



# Guilford County Schools

## NAMING OF SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL FACILITIES NOMINATION FORM

**Please print or type all information; use additional sheets as necessary and attach exhibits or other documentation in support of this nomination. Refer to Guilford County Schools administrative procedure "Naming of Schools and School Facilities." (FDCA-P)**

It is proposed that: **Newcomers School High Point**

be named **Sylvia Mendez Newcomers School**

in honor of **Sylvia Mendez**

according to the following criteria established by the Board of Education.

- A.** If a geographic location or similarly site specific identifiers, such as road, community or the like, explain the reasoning and significance of the recommendation below:

**N/A**

- B.** If an individual, please attach a resume or vita and fully respond to the following criteria:

Has made an outstanding contribution to a school, the Guilford County Schools, the community, county, state, or the nation. Record of recognizable excellence in his/her respective field evidenced by a variety of outstanding accomplishments, awards and leadership and service roles in his/her profession, community, professional and civic organizations. Has been a positive role model for others. Has exhibited values like honesty, integrity, respect, sense of fairness, concern for others, self-discipline, teamwork, dedication to work, etc. Has shown a commitment to excellence.

Born on June 7, 1936 in Orange County, California, Sylvia Mendez is one of the most influential Latinas and civil rights leaders in the United States. Mrs. Mendez is the daughter of Gonzalo Mendez (A Mexican immigrant) and Felicitas Mendez.<sup>1</sup>

Her family moved to Westminster in Orange County, California, when Mrs. Mendez was a child. When her parents tried to register her and her brothers at a nearby Westminster elementary school, they were told the public school did not admit Hispanic students. The family was asked to enroll the Mendez children at Hoover Elementary School, a school specifically for Mexican Americans.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://sylviamendezinthemendezvswestminster.com/>

In 1945, Mr. Mendez filed a federal lawsuit against Westminster and three other school districts in Orange County, representing 5,000 Mexican American students. The Mendez family fought so that Mrs. Mendez and other students of Mexican descent could have an equal education through the landmark case, *Mendez vs. Westminster*, making California the first state in the nation to end school segregation, paving the way for the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court ruling that desegregated all U.S. schools in 1954.<sup>2</sup>

Years later, Mrs. Mendez did not just graduate high school but embarked on a successful career in health care. She attended Orange Coast Community College, where she earned her Associate of Arts degree in nursing. She later went on to California State University at Los Angeles to earn her Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Mrs. Mendez worked for 33 years as a nurse at the Los Angeles University of Southern California Medical Center, where she also held leadership roles.

She has received numerous awards. In 2011, President Obama awarded Mrs. Mendez the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award in the United States. Additionally, she received an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Humane Letters from Brooklyn College of The City University of New York. Mrs. Mendez was also inducted into the Hall of Fame at Santa Ana College, and a school was dedicated in her honor in Santa Ana, CA.

Signed: 

<small>DocuSigned by:</small> <i>Christian Walter</i>	4/6/2022
<small>DocuSigned by:</small> <i>Mayra Hayes</i>	4/6/2022
<small>DocuSigned by:</small> <i>Sharon L. Contreras</i>	4/7/2022

on behalf of: **Newcomers School High Point**

Print Name:

Date: **February 24, 2022**

**Contact Information:**

Address: **712 N. Eugene Street Greensboro, NC 27455**

<sup>2</sup> <https://news.chapman.edu/2011/02/15/sylvia-mendez-honored-with-medal-of-freedom/>