

# Ad Hoc Renaming Committee

## Explanation of Process & Official Recommendations

In April, the DJUSD School Board Trustees each selected 3 members from the community to serve on a 15 member ad hoc committee to come up with recommendations to rename César Chávez Elementary School (CCE). At the same time, a public notice was put out into the community for anyone to give suggestions on what the new name could be with an explanation.

The deadline for new names was extended an additional week and 281 suggestions were submitted by the public. The committee also asked all the teachers at César Chávez Elementary School to do a short activity with their students to brainstorm ideas, themes and new names for the school. Teachers conducted their in-class activities and submitted their suggestions to the committee as well.

Once the committee met for the first time, they agreed on scheduling 5 meetings over April and May to help narrow down their final recommendations. The ad hoc committee took into consideration all the names that were submitted, the ideas from the students at CCE and their own ideas.

After agreeing upon a group of core values and principles, each committee member narrowed down their top 2 names and the committee thoroughly discussed each recommendation. This discussion ultimately narrowed down to two final name recommendations: **Monarca Elementary School** and **Sí Se Puede Elementary School**. A final vote was taken by the committee where Monarca Elementary School received 9 votes and Sí Se Puede Elementary School received 6 votes from the committee members. These are the two final names that the ad hoc committee are recommending to DJUSD Superintendent Matt Best and to the DJUSD School Board Trustees. Each group wrote a 1-page explanation of why they believed each name would serve the school well.

We wanted to thank the community for their patience in this process and to all the community members that gave suggestions to the committee.

Sincerely,

*Ad Hoc Committee to Rename César Chávez Elementary School*

## Recommendation #1: **Monarca Elementary School**

- *Monarca*, Spanish for the Monarch butterfly, is widely recognized as a symbol of migration and resilience. The name honors the school's bilingual identity while representing a broad concept rather than being tied to a single individual. For a school with ties to farmworker heritage—**Monarca honors the journey, not just the destination...**
- The western population of the monarch butterfly overwinters in coastal California and is considered an important keystone species in the biome. That journey reflects the stories of many migrant families whose perseverance, sacrifice, and hard work helped shape California's agricultural communities.
- The monarch butterfly symbolizes transformation, growth, and resilience through metamorphosis from caterpillar to butterfly. It can also represent overcoming challenges and emerging stronger — a meaningful message for elementary students that can be connected to lessons about perseverance, hope, and personal growth.
- Monarch butterflies are vital to the Dia de los Muertos celebration due to their annual migration to the oyamel fir forests of central Mexico. This is a widely celebrated holiday in Spanish speaking cultures and an important event at our Spanish immersion school.
- The monarch butterfly imagery could serve as inspiration for a potential future logo addition to our school's visual identity, complementing — rather than replacing — our existing Lobo (wolf) mascot and traditions. The concept of a monarch gently resting on the Lobo's nose symbolizes harmony, growth, transformation, and the nurturing spirit of our elementary school, while still honoring the strength and pride our wolf mascot embodies. Together, the imagery reflects our belief that Everyone Belongs.

## Recommendation #2: **Sí Se Puede Elementary School**

**Introduction:** “Sí Se Puede”, meaning “Yes We Can”, is deeply connected to the legacy of farm workers and the broader struggle for dignity, fairness, and respect in our country. Coined by Dolores Huerta, adopted by Barack Obama, and in continued use by labor unions and social movements today, “Sí Se Puede” is a lesson in the importance of determination, optimism, and resilience while advocating for justice. “Sí Se Puede” best embodies the traditions and values of the school and the history that inspired it. The name “Sí Se Puede” reflects every school value that our Ad Hoc Renaming Committee hopes to retain and pass down to future generations of students.

- **Value 1: Clearly recognizes the farmworker movement.** By utilizing the “Sí Se Puede” name that was first coined by Dolores Huerta and popularized by the United Farm Workers, this name continues to honor the history of the farm worker movement, and offers an opportunity to teach students about the realities of farmworkers that live and work in and around Davis.
- **Value 2: Emphasizes social justice.** This name roots the school in the history of the labor and civil rights movements, as well as more recent struggles for justice. “Sí Se Puede” connects the school to values of compassion, fairness, and advocacy for others -- important lessons for students as future leaders and community members.
- **Value 3: Encourages a spirit of service.** “Sí Se Puede” translates to “Yes We Can”. This phrase reflects the importance of working together and making a positive difference. It reinforces the idea that schools are not only places for academics, but also where students learn responsibility, kindness, and community service. Students at “Sí Se Puede” will be taught to believe in their own ability to build a fairer world.
- **Value 4: Uses Spanish in the name.** The entire committee felt strongly on using a Spanish name, to honor the Latino community and that this is a Spanish immersion school. At the same time, this phrase is common enough in California that most people have encountered it and can easily pronounce it.
- **Value 5: Connects well with the DJUSD Graduate Profile.** “Sí Se Puede” promotes both collective and individual empowerment and resilience. It is a relatable, positive, and inspiring message for kids from TK through 6th grade. “Sí Se Puede” is aligned with our broader district-wide mission and the DJUSD Graduate Profile.
- **Value 6: Preserve continuity in values and lessons.** “Sí Se Puede” is already a common tagline at the school and will be highly recognizable and familiar to staff and students. “Sí Se Puede” reinforces the school’s existing identity and reaffirms all of its core values and themes already expressed in CARES.

**CONCLUSION:** “Sí Se Puede” sends a powerful message to students every day. It encourages children to believe in themselves, overcome challenges, work hard, and know they are capable of success regardless of their background. “Sí Se Puede” is uplifting, easy for children to understand, and meaningful across generations. It creates a welcoming identity that families and the broader community connect with because it represents hope, perseverance, unity, and pride. “Sí Se Puede” preserves what is best about CCE’s current identity and allows for a continued connection with the school’s deep roots in the history of the farm worker movement and its commitment to social justice.