



For Immediate Release

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Contact Dave Sheehan, (702) 799-5304

CCSD renames one school and announces namesakes for four new schools

Namesakes honored for service to community and public education

LAS VEGAS – During a regular meeting on Oct. 5, the Clark County School District (CCSD) Board of School Trustees voted to rename one school and name four new school facilities to open during the 2018-2019 school year. One of the highest honors bestowed upon an individual who has made an everlasting impact in the local community is to become a school namesake. The motivation for this naming opportunity is to honor people of the highest character while providing students with role models and a sense of the rich history and diversity of the Southern Nevada community.

The four new schools will be named as follows:

- Shirley A. Barber Elementary School, at South Spencer Street and East Pyle Avenue
- Kenneth Divich Elementary School, at Farm Road and North Jensen Street
- Robert and Sandy Ellis Elementary School, at Beltrada Avenue and Via Italia
- Dennis Ortwein Elementary School, at Dean Martin Drive and Interstate 15

Shirley A. Barber has lived in Clark County for 47 years and for more than five decades, she has dedicated her life to education and the advancement of learning for all students. She has served as an educator, administrator, elementary school principal, community activist and member of the CCSD Board of School Trustees.

Barber developed and implemented many programs during her time as an educator and principal. She successfully lobbied for implementation of full-day kindergarten in CCSD and developed the Pre-First Grade Intersession Program in 1990 to aid academic success of “at-risk” students entering first grade. She designed a Career Day program to introduce elementary students to a variety of career paths and championed programs that give students early exposure to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programs. Many of the programs she created in her tenure still exist today.

Kenneth Divich served in various roles during his 31 years with CCSD. He was an inspiring role model who devoted his life, both professional and personal, to at-risk students. His career at Rancho High School is marked by concerted efforts to assist the students who were failing and

hardest to educate. In the 1960s, Divich became an early creator and advocate for re-entry programs for drop-outs who had left high school for the temptation of entry level jobs but who later discovered a ceiling on their futures. In conjunction with other partners, he created “Work Experience” school credits for these students, enticing them to return to school. Divich’s extraordinary efforts often broke generational chains of drop-outs in families in at-risk neighborhoods, with many students becoming the first in their families to graduate.

Robert and Sandra Ellis are well-known as philanthropic partners of CCSD. They have been personally and directly involved at 11 schools in the district, and have donated millions of dollars from their own personal finances to educational causes in Clark County. They have adopted 11 CCSD schools with low-income student populations. Over the course of nearly 15 years, the Ellises have donated more than 20,000 pairs of shoes and socks and 20,000 toys to CCSD students.

The Ellises also provide financial resources, support and encouragement to special needs students in Clark County. For a number of years, they have supported a special education program at Basic Academy of International Studies, to help with instruction and curriculum programs and to provide an annual dance for the surrounding special education programs where students are able to get together, dance, eat, and enjoy a special event.

Dr. Dennis Ortwein began his career as a teacher in 1956, during the first year of the newly formed CCSD. His career spanned 30 years as both a teacher and administrator, then another 13 years after retirement as a substitute principal. A champion for equality and human rights causes, Dr. Ortwein played a critical role in local school desegregation. He was a leader in CCSD’s movement to eliminate de-facto segregation and to organize a plan to integrate the public schools of Clark County.

In 1966, after 10 years as a teacher and principal, Dr. Ortwein took a leave of absence to help the U.S. government and Ohio University develop a “teacher of teachers” training program for the government of Nigeria. Additionally, he acted as an ambassador for the U.S. in the newly developed and independent country, travelling throughout Nigeria and performing musical renditions, using his exceptional singing voice to bridge cultures. Upon his return to Clark County, Dr. Ortwein became the principal of the still-segregated Jo Mackey Elementary School. He worked with civil rights advocates to bring about the integration of the schools and to ensure equal educational opportunities for all CCSD students.

Steve Cozine Elementary School was renamed Steve and Linda Cozine Elementary School. When the school was originally named 15 years ago, Linda Cozine could not be included as a namesake with her husband because she was working for the school district at the time. As Ms. Cozine has retired more than two years ago, now meeting policy requirements, the school requested to add her as an official part of the school namesake. For the past nine years, Linda Cozine has opened the school each year by greeting the staff and giving kind words and gifts. She has also created a fund that gives the school \$1,000 to support school programs.

CCSD [Policy 7223](#) Naming of Schools and Education-Related Facilities outlines the criteria for naming district facilities and portions of facilities, the selection process, and the make-up of the School Name Committee. To learn more about the school naming process and to see the finalists from the 2017 call for nominations, visit <http://ccsd.net/trustees/school-name-committee.php>. For more information about CCSD, visit

CCSD.net.

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*Office of the Superintendent - Communications Office - 5100 West Sahara Avenue, Las Vegas,
NV 89146*



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