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OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Community Schools, Thriving Students

BOARD OF EDUCATION 2025

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To:	Facilities Committee
From:	Dr. Kyla Johnson-Trammall, Superintendent Preston Thomas, Chief Systems & Services Officer Curtiss Sarikey, Chief of Partnerships Officer Dr. Dexter Moore, Jr., Chief of Staff Pranita Ranbhise, Director, Facilities Planning & Management
Meeting Date:	May 15, 2025
Subject:	Naming the New Administrative building and the Conference room at 1011 Union Street, located on the historical site of Cole Elementary School, in Honor of Dr. Marcus A. Foster.

ASK OF THE BOARD:

Discussion and adoption of Resolution No. 2425-0132 Naming the New Administrative building and the Conference Room at 1011 Union Street, the former Cole Elementary Site.

BACKGROUND:

The Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) has a longstanding commitment to honoring individuals and institutions that have played a significant role in shaping Oakland's educational landscape and the broader community in the naming of our schools and our buildings. This commitment is reflected in Board Policy 7310, which establishes the framework for naming and renaming district facilities. The policy emphasizes the importance of community engagement in this process, ensuring that naming decisions reflect the values, history, and aspirations of the district's students, families, and stakeholders.

This February, the new administrative building was completed and has begun to serve as an administrative center for student and family support, key administrative functions, leadership development and providing essential services that enhance student achievement and community engagement. Not only will the building serve as the administrative center for OUSD, the new administrative building also represents a significant economic investment in the West Oakland neighborhood, providing opportunities for small local businesses to benefit from increased activity and district operations in the area.

Historically, OUSD has recognized influential figures and institutions by naming district buildings. The former administrative headquarters at 1025 2nd Avenue was named the Paul Robeson Building in tribute to the renowned scholar, artist, and activist whose legacy of social justice and advocacy continues to inspire generations. Similarly, Board documents reference the designation of the future administrative leadership center as the Marcus A. Foster Leadership or Educational Complex, in honor of Dr. Marcus A. Foster, OUSD's first African American superintendent. Dr. Foster was a trailblazer in educational leadership, known for his dedication to equity and transformative reforms that benefited Oakland's students. The site of the newly completed OUSD administrative building also carries deep historical significance.

Previously home to Cole Grammar School and later Cole Middle School, the location has served generations of Oakland students and contributed to the educational fabric of West Oakland. Recognizing this rich history, the district remains committed to preserving and honoring the legacy of institutions and individuals who have shaped public education in Oakland.

DISCUSSION:

Pursuant to Board Policy 7310, the District convened an Ad Hoc Community Advisory Committee to consider naming options for the new administrative building. The committee, composed of community members, staff, and stakeholders, has met four times over two months, with one additional meeting scheduled. The committee was charged with evaluating potential names based on historical context, community input, and alignment with the district's mission and values.

The committee considered the historical significance of the Paul Robeson Building, the legacy of Cole Elementary School, the leadership of Dr. Marcus A. Foster, and prior Board actions and commitments. After deliberation, the committee recommends naming the facility the **Dr. Marcus A. Foster Leadership Center** and designating the Superintendent's conference space as the Dr. Marcus A. Foster Conference Room. The resolution includes provisions for installing permanent signage, plaques, and educational materials to honor Dr. Foster's contributions as well as the historical role of the Cole school site.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Up to $30,000 in Measure B or Measure J interest earnings will be allocated for costs associated with signage, plaques, and educational displays.

ATTACHMENT:

Draft Resolution No. 2425-0132 Naming the New Administrative building at 1011 Union Street, located on the historical site of Cole Elementary School, in Honor of Dr. Marcus A. Foster.

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF
THE
OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Resolution No. 2425-0132
Naming the New Administrative building at 1011 Union Street, located on the historical site of Cole Elementary School, in honor of Dr. Marcus A. Foster, a groundbreaking educator and visionary leader.

WHEREAS, Dr. Marcus A. Foster (1923–1973) dedicated his life to the transformative power of education, championing high standards, community engagement, and equitable opportunities for students of all backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, as Superintendent of the Oakland Unified School District from 1970-1973, Dr. Foster was a pioneering educator and administrator and the first African American to lead a major urban school system, bringing a bold, compassionate, and forward-thinking approach to educational leadership during a period of significant social change and challenges; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Foster worked tirelessly to foster strong relationships between schools, families, organizations, and broader communities, believing that every child's academic success was inextricably linked to the health and well-being of the entire neighborhood, and which laid the foundation for OUSD's community schools vision; and

WHEREAS, the historical site of Cole Grammar School (1878-2009), which was reestablished as Cole Middle School (1980-2009), stands as a testament to the educational legacy in Oakland, having served countless students and families over many years; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Foster's commitment to students and the district was reinforced by the involvement of his wife, Albertine Ramseur, affectionately known as "Abbe", who worked at the Cole Elementary site, reflecting a true family partnership in the mission of uplifting the educational environment and community of Oakland; and

WHEREAS, per Board Policy 7310, the Board shall consider dedicating buildings, parts of buildings, or other district facilities, in memory of deceased students, staff members, and community members, and benefactors of the district (memorials); and

WHEREAS, on June 10, 2015 the OUSD Board of Education unanimously adopted Resolution No. 1415-1166, in part, authorizing to name the former administration building in honor of Dr. Marcus Foster; and

WHEREAS, naming the new administrative center after Dr. Marcus A. Foster will ensure that his legacy of visionary leadership, unwavering integrity, dedication to social justice, and community-centered educational reform will guide present and future generations of educators, administrators, parents, and students; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Marcus A. Foster gave his life for the children of Oakland on November 6, 1973; the memory of his courage, empathy, and trailblazing service provides a meaningful model for all who believe in the transformative power of education and the essential role of equity and collaboration in our schools;

WHEREAS, the Oakland Tribune wrote at Dr. Foster's death in 1973, "Dr. Foster believed that all students could learn. He was committed to the vision of students being enriched by teaching and then passing on that treasure to future generations. … "It was no castle of dreams he built in this city. It was a solid edifice fashioned, brick by brick, of academic improvement, of trust among people, of inspiration and enthusiasms and confidence;" and

WHEREAS, Dr. Foster's daughter, the Reverend Marsha Foster, PhD, supports the recommendation that the new

administrative center be named in honor of her father; and

WHEREAS, naming the new administrative center for Dr. Foster is a fitting tribute to a man who said, in a message to all OUSD employees "when the pieces are in place, when we are done with the temporary preoccupation and the catchphrases, when we feel the power and exhilaration of real movement toward our objectives, then will come an important realization. Our success will come not because of Board directives, or the Superintendent's notions, or the staff's creativity, or the community's yearning. We will make it because we have the common need to draw on each other, and the audacity to believe that in concert, we are equal to the great tasks;"

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Oakland Unified School District community, its students, alumni, staff, and future generations, hereby dedicates and officially names the new Administrative Center at the historical site of Cole Grammer School as the Dr. Marcus A. Foster Leadership Center, and the Superintendent's Conference Room the Dr. Marcus A. Foster Conference Room; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that appropriate signage, plaques, and educational materials be installed to highlight Dr. Marcus A. Foster's extraordinary contributions, ensuring that all who enter these facilities will learn not only of his innovative leadership and enduring influence on public education, but also of the critical role his family played in strengthening community ties; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that appropriate plaque and educational materials be installed to memorialize the legacy of Cole Grammar and Middle School, the original site of the new Dr. Marcus A. Foster Leadership Center; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be presented to the Reverend Marsha Foster, PhD, Dr. Foster's only child, to the Oakland Unified School District, and to the broader Oakland community, serving as a permanent tribute to the values, achievements, and compassionate vision embodied by Dr. Marcus A. Foster.

Passed by the following vote:

PREFERENTIAL AYE:

PREFERENTIAL NOE:

PREFERENTIAL ABSTENTION:

PREFERENTIAL RECUSE: AYES:

NOES: ABSTAINED:

RECUSE:

ABSENT:

CERTIFICATION

We hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of a Resolution passed at a Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of the Oakland Unified School District held on _____ 2025.

Legislative File	
File ID Number:	25-1323
Introduction Date:	5/15/2025
Enactment Number:	
Enactment Date:	
By:	

OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Jennifer Brouhard
President, Board of Education

-
Kyla Johnson-Trammell
Superintendent and Secretary, Board of Education