairness, and equality; healthy individuals and a healthy environment; discourse and collaboration; and respect and support for all. Naming the campus in their honor will signal to the community and our students that we, too, stand with the Obama family in supporting all students in creating their own future in a world of acceptance."

As part of this process, the School Board has requested that staff collect community feedback and comments regarding the proposed name. If you would like to comment and/or provide feedback, please do so through the "[Let's Talk](#)" portal located on the SMMUSD website. Click on the button, "Comment on naming the facility housing the new PBL pathway: Obama Center for Inquiry and Exploration." Several public comments were made following the Board's discussion and all were supportive and enthusiastic about this naming proposal.

The SMMUSD Board of Education unanimously agreed on the proposed name and will take final action to name the center The Michelle and Barack Obama Center for Inquiry and Exploration at a special board meeting on May 30.

[More information on our planned PBL program is online](#)

Thank you,

Dr. Ben Drati, Superintendent

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