

Corvallis School District 509J  
**Rename Husky Elementary School to Bessie Coleman Elementary School**  
Resolution No. 21-0902

WHEREAS, systemic racism and racial oppression have plagued our nation for over 400 years and is evident in national, state, and local institutions, including law enforcement, prisons, and public education, and have led to physical, social and emotional, political, legal, economic, and environmental harm on people of color in the United States and Oregon;

AND WHEREAS, education is a key lever for creating a more equitable and anti-racist community, nation, and world;

AND WHEREAS, the Corvallis School District acknowledges that the names of school buildings have significant impact on the overall educational environment to foster positive student development and sense of belonging;

AND WHEREAS, students, families, and staff within our District have long advocated for changing the name of certain schools and buildings because of the misalignment with our values and commitment to racial equity and social justice;

AND WHEREAS, at the July 30, 2020 meeting of the Board of Directors, a proposal was made to rename Husky Elementary, Jaguar Elementary, and Wildcat Elementary schools, identify buildings that need further name changes, establish a process for changing these names, and select a proposed list of names that better represent the culture, climate, and collective values of our community; the proposal was adopted at the August 6, 2020 Board of Directors meeting;

AND WHEREAS, membership of the Superintendent's School Renaming Task Force included students, families, staff, community members, and alumni commenced in October 2020 and met until mid-January 2021. The charge of the Task Force work was to query the community, research the renaming options, and put forth a list of recommended names to the Superintendent for his review and final recommendation to the Board of Directors;

AND WHEREAS, Bessie Coleman was the first African American woman and first Native American woman to earn a pilot's license, which she accomplished by learning to speak French and moving to France. She was deeply respected by Black communities who recognized not only her flying skills but also her contributions to civil rights and racial justice in the darkest era of post-Civil War society;

AND WHEREAS, the recommendation to rename Husky Elementary School to Bessie Coleman Elementary School will foster a lasting message of determination, valor, and cultural understanding among all students and staff;

AND WHEREAS, the recommendation to rename Husky Elementary School to Bessie Coleman Elementary School will nurture students' appreciation and respect of the historical and contemporary contributions of women, especially African American, Native American, and multi-racial women to civil rights and racial justice;

AND WHEREAS, our community and nation's future requires that systemic racial oppression be dismantled, and that the removal of a historical figure's name from a building does not constitute erasure from history, but a conscious choice to amplify those societal values that must be taken into the future to promote equity, and ensure ALL children are able to thrive and grow;

AND WHEREAS, as leaders of our Corvallis School District and role models for young people, it is our charge to call out racism in all its forms and stand up against injustice especially in our public education system.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the School Board of Corvallis School District 509J hereby changes the name of Husky Elementary School to Bessie Coleman Elementary School.

Adopted by the Board of Directors of School District No. 509J (Corvallis) of Benton and Linn Counties, Oregon, at its regular meeting this 9<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2021.

ATTEST:

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Sami Al-Abdrabbuh, Board Chair

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Ryan Noss, Superintendent