

Portola Renaming
Comments Received
June 6 - 13, 2014

(Due to the abusive nature of some calls, only comments where a name was given are included.)

"This is the dumbest thing I've ever heard. Honor him in a different way, but not a school."

-Barbara Campbell

"I am against changing the name. I went there and don't want to see the name changed."

-Carol Powell

"I object to the change of the name."

-Ann Gustaf

"I live in El Cerrito and I don't agree with it at all. I don't see the need for it. I've never heard of him."

-Emma Dawley

"I want to express my complete approval of this happening."

-Natalie Roberts

"I wholeheartedly support the idea."

-Cray Ritter

"Portola has a very historic background for California. Portola is the gentleman who discovered San Francisco Bay. I think it's a mistake to change it to someone I don't think El Cerritans know."

-Barbara Bacon

"There's always confusion when you change names and you want to be prepared for that. Fred T. Korematsu is a long name; Portola is only two syllables. You might want to figure out a nickname because people are going to use one."

-Deborah Barges

"I'd like it to stay Portola Middle School."

-Myrtle Stovall

"The world is too damn complex and name changes add to the complexity. Name something new. I have no objection to the honoree."

-Kevin Langdon

From: [Jan Brown](#)
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: Fred T. Korematsu Middle School proposal
Date: Saturday, July 05, 2014 10:19:52 PM

Dear members of the West Contra Costa Unified School District Board,

Thank you for seeking input about the proposed name change for Portola Middle School. I am a Richmond resident and attended the public schools of the Richmond Unified School District including Portola Junior High where I was student editor of its newspaper in 1963/64. My children also attended public schools, including Adams Middle School which no longer exists as a school. I know the loss when a landmark in one's history is removed. Whenever possible, I believe that existing sites and streets of our neighborhoods should retain their original names even when new developments consume our attention and admiration.

Having said that, I also believe that Portola's proposed name change is appropriate for the following reasons:

1. Both the school building and the school site are entirely new. The Portola I remember is already gone. The former Portola school was a beautiful building designed by renowned architect John Carl Warnecke (who later designed the John F. Kennedy national memorial). My sadness came upon watching its (apparently necessary) wrecking ball demise.
2. Fred T. Korematsu and the story his name has come to symbolize is important to American civic history with particular relevance to our culturally diverse school district. The lessons to be learned by the simple question "Who is Fred T. Korematsu?" offer many teachable moments for students, their parents, and our community at large.

I would be pleased if my grandchild one day attends the Fred T. Korematsu Middle School.

Jan Hardison Brown
Madera Elementary School '61
Portola Jr. High '64
ECHS '67

===

 cell: 

From: [Norman La Force](#)
To: [Communications](#); ["Greg Lyman"](#); ["Jan Bridges"](#); ["Janet Abelson"](#); ["Mark Friedman"](#); ["Rebecca Benassini"](#); ["Corky Booze"](#); ["Gayle McLaughlin"](#); ["Jael Myrick"](#); ["Jim Rogers"](#); ["Jovanka Beckles"](#); ["Nat Bates"](#); ["Tom Butt"](#)
Cc: ["Michelle Myers"](#); ["Virginia Reinhart"](#)
Subject: Renaming Portola Middle School for Fred Korematsu
Date: Wednesday, July 02, 2014 9:57:45 PM

Dear School Board,

The Sierra Club urges you to rename Portola Middle School for Fred Korematsu. The Sierra Club believes in environmental justice. Fred Korematsu sought justice and truth through the legal process. He took legal means to redress the wrongs against himself and his community. This is one of the core values of the Sierra Club. We cannot have environmental justice if our rights as Americans are not protected. Fred Korematsu was a voice for human rights and environmental rights.

Sincerely yours,

Norman La Force, Chair
West Contra Costa County Group

From: [Oliver Morse](#)
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: Portola Middle School Name Change
Date: Saturday, July 05, 2014 1:11:59 PM

It is important to name our schools after individuals who have stood against injustice. The names of these brave individuals serve as an inspiration to our youth.

Oliver C. Morse

[REDACTED]
Berkeley, CA 94707

Phone: [REDACTED]

From: [Hirose Akiyo](#)
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: Korematsu Middle School
Date: Wednesday, July 02, 2014 5:35:08 PM

I agree to name the Portola Middle school to be Korematsu due to his brave and righteous attitude throughout his life. Every single person is equal and has a right to be treated equally. We honor his deed and we should remember it. Since El Cerrito is the town with a lot of Japanese American, it is very suitable to adopt this name for the middle school. At young age, children understand how we should treat each other.

Thank you.

Akiyo Yokoi, resident of El Cerrito.

From: [Charles T. Ramsey](#)
To: [James Ghidella](#)
Cc: [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: Fwd: Renaming of Portola to Fred T. Korematsu
Date: Saturday, July 05, 2014 9:56:12 PM

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Wally Gordon [REDACTED]
Date: July 5, 2014 at 9:48:39 PM PDT
To: Charles Ramsey <charamsey@comcast.net>
Cc: "Adrienne Ramsey" [REDACTED], "Alvin Yee" [REDACTED],
[REDACTED], "Bobby Dowling" [REDACTED],
"cricketjoy" [REDACTED],
[REDACTED], "Ken Yamauchi" [REDACTED],
[REDACTED], "Donald Ellis" [REDACTED], "EJWong" [REDACTED],
[REDACTED], "Felicia Layser
Robertson" [REDACTED], "Gboyega Aladegbami"
[REDACTED], "Grace Murphy-Jenkins"
[REDACTED], "Genevieve Simmons"
[REDACTED], "Irene Rojas-
Carroll" [REDACTED], "Jim Sinai"
[REDACTED], "joanna pace" [REDACTED],
"Joel Cohen" [REDACTED], "Jenn Rader"
[REDACTED], "Herman David Blackmon"
[REDACTED], "Karen Korematsu" [REDACTED], "Karen
Fenton" [REDACTED], "Kisa Takesue"
[REDACTED], "Kazue Nakahara"
[REDACTED], "Karen Wang"
[REDACTED], "Carolyn Day
Flowers" [REDACTED], "Ann Cheng"
[REDACTED], "Karen Elizabeth Pfeifer"
[REDACTED], "kenneth kuchman"
[REDACTED], "Makiko Sato"
[REDACTED], "Nancy Schiff"
[REDACTED], "Norman La Force"
[REDACTED], "Peter N. Chau"
[REDACTED], "Carla
Ramirez" [REDACTED], "Robert Studdiford"
[REDACTED], "C Slamon" [REDACTED], "Soo
Zee Park" [REDACTED], "Thomas Prather"
[REDACTED], "Andrew Woo" [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Renaming of Portola to Fred T. Korematsu

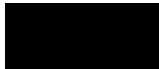
I think it is fair to say that Gaspar de Portola is incredibly pervasive in terms of having anything and everything named after him in California. Having grown up in Monterey, I often thought I lived in Portolaville. But,

I went to Walter Colton Jr. High School. I bet most if not all have no idea who Walter Colton was. He was Monterey's Gringo version of Portola 'light'. So, do at a school which is what a school is intended to do: inspire thought and provoke debate. Yes, and maybe the history of this State and its schools shouldn't be caught in simply acknowledging the 18th Century Spanish Colonial history.

Wallace B. Gordon, AIA
Deems Lewis McKinley Architects



San Francisco, CA 94102



- fax

www.dlm.com



On Jul 4, 2014, at 5:28 PM, Charles Ramsey wrote:

Please expect a higher than usual turnout for the meeting on Wednesday night at LaVonya DeJean Middle School in Richmond. We have strong feelings on both sides of the issue. I would strongly encourage supporters to have anyone they know come and speak to the school board, this issue could go either way and this is our last chance to have some public recognition in this area about the impact of the Japanese internment during World War II.

Some feel upset about the loss of Portola and others feel that this is not an appropriate location for the renaming. Our committee has made its decision and the chair will address the board and inform them about why we decided to move ahead with renaming Portola to Fred T. Korematsu Middle School.

For those who want to make a difference this is an absolute meeting where they must attend. I cannot say how important it is for board

members to hear from the community.

I hope that everyone is having a wonderful and relaxing Fourth of July. A day that pays tribute to all of us being an American. We can remind the board that at one point in our not too distant past that this was lost on the United States Government. I look forward to your comments to this email about attending the meeting on Wednesday at 6:30 PM.

With that, I rest my case.

Charles T. Ramsey, Esq.
School Board President
West Contra Costa
Unified School District

From: [Charles Ramsey](#)
To: [James Ghidella](#)
Cc: [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: Fred Korematsu
Date: Sunday, July 06, 2014 5:20:40 PM

Please include and add to the record that is being complied by us.

Charles T. Ramsey

From: [REDACTED] [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Sunday, July 06, 2014 5:01 PM
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; toddagroves@gmail.com; mkronen@aol.com; elainemerrweather@gmail.com
Subject: Fred Korematsu

Dear WCCUSD Board,

I urge you to adopt the name of Fred Korematsu for the new middle school in El Cerrito. The man was a strong advocate for civil liberties and against the political, economic, and racial injustice perpetrated on the loyal Japanese American in the 1940's.

As indicated in the Equality Statement that accompanies your Mission, the District works to mitigate institutional racism with your educational process. The legacy of Mr. Korematsu will teach students the core values and character essential to strong citizenship and respectful protest.

Thank you,
Tom Morioka
[REDACTED]
El Cerrito, CA 94530

Dr. Bruce Harter, Superintendent WCCUSD

6/16/14

1108 Bissell Ave.

Richmond, Ca 94801

Re: Proposed Portola Middle School name change

Dear Dr. Harter,

Why would anyone even think about changing the name of a school without researching the existence of such a name? It appears that no such research of recent or past history of the school districts own records/archives of how the name of the Portola Jr. High School was acquired.

Around 1951 or 1952 the El Cerrito Jr. Sr. High School PTA set up a contest among the Student Body to submit proposed names for the new Jr. High School. The best name submitted would be the name of the new school and the person submitting the best name would be awarded a small prize.

During a student body rally at El Cerrito, they announced the winner of the contest was Max Kern, a friend and classmate of mine in the class of 1955, and when Portola Jr. High School opened in September of 1952 we happened to be the very first 9th grade class to attend the new school.

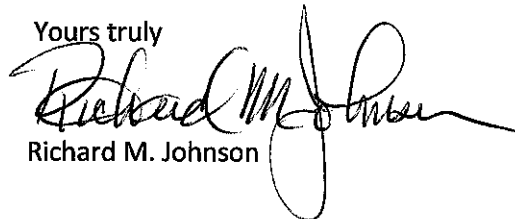
When Max was asked how he came up with the name of Portola, he explained, in his history class he read where Captain Gasper de Portola led an expedition, sent by the Spanish government from San Diego to find and explore the Santa Cruz Harbor. They missed Santa Cruz and by accident in November of 1769 they discovered the San Francisco Bay, and Max felt it was only fitting that this new Jr. High School should be named Portola.

At the very least I would ask/request before any change is made to the name of this School, that the public is informed about this small piece of history, and it be included in any future publications or public meetings regarding this proposed name change.

Is it just a matter of time before someone comes up with the hair brained idea to change the name at Kennedy or De Anza, because they aren't learning or being taught American History in the WCCUSD ?

Awaiting your response I remain,

Yours truly



Richard M. Johnson

cc: Max Kern

Charles Ramsey

RECEIVED

JUN 18 2014

SUPERINTENDENT

Donald K. Tamaki

Direct Line: [REDACTED]

Fax: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

June 23, 2013

Mr. Jim Ghidella
Chair of WCCUSD
Committee on Changing Name of Portola
Middle School in El Cerrito, California,
to Korematsu Middle School

Dear Mr. Ghidella,

I served on the pro bono legal team led by Dale Minami, representing Fred Korematsu in overturning his criminal conviction resulting from his landmark Supreme Court constitutional challenge to the Internment of 120,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry during WWII. After reviewing some of the letters and comments that have been made with respect to the proposal to rename “Portola Middle School” to “Korematsu Middle School,” it occurred to me that providing the Committee with a footnoted factual background might be helpful to its deliberations.

On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, and fear gripped our nation.¹ Within hours, Secret Service and FBI agents swept through Japanese-American communities, arresting its leaders.² Within weeks, these communities were subjected to race-based curfew orders.³ Within months, the wholesale rounding up of Americans was in full swing as they were herded into make-shift detention centers surrounded by barbed wire and machine gun towers while Internment camps were being constructed in the interior of the country.⁴ By the summer of 1942, over 110,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry, 70,000 of whom were American citizens by birth, had been confined in ten concentration camps stretching from California to Arkansas.⁵ Still others were held in penitentiaries while their families wondered if they would ever see them

¹ JUSTICE DELAYED 57 (Peter Irons ed., 1989).

² JOHN TATEISHI, AND JUSTICE FOR ALL, at xv (1984).

³ Cf. *id.* at xviii. (describing Military Proclamation No.3, which was issued on March 24, 1942 and imposed a nighttime curfew only on persons of Japanese ancestry).

⁴ See RONALD TAKAKI, STRANGERS FROM A DIFFERENT SHORE 394-95 (1998).

⁵ See Peter Irons, *Preface* to JUSTICE DELAYED, at ix, ix (Peter Irons ed., 1989).

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again.⁶ These Americans had lost their property, their freedom, and for some, even their lives.⁷ The Internment was immensely popular, and with the full support of the news media, politicians built their careers by proclaiming “the Japs must go!”⁸

Fred Korematsu, a loyal American citizen by birth, was arrested and jailed for refusing to obey the military orders.⁹ In 1944, the US Supreme Court heard his case and ruled against him, denying that the Internment had been prompted by racism, and instead calling the incarceration a military necessity.¹⁰

In a stinging dissent, Justice Robert Jackson complained about the lack of any evidence to justify the Internment, writing “...the Court for all time has validated the principle of racial discrimination...and of transplanting American citizens. The principle then lies about like a loaded weapon ready for the hand of any authority that bring forward a plausible claim of an urgent need.”¹¹ Constitutional law scholars have referred to the 1944 case as a “civil liberties disaster.”¹²

Korematsu’s case stood for almost 40 years until Professor Peter Irons, researching government’s archives, stumbled upon secret Justice Department documents.¹³ Among them were memos written in 1943 and 1944 by Edward Ennis, the Justice Department attorney responsible for supervising the drafting of the government’s brief.¹⁴ As Ennis began searching for evidence to support the Army’s claim that the Internment was necessary and justified, he found precisely the opposite -- that J. Edgar Hoover of the FBI,¹⁵ the FCC,¹⁶ the Office of

⁶ See Roger Daniels, *Incarcerating Japanese Americans*, MAGAZINE OF HISTORY, Summer 2002, at 21 (explaining that 261 Japanese American men held in camps were convicted of draft resistance and served time in federal penitentiaries), available at <http://www.oah.org/pubs/magazine/ww2homefront/DANIELS.html>.

⁷ See TAKAKI, *supra* note 4, at 392-405.

⁸ See Sumi Cho, *Redeeming Whiteness in the Shadow of Internment: Earl Warren, Brown, and a Theory of Racial Redemption*, 19 B.C. L. REV. 73, 111 (1998) (popular support in California for Internment); Stan Kadani & Barbara Noguchi, *Friends Remembered: Quaker Journal Looks at Japanese American Internment*, ASIANWEEK, Mar. 5, 1993, at 2 (public cries of “All Japs Must Go!”).

⁹ See *Korematsu v. United States*, 323 U.S. 214, 215-16 (1944).

¹⁰ See *id.* at 223-24.

¹¹ See *Korematsu v. United States* 323 U.S. at 244-47 (Jackson, J. dissenting)

¹² Eugene Rostow, *The Japanese American Cases—A Disaster*, 54 Yale L.J. 489 (1945)

¹³ See Peter Irons, *Introduction to JUSTICE DELAYED* 4,7 (Peter Irons ed., 1989). Although Korematsu’s conviction no longer stands, *Korematsu v. United States* has never been reversed.

¹⁴ See *id.* at 4-6.

¹⁵ See Petition for Writ of Error Coram Nobis, *Korematsu v. United States*, 584 F. Supp. 1406 (N.D. Cal. 1984), reprinted in *JUSTICE DELAYED*, *supra* note 13, at 144-60. For example, FBI Director Hoover submitted a detailed report to the Attorney General on February 7, 1944 “Reported Bombing and Shelling of the West Coast” in which he wrote:

Certain statements have been made in the report indicating that immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor there was a possible connection between the sinking of United States ships by Japanese submarines and alleged Japanese espionage activity on the West Coast. It

Naval Intelligence¹⁷ and other authoritative intelligence agencies¹⁸ categorically denied that Japanese Americans had committed any wrong. Other memoranda characterized the government's claims that Japanese Americans were spying as "intentional falsehoods."¹⁹ These official reports were never presented to the Supreme Court, having been intentionally suppressed and, in one case, destroyed by burning it.²⁰ It was on this basis -- governmental misconduct -- that a legal team of pro bono attorneys successfully reopened Korematsu's case in 1983,

was also indicated that there have been shore-to-ship signaling, either by radio or lights, at this time.

As indicated by the attached memorandum, there is no information in the possession of this Bureau as the result of investigations conducted relative to submarine attacks and espionage activity on the West Coast which would indicate that attacks made on ships or shores in the area immediately after Pearl Harbor have been associated with any espionage activity ashore or that there has been any illicit shore-to-ship signaling, either by radio or lights...Every complaint in this regard has been investigated, but in no case has any information been obtained which would substantiate the allegations that there has been illicit signaling from shore-to-ship since the beginning of the war.

Memorandum, J. Edgar Hoover to the Attorney General (Feb. 7, 1944), *reprinted in JUSTICE DELAYED, supra* note 13, at 158.

¹⁶ See Petition for Writ of Error Coram Nobis, *supra* note 15, at 156-60. For example, in a report to Attorney General Francis Biddle dated April 4, 1944, FCC Commissioner James L. Fly wrote: "There were no radio signals reported to the Commission which could not be identified, or which were unlawful. Like the Department of Justice, the Commission knows of no evidence of any illicit radio signaling in this area during the period in question." Report from James L. Fly, FCC Commissioner, to Francis Biddle, Attorney General (Apr. 4, 1944), *reprinted in JUSTICE DELAYED, supra* note 13, at 159.

¹⁷ See Petition for Writ of Error Coram Nobis, *supra* note 15, at 148-49. For example, Lt. Commander Kenneth D. Ringle of the ONI concluded:

That, in short, the entire 'Japanese Problem' has been magnified out its true proportion, largely because of the physical characteristics of the people; that it is no more serious than the problems of the German, Italian, and Communistic portions of the United States population, and, finally, that it should be handled on the basis of the *individual*, regardless of citizenship, and *not* on racial basis.

Memorandum from K. D. Ringle, Lieutenant Commander, U.S. Navy, to Chief of Naval Operations (Jan. 26, 1942), *reprinted in JUSTICE DELAYED, supra* note 13, at 148.

¹⁸ See Petition for Writ of Error Coram Nobis, *supra* note 15, at 153-54.

¹⁹ See Petition for Writ of Error Coram Nobis, *supra* note 15, at 161. For example, Justice Department attorney John Burling wrote to Assistant Attorney General Herbert Wechsler, who directed the War Division of the Department: "You will recall that General DeWitt's report makes flat statements concerning radio transmitters and ship-to-shore signaling which are categorically denied by the FBI and the Federal Communications Commission. *There is no doubt that these statements are intentional falsehoods . . .*" Memorandum from John L. Burling, Justice Department Attorney, to Herbert Wechsler, Assistant Attorney General (Sept. 11, 1984), *reprinted in JUSTICE DELAYED, supra* note 13, at 161.

²⁰ See Petition for Writ of Error Coram Nobis, *supra* note 15, at 137-160. Of the burning of the original version of the Final Report, Warrant Officer Theodore E. Smith wrote on June 29, 1943: "I certify that this date I witnessed the destruction by burning of the galley proofs, galley pages, drafts and memorandums of the original report of the Japanese Evacuation." Memorandum from Theodore E. Smith, Warrant Officer Junior Grade (June 29, 1943), *reprinted in Justice Delayed, supra* note 13, at 143.

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resulting in the erasure of his criminal conviction for defying the Internment.²¹ In a statement remarkable for its prescience, Judge Marilyn Hall Patel of the US District Court of the Northern District of California wrote:

Korematsu remains on the pages of our legal and political history. As a legal precedent it is now recognized as having limited application. As a historical precedent it stands as a constant caution that in times of war or declared military necessity our institutions must be vigilant in protecting our constitutional guarantees. It stands as a caution that in times of distress the shield of military necessity and national security must not be used to protect governmental actions from close scrutiny and accountability. It stands as a caution that in times of international hostility and antagonisms our institutions, legislative, executive and judicial, must be prepared to protect all citizens from the petty fears and prejudices that are so easily aroused.²²

In 1998, Korematsu received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian award. President Clinton's introduction of Korematsu reflects the significance of his achievements: "In the long history of our country's constant search for justice, some names of ordinary citizens stand for millions of souls...Plessy, Brown, Parks...To that distinguished list, today we add the name of Fred Korematsu."

Honorary doctorates were bestowed upon Korematsu by the University of San Francisco, California State University Hayward, McGeorge School of Law, and the City University of New York Law School. On September 23, 2010, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed into law AB 1775 designating January 30th as "Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution." AB 1775, passed by unanimous votes in the Assembly Education Committee, the Assembly Floor, the Senate Education Committee, on the Senate Floor, and in the California legislature on August 24, 2010.

In an unusual statement posted on the U.S. Justice Department's blog on May 20, 2011, Acting Solicitor General Neal Katyal on Friday spoke of the "mistakes" made by the Solicitor General in 1944, Charles Fahy, in defending the U.S. government's World War II Japanese-American internment program before the Supreme Court. The Solicitor General is responsible for representing the United States before the Supreme Court.

Katyal reviewed the evidence unearthed by our legal team in the 1980's that in 1943 and 1944, then-Solicitor Fahy failed to disclose to the Court official reports from government agencies responsible for national security (cited in the foregoing footnotes) stating that Americans of Japanese ancestry had committed no wrong and posed no threat. His omissions and

²¹ See Irons, *supra* note 13, at 23-26.

²² Korematsu v. United States, 584 F. Supp. 1406, 1420 (N.D. Cal. 1984).

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misstatements came in the cases of *Korematsu v. United States* and *Hirabayashi v. United States*, in which the Court upheld the internment program.

“Those decisions still stand today as reminders of the mistakes of that era,” Katyal wrote in his blog post. “Today, our office takes this history as an important reminder that the ‘special credence’ the Solicitor General enjoys before the Supreme Court requires great responsibility and a duty of absolute candor in our representations to the Court. Only then can we fulfill our responsibility to defend the United States and its Constitution, and to protect the rights of all Americans.”

For the Committee’s information, I have attached to this letter Acting Solicitor General’s “confession of error” as posted on the U.S. Justice Department’s website.

Fred Korematsu’s story is an American story of faith, perseverance, and courage. His struggle for justice is a textbook lesson on the meaning of the Constitution. It is therefore singularly appropriate that the principles of democracy that Korematsu sought to uphold be memorialized in a middle school bearing his name. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me. Thank you.

Very truly yours,

MINAMI TAMAKI LLP

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Donald K. Tamaki", written over a horizontal line.

By: _____
Donald K. Tamaki



Confession of Error: The Solicitor General's Mistakes During the Japanese-American Internment Cases

May 20, 2011 Posted by The Department Of Justice

The following post appears courtesy of Neal Katyal, Acting Solicitor General of the United States

It has been my privilege to have served as Acting Solicitor General for the past year and to have served as Principal Deputy Solicitor General before that. The Solicitor General is responsible for overseeing appellate litigation on behalf of the United States, and with representing the United States in the Supreme Court. There are several terrific accounts of the roles that Solicitors General have played throughout history in advancing civil rights. But it is also important to remember the mistakes. One episode of particular relevance to AAPI Heritage Month is the Solicitor General's defense of the forced relocation and internment of Japanese-American during World War II.

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States uprooted more than 100,000 people of Japanese descent, most of them American citizens, and confined them in internment camps. The Solicitor General was largely responsible for the defense of those policies.

By the time the cases of Gordon Hirabayashi and Fred Korematsu reached the Supreme Court, the Solicitor General had learned of a key intelligence report that undermined the rationale behind the internment. The Ringle Report, from the Office of Naval Intelligence, found that only a small percentage of Japanese Americans posed a potential security threat, and that the most dangerous were already known or in custody. But the Solicitor General did not inform the Court of the report, despite warnings from Department of Justice attorneys that failing to alert the Court "might approximate the suppression of evidence." Instead, he argued that it was impossible to segregate loyal Japanese Americans from disloyal ones. Nor did he inform the Court that a key set of allegations used to justify the internment, that Japanese Americans were using radio transmitters to communicate with enemy submarines off the West Coast, had been discredited by the FBI and FCC. And to make matters worse, he relied on gross

generalizations about Japanese Americans, such as that they were disloyal and motivated by “racial solidarity.”

The Supreme Court upheld Hirabayashi’s and Korematsu’s convictions. And it took nearly a half century for courts to overturn these decisions. One court decision in the 1980s that did so highlighted the role played by the Solicitor General, emphasizing that the Supreme Court gave “special credence” to the Solicitor General’s representations. The court thought it unlikely that the Supreme Court would have ruled the same way had the Solicitor General exhibited complete candor. Yet those decisions still stand today as a reminder of the mistakes of that era.

Today, our Office takes this history as an important reminder that the “special credence” the Solicitor General enjoys before the Supreme Court requires great responsibility and a duty of absolute candor in our representations to the Court. Only then can we fulfill our responsibility to defend the United States and its Constitution, and to protect the rights of all Americans.

Neal Katyal is the Acting Solicitor General of the United States.

Dale Minami

Direct Line: [REDACTED]

Fax: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

June 20, 2013

Mr. Jim Ghidella
Chair of WCCUSD
Committee on Changing Name of Portola
Middle School in El Cerrito, California,
to Korematsu Middle School

Dear Mr. Ghidella,

I am writing this letter in support of changing the name of the Portola Middle School to the Korematsu Middle School. By way of introduction, I am an attorney who has practiced for 42 years in the Bay Area. As an active member of the Asian Pacific American community, I have helped establish the Asian Law Caucus, Inc., a community-interest law firm, the Asian American Bar Association of the Greater Bay Area, the Asian Pacific Bar of California, and the Next America Fund, a registered political action committee. I've also been active on many boards and organizations in the past – the ACLU, the Asian Law Caucus, the Nagel Island Immigration Foundation, the Japanese American Citizens' League, Chinese for Affirmative Action and many other community groups.

I was the Lead Counsel in the coram nobis case of Fred Korematsu, seeking to overturn his 40 year-old conviction for refusing military orders aimed at Japanese Americans during World War II. 120,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry were rounded up, sentence to indefinite detention without the right to notice of charges, a trial or the right to attorney. Among those Americans of Japanese ancestry were my entire family – elderly grandparents, my mother and father and my then one-year old brother.

Fred felt that the orders to exclude and detain Japanese Americans were simply wrong so he refused them. He was tried, convicted then appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court where the Court upheld his conviction based on "military necessity". New evidence was discovered in the early 1980's which proved that the government produced false evidence to support Fred's conviction, evidence of the dangers of Japanese Americans which were specifically refuted by other agencies of the U.S. government. The contradictory evidence was deliberately altered, suppressed and destroyed and never shared with the Supreme Court. The upholding of Fred's conviction was therefore based on a foundation of fraud, a finding which the U.S. District Court made in 1983 when it overturned his tainted conviction and erased it from the books.

Fred's courage in both standing up to the original unconstitutional military orders, enduring ostracism and shame from his own community, then returning to challenge his conviction 40 years later while recovering from a serious operation was a remarkable act of bravery, risking further criticism. Ostracism and his health. His strength was inspiring to a whole country, many who heard of his stance and applauded his defense of our Constitution. But his role after his conviction was overturned was even more remarkable. He travelled the country speaking out against injustice and discrimination and his story became even more timely when our crises in the Middle East exploded and calls to imprison Arab and Muslim Americans were rising. I accompanied him on many of those trips and marveled at the passion, energy and conviction with which he defended our Constitutional guarantees. He was a tireless advocate of equality and a symbol of the greatest right we enjoy: Freedom of speech.

In 1942, very few spoke out against the mass banishment of Japanese Americans and we suffered a civil rights disaster. In 1983, Fred and two others stood up to challenge their convictions by unfair laws. Their bravery spoke to their great patriotism for they "Spoke truth to power", risking their future to protect the rights we hold so dearly. Fred became a wonderful example and symbol of what is good about this country – the willingness to admit errors and the power to correct them. A school bearing Fred's name will be a constant reminder of how fragile our civil rights are and how one person's courage can have an immense impact on securing those rights for our children and grandchildren.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

MINAMI TAMAKI LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dale Minami", enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Dale Minami

June 17, 2014

To: Charles Ramsey, West Contra Costa School Board President

My name is Dr. Daniel Tanita. I am a third generation Japanese American.

My grandfather came to San Francisco from Japan in 1904. My parents were both born in California in 1916. My family had already been in California for 37yrs when the 2nd World War started.

Little did they know that they and 100,000 other Americans of Japanese descent, would be taken from their homes and sent to internment camps because of their race.

None of them were ever found guilty of treason or insurrection or supporting the enemy.

They were all Americans whose only crime was that they were of Japanese ancestry.

Were German Americans taken from their homes?

This was the injustice that Fred Korematsu fought against. He stood up against bigotry and racism and discrimination.

He fought injustice the way Martin Luther King, Jr. and Caesar Chavez did, by standing up and saying that what was being done was wrong.

Martin Luther King, Jr. and Caesar Chavez have schools named after them because they are National heroes who stood up against injustice.

Fred Korematsu is not a local hero. He is a National Hero who stood up to injustice. He has been recognized as such around the country.

Asian Americans deserve to have a school named after someone who is a Giant and a Hero and can represent who we are and who we have been in America.

I would urge that you strongly consider naming Portola Middle school in his honor>

Thank you,

Dr. Daniel Tanita
San Pablo, CA

RICHARD H. BARTKE
[REDACTED]
EL CERRITO, CALIFORNIA 94530

June 14, 2014

BOARD OF EDUCATION
WEST CONTRA COSTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
1108 Bissell Avenue,
Richmond, CA. 94801-3135

Re: Proposed Name Change of Portola Middle School

Hon. Members of the Board –

I am unable to attend a community meeting because I will be traveling for the next couple of weeks. However, I have tried to read and listen to discussions about the proposal to change Portola to "Fred T. Korematsu" school.

I did not attend Portola nor did my kids, so I am not one who opposes the change based on tradition or familiarity, although I understand that point of view.

Historically, Portola was one of those hardy folks who braved the tough unknown of the new world, and through such bravery contributed directly to the community we enjoy. Returning to the name "Portola" is thus quite appropriate. And it honors a culture which thrives within this District. I have also heard the name "Castro" suggested and that also seems very appropriate, as the school will be part of what once was the Castro Mexican Land Grant.

Sundar Shadi's name has been offered, for all the contributions he made to this community.

There are a number of Japanese in this District too, so one question may be whether Mr. Korematsu is the most fitting representative of them. I hope you hear from that community. I have heard that the school might be better named for the Adachi's, or Mabuchi's. How about the incredible Japanese heroes of WWII, the Rainbow Division, the 442nd Regimental Combat team, or the code-breakers at the Presidio of San Francisco. All of them served while their families were in the camps. Those were concrete contributions, not recognized only in future years.

The Korematsu case was of some interest and some importance in recent years. With our 20-20 hindsight I think we all agree that the removal of Japanese-American citizens away from the west coast was not only grossly unfair, but also unnecessary. But that was not known at the time. Those of us who remember the scares of 1942 to 1944 recall that by a brilliantly planned and executed sneak attack on Hawaii, Japan destroyed our strongest fleet and in the Philippines defeated our best General; its submarines patrolled our coast and shelled a refinery near Santa Barbara. There was real fear of an attack here, possibly aided by a Japanese spy as had occurred on Oahu.

RECEIVED

JUN 16 2014

So while tens of thousands of our Japanese neighbors (some were my friends) relocated to the camps if they had no place else to go away from the coast, Mr. Korematsu did not. I do not know why. He was tried, and convicted; he appealed and lost, he went to the Supreme Court and lost. Some 40 years later the conviction was again challenged, and overturned.

Mr. Korematsu was awarded a Presidential Medal but so have residents who actually lived in this community. Ed McMillan of El Cerrito got such a medal, plus the Fermi Medal, and a Nobel Prize. It seems more reasonable to honor folks who lived in West County, and we have had a number of Nobel Prize winners, for example.

The conclusion I draw, and which you well may draw also, is that while Mr. Korematsu's case was noteworthy, there have been people who lived in this District who have given more to it, have been more decorated, and do not yet have schools named for them (as has Mr. Korematsu).

Thank you for your consideration of the above.


Richard H. Bartke

Cc: James L Ghidella

ATTENTION: Bruce Harter, Superintendent Schools
West Contra Costa County Schools
1108 Bissell
Richmond, California 94801

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

PHILIP A. LEE was born in Utah May 9, 1881. He was raised in Nevada. He married Olga Carling in Nevada in 1905. They came to RUST (EL CERRITO) in 1911. When EL CERRITO became incorporated in 1917 Philip A Lee was on El Cerrito's first City Council. He was an honest and hard-working man. People recognized this and elected him as the first mayor of El Cerrito and he served seven terms between 1917 and 1928. Sometimes he was a councilman and one time he was the street commissioner. Philip was steadily employed as a steamfitter for the Standard Oil Richmond Refinery until 1923. At that time he took charge of his first business venture - a filling (full service) gas station - on the corner of Fairmont and San Pablo Avenue with his wife assisting. Their home was located next to the station and is still standing today (2014). Behind their home was the city's one-cell jail. They had a son and a daughter who attended Fairmont School and graduated from Richmond High School (1933 and 1938). Olga was president of the PTA at Fairmont School and President of the Auxillary Post of American Legion in El Cerrito. Philip A. Lee passed away in 1945.

PHILIP A. LEE was his daughter's (Vilate Veirs) Pal. They enjoyed fishing and camping and sometimes he took her to the Oakland Oaks ball games in Emeryville. Vilate Veirs is 94 years old and still lives in El Cerrito today (2014). She was proud to be the speaker for her dad's sidewalk paver (located at the corner of Fairmont and San Pablo Avenue) in an audio tour the City of El Cerrito put together. She and her husband, Jack Veirs, raised their three children in El Cerrito. They attended Mira Vista Elementary School and El Monte and Portola Jr. High School and graduated from El Cerrito High School (1959, 1961, 1963).

We respectfully request that you seriously consider renaming Portola Middle School with his name PHILIP A. LEE Middle School in honor of his dedication to this city and his dream for its growth.

Thank you!


Most Sincerely,

PHILIP A. LEE'S FAMILY

RECEIVED
JUN 16 2011
SUPERINTENDENT

From: [Charles Ramsey](#)
To: ["Joni Hiramoto"](#)
Cc: [James Ghidella](#); [Walton, Marcus](#); [Enos, Randall](#); [Karen Korematsu](#); [Karen Fenton](#); [cricketjoy](#)
Subject: FW: Castro School
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2014 4:44:44 PM

-----Original Message-----

From: Teresa Myintoo [<mailto:> ]
Sent: Thursday, June 26, 2014 11:15 AM
To: Charles Ramsey
Cc: Todd A.Groves
Subject: Castro School

Dear Committee and Mr. Enos,

I attended recently the presentation on Juan Bautista de Anza land expedition from Sonora to Northern California in 1774 presented at the El Cerrito Historical Society.

The role of Spanish Mexican pathfinders and settlers is very important in early California and cannot be forgotten.

Therefore I would like to keep the name of Don Victor Castro (Mexican settler in El Cerrito area in the 19th century and descendant of Francisco Castro who came as a

child with Anza's expedition or the name of Portola who discovered the San Francisco Bay in 1769.

I believe the names of Castro or Portola school should be kept as part of the Spanish heritage of this area.

Sincerely,

Teresa Myintoo

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: Renaming of Portola
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2014 9:30:06 AM

With no disrespect to Mr. Korematsu, I am not in favor of renaming Portola Middle School. As far as I can tell, Mr. Korematsu has no direct connection with the communities of El Cerrito or Richmond and I don't see a need to rename the school for him.

Thanks,

Paul Gilbert-Snyder

From: [Yaeko Yedlosky](#)
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: Portola Middle School
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2014 4:08:48 PM

I believe all the suggested names proposed as a name change for the Portola Middle School have merit for consideration. However, I feel that renaming it after Fred T. Korematsu who fought for due process as an American citizen and was unjustly imprisoned would be an appropriate selection for a learning institution of our young students.

Thousands of Japanese-Americans did not have the courage of Mr. Korematsu. Ten so-called relocation camps imprisoned 120,000 of Japanese ancestry for 3 years.

Thank you for inviting community input on this important issue.

Y. Yedlosky

From: [Anna-Maria Hertzner](#)
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: Portola Middle School - Proposed Name Change
Date: Monday, June 23, 2014 8:17:35 AM

Portola was not the address of Portola Middle School, so I think it is fine to keep the name for the middle school, even though it will be at a different location in the future. Portola was one of three streets adjoining the middle school.

Fred T. Korematsu did nothing to change things; he just defied orders at a time when word of the atrocities carried out by Japanese on their prisoners during World War II were causing great concern in many countries. Read "Song of Survival" by Helen Colijn, or see the movie "Paradise Road" based on Colijn's book.

I vote in favor of keeping Portola Middle School as the name for the school in its new location.

Thank you for considering my vote.

Anna-Maria Hertzner (grand-daughter of Johannes and Barbara I. M. Schoon who, as prisoners of the Japanese, were cruelly treated by the Japanese during World War II).

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: Renaming Portola Middle School to Fred Korematsu Middle School
Date: Thursday, June 19, 2014 7:45:26 AM

From: Ellen [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, June 17, 2014 4:43 PM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Renaming Portola Middle School to Fred Korematsu Middle School

Dear Mr. Ghidella:

I heard about the West Contra Costa Unified School District's proposal to change the name of Portola Middle School in El Cerrito to the Fred Korematsu Middle School.

I am strongly in favor of this change. What Fred did was not the "Japanese way." He did something not only against his government, but against the grain of his own community. He did not follow the conventional wisdom of the rest of the 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans and go to the camp in order to prove he was a loyal American. I understand the feelings of those who object to having him honored.

Fred's act of civil disobedience, while not the "Japanese way," was instead the "American way." I know there are people who say, "Fred was disobeying the law, we should not set him up as an example for our children." But this is exactly the lesson I want my children to learn: that there are times when you have to stand up for what is right.

Fred demonstrated courage by not going along with everyone else and his gut instinct –that he was an American, that he could not be evacuated just on the base of his race, without a trial or hearing -- has been vindicated by history. And because he stood up and challenged his conviction all the way to the Supreme Court in the 1940's and in federal court in the 1980's— now things are better for all Americans.

Changing the name of Portola Middle School to the Fred Korematsu Middle School would demonstrate El Cerrito's leadership in honoring a true American hero. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Ellen Widess

Ellen Widess Consulting
[REDACTED]

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: Renaming Portola JHS
Date: Thursday, June 19, 2014 7:42:44 AM

Marcus, this morning I am forwarding to you email that I have received in the last few days; would you please distribute it to the Committee and Dr. Harter, and please post it on the website. I will be out of state until Sunday night, but you will now have all communications sent to me. Thank you, Jim Ghidella

From: David Dansky [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 18, 2014 5:34 PM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Renaming Portola JHS

Dear Mr. Ghidella,

My name is David Dansky.

I attended junior and senior high school in Richmond, graduating from the old Richmond Union High School. After going to Cal Berkeley and then Boalt Law School, I decided my life's calling was classroom teaching. I taught at Ells HS and Kennedy HS for 25 years. I am a member of the National Forensics League and California High School Speech Associations Halls of Fame for my 25 years of forensics coaching in Richmond Schools. I currently support the efforts to provide excellence in education to Richmond students through contributions to the Eagle Foundation and the West Contra Costa Retired Teachers Scholarship Fund. My heart has never left the district.

I strongly support the WCCUSD's proposal to rename Portola Middle School to the Fred Korematsu Middle School. Charles Ramsey deserves the community's approbation for his leadership in this endeavor. 99% of constitutional legal scholars have found the original Supreme Court ruling to be one of tortured logic, flawed legal reasoning and factually inaccurate. Anyone with a cursory knowledge of what happened to our American citizens of Japanese ancestry during WWII knows what a travesty of justice was their fate in the sending patriotic Americans to internment camps. Fred Korematsu stood up against injustice and should be, and has been, saluted for his courage by receiving the Presidential Medal of Honor from Bill Clinton, as well as the highest encomium from the State of California, which recognized the injustice to Mr. Korematu, when it declared January 30 as Fred Korematsu Day in California. Really little else needs to be said, but let me say a little more.

M.L.King and Caesar Chavez were also rewarded for their dedication to the fight for civil rights with the Presidential Medals of Freedom and have had schools named for them in the WCCUSD. As you now know, not one person, not one, of Japanese American ancestry ever committed one act of sabotage or spying for the enemy during WWII. In fact the mighty Rainbow Division made up mostly of Japanese Americans was the most feared fighting force in WWII and has more medals per capita than any other fighting unit in American military history. Fred Korematsu also fought bravely for due process, fought for justice. In time his conviction was overturned in 1983; a bit late, but better than never.

I cannot think of any way of engendering feelings of a high level of civic virtue and responsibility than honoring the name of Fred Korematsu. He epitomizes due process of law and indefatigable courage. I would be proud to name any of my grandchildren after him and would hope they would emulate him in every aspect of their lives. Certainly the WCCUSD with its history of promoting quality education and encouraging all of its students to achieve excellence would be well served in naming Portola after Fred Korematsu. I know my late brother, Steven, who attended Portola, would have been as strong in his endorsement of this as I am.

Thanks for taking the time to read this old speech and debate coach's email.

All the best, and wishes for good wisdom in making your judgments,

David Dansky

Now in Ridgefield, WA, but whose love for Richmond schools and its students has never wavered.

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: [Walton, Marcus](#); charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net
Subject: FW: renaming new middle school
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2014 4:01:22 PM

received this afternoon

From: Cathy Travlos [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 26, 2014 3:36 PM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: renaming new middle school

Dear Mr. Ghidella,

I'm emailing to support naming the new middle school after Fred Korematsu. I'm a Portola alum and former Portola parent. I'd love to see the new school named after someone local who was willing to stand up for justice.

Thank you,
Cathy Travlos

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: Rename Portola to Korematsu Middle School
Date: Friday, June 20, 2014 7:33:57 AM

...just checking me email from Montana....

From: Betty Kano [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 19, 2014 2:39 PM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Rename Portola to Korematsu Middle School

Dear Mr. Jim Ghidella:

I am a former student of Portola Middle School and am heartily in favor of renaming it to Korematsu Middle School.

Gaspar de Portola was an explorer who left a bloody trail of conquest in California for Spain. It is a welcome opportunity to rename the school, as it is being rebuilt and relocated, after a Bay Area Japanese American hero who paved the way for justice for 120,000 Japanese Americans wrongfully incarcerated during WWII.

Fred Korematsu and his family were part of the large Japanese American flower growing industry based here that flourished before WWII. When Executive Order 9066 was promulgated in 1942, calling for the removal of all persons of Japanese descent from the West Coast, American-born Fred Korematsu was among the very few who defied that order exercising his rights as a US citizen. In circumstances fraught with polarizations of loyalty, family values, culture, death and perseverance, Korematsu brought his case to the US Supreme Court - and lost. It was because of that case that 40 years later Korematsu could charge the government of wrongdoing in concealing evidence that discharged "military necessity."

Mr. Korematsu withstood taunts from everyone, including from Japanese Americans, at the beginning of his quest for justice in 1943 to his eventual success in the landmark coram nobis case 40 years later that began crucial hearings on wartime incarceration of Japanese Americans and eventual passage of Redress and Reparations and the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.

All Japanese Americans can attest to the significance of that Act in addressing the stain of guilt brought on by US government wartime hysteria and racism.

The renaming of Portola Middle School is long overdue; naming it Korematsu Middle School would help bring his struggle for civil liberties for all to El Cerrito.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Betty Nobue Kano
Asian American Studies, San Francisco State University (Faculty)
Japanese American National Library (Board)
Japanese American Women Alumni of UC Berkeley (Board)

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: [Walton, Marcus](#); charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net
Subject: FW: Proposal to name school after Fred Korematsu
Date: Thursday, June 19, 2014 10:42:52 AM

received this morning

From: David Oppenheimer [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 19, 2014 10:27 AM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Proposal to name school after Fred Korematsu

Mr. Jim Ghidella

Chair

WCCUSD Committee on Changing the Name of Portola Middle School
El Cerrito, California

Dear Mr. Ghidella,

I am a clinical professor of law at Berkeley Law (although I write as an individual). I write to express my strong support of the West Contra Costa Unified School District's ("WCCUSD") proposal to change the name of Portola Middle School in El Cerrito, California, to the Fred Korematsu Middle School.

Mr. Korematsu is a genuine American hero. He stood up for the principle that a U.S. citizen is entitled to due process of law, and that right cannot be taken away on the basis of race, color or creed. He did so at considerable personal cost. The internment of the 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans was a shameful violation of due process, motivated by war hysteria and lacking in any evidence of disloyalty or espionage by the Japanese American community.

Mr. Korematsu resisted the order to report for deportation to the camps, and was thus imprisoned. After 40 years as a felon, his conviction for disobeying the internment order was overturned in federal court in 1983, when Judge Marilyn Hall ruled that the original conviction was based entirely on falsified evidence. By naming a school in his honor, you will create an opportunity for the people of El Cerrito to reflect often, and deeply, on the illegal treatment of Japanese Americans in California during World War II, and on the importance of resisting racism wherever we see it.

As you know, Mr. Korematsu's heroism was overlooked through much of his

life. It's public recognition began some 16 years ago in 1998, when President Bill Clinton awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In 2010 the California legislature passed and Governor Schwarzenegger signed AB 1775 which designated January 30 as Fred Korematsu Day in California. Now, West Contra Costa has an opportunity to continue this recognition.

Sincerely yours,

David B. Oppenheimer

--

David B. Oppenheimer
Clinical Professor of Law
Director of Professional Skills
Berkeley Law



From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: Portola Middle School
Date: Thursday, June 19, 2014 7:44:06 AM

From: Ann Lehman [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 18, 2014 1:18 PM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Portola Middle School

Dear Mr. Ghidella,

My name is Ann Lehman. I am an El Cerrito resident, whose son graduated from ECHS in 2012. I support the West Contra Costa Unified School District's proposal to change the name of Portola Middle School in El Cerrito to the Fred Korematsu Middle School. Mr. Korematsu stands for the principle that a U.S. citizen is entitled to due process of law, and that right cannot be taken away on the basis of race, color or creed. He did not sue the government for money or profit. He did not set out to become a civil rights hero. He was an ordinary man who had the strength and courage to challenge the government when it was wrong. History has vindicated him and President Bill Clinton bestowed upon him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998. He deserves this honor too, and I would be proud to have the middle school named in his honor. It would send a message to our future generations about what it means to be an American citizen. Not only does one have rights, but one must stand up to defend those rights.

Best,

Ann Lehman
Governance and Gender Consultant
Zimmerman Lehman

ENEWS Subscribe to our free e-newsletter,
ZimNotes. forging futures for nonprofits at
www.zimmerman-lehman.com

TWITTER www.twitter.com/alehman
LINKEDIN <http://www.linkedin.com/in/zimmermanlehman>
FACEBOOK <http://www.facebook.com/zimmerman.lehman>

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: Portola Middle School Name Change to Korematsu Middle School
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2014 1:04:54 PM

received today

From: Corinne Uchiumi [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 26, 2014 11:58 AM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Portola Middle School Name Change to Korematsu Middle School

Mr. Jim Ghidella
Chair of WCCUSD Committee on Changing Name of Portola Middle School in El Cerrito, California, to
Korematsu Middle School
[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Ghidella,

I strongly support the West Contra Costa Unified School District's ("WCCUSD") proposal to change the name of Portola Middle School in El Cerrito, California, to the Fred T. Korematsu Middle School.

Mr. Korematsu stood for the principle that a U.S. citizen is entitled to due process of law, and that right cannot be taken away on the basis of race, color or creed. He did not sue the government for money or profit. He did not set out to become a civil rights hero. He was an ordinary man who had the strength and courage to challenge the government when it was wrong. History has vindicated him and President Bill Clinton bestowed upon him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998. In 2010 the California legislature passed AB 1775 which designated January 30 as Fred Korematsu Day in California. Based on these honors, it is appropriate for a public school anywhere in the nation, but especially in California, to bear his name.

The WCCUSD has schools named after Martin Luther King, Jr, and Cesar Chavez. Like Fred Korematsu, they were awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for their work to advance the cause of civil rights in this nation. The internment of the 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans was a violation of due process, motivated by war hysteria and lacking in any evidence of disloyalty or espionage by the Japanese and Japanese American community. Mr. Korematsu's conviction for disobeying the internment order was overturned in 1983, after the coram nobis team proved to Judge Marilyn Hall Patel in federal court in San Francisco that the original conviction was based on falsified evidence. By that time, Fred had suffered the ramifications of a wrongful conviction -- in lost job opportunities -- for 40 years.

It is entirely appropriate in this instance to name a school after someone who "broke the law." Our hope for the future depends on our children's understanding of civil disobedience, due process of law, and courage. It is time to recognize Fred Korematsu, an American citizen whose strength and courage helped our nation redeem its shameful conduct during World War II.

Thank you.

Corinne Uchiumi
[REDACTED]
El Cerrito, CA 94530
[REDACTED]

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: [Walton, Marcus](#); charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net
Subject: FW: Portola Middle School Name Change from Wendy Adachi
Date: Thursday, June 19, 2014 10:41:21 AM

received this morning

From: Wendy Adachi [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 19, 2014 9:53 AM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Portola Middle School Name Change

Mr. Jim Ghidella
Chair of WCCUSD Committee on Changing Name of Portola Middle School in El Cerrito, California, to Korematsu Middle School
[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Ghidella,

My name is Wendy Adachi. I am a graduate of Portola Middle School. I attended Madera Elementary and El Cerrito High School. My family has lived in the Richmond/El Cerrito area since 1897. I strongly support the West Contra Costa Unified School District's ("WCCUSD") proposal to change the name of Portola Middle School in El Cerrito, California, to the Fred Korematsu Middle School.

Mr. Korematsu stood for the principle that a U.S. citizen is entitled to due process of law, and that right cannot be taken away on the basis of race, color or creed. He did not sue the government for money or profit. He did not set out to become a civil rights hero. He was an ordinary man who had the strength and courage to challenge the government when it was wrong. History has vindicated him and President Bill Clinton bestowed upon him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998. In 2010 the California legislature passed and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed AB 1775 which designated January 30 as Fred Korematsu Day in California. Based on these honors, it is appropriate for a public school anywhere in the nation, but especially in California, to bear his name.

The WCCUSD has schools named after Martin Luther King, Jr, and Cesar Chavez. Like Fred Korematsu, they were awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for their work to advance the cause of civil rights in this nation. The internment of the 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans was a violation of due process, motivated by war hysteria and lacking in any evidence of disloyalty or espionage by the Japanese and Japanese American community. Mr. Korematsu's conviction for disobeying the internment order was overturned in 1983, after the *coram nobis* team proved to Judge Marilyn Hall Patel in federal court in San Francisco that the original conviction was based on falsified evidence. By that time, Fred had suffered the ramifications of a

wrongful conviction -- in lost job opportunities -- for 40 years.

It is entirely appropriate in this instance to name a school after someone who "broke the law." Our hope for the future depends on our children's understanding of civil disobedience, due process of law, and courage. It is time to recognize Fred Korematsu, an American citizen whose strength and courage helped our nation redeem its shameful conduct during World War II.

Wendy Adachi

[REDACTED]

Moraga, CA 94556

Family home

[REDACTED]

El Cerrito, CA 94530

[REDACTED]

From: [Charles Ramsey](#)
To: [James Ghidella](#)
Cc: ["Joni Hiramoto"](#); [cricketjoy](#); [Karen Korematsu](#); [Karen Fenton](#); ["Thomas Prather"](#); [Enos, Randall](#); [Walton, Marcus](#); ["joanna pace"](#)
Subject: FW: Portola Junior High School
Date: Sunday, June 22, 2014 10:17:17 PM

From: Sharon Steele [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, June 22, 2014 4:52 PM
To: charamsey@comcast.net
Subject: Portola Junior High School

I am writing to ask that you please DO NOT change the name of the new junior high/middle school from Portola. I attended Portola Junior High in the sixties and it was one of the most beautiful schools in California. I realize it had to be torn down to meet earthquake standards, however, the name has a history for El Cerrito. I also attended Castro Elementary school. I'm heartbroken that items from the old school have not been saved for memorabilia and used in the new school that will take its place. Please, we've already lost Castro, don't let us lose Portola too. Rename the school Portola Middle School if necessary but please keep the name Portola. You can name each building with after someone if you want to or the fields but please leave the school name Portola. Perhaps the Admin office should be in the Castro Building, etc.

SHARON STEELE

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: Naming of Portola Middle School after Fred Korematsu
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2014 9:40:45 AM

From: Margaret Fujioka [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2014 8:28 AM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Naming of Portola Middle School after Fred Korematsu

Dear Mr. Ghidella:

My name is Margaret Fujioka and I am the Mayor of the City of Piedmont. Today I write as a private citizen in support of changing the name of Portola Middle School to Fred Korematsu Middle School.

The WWII internment of 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans, including my parents, was a violation of due process, motivated by war hysteria and lacking in evidence of disloyalty or espionage by the Japanese and Japanese American community. Korematsu's conviction for disobeying the government's evacuation order was overturned in 1983, after the coram nobis team proved to Judge Marilyn Hall Patel that the original conviction was based on falsified evidence. Like Martin Luther King, Jr. and Cesar Chavez, Korematsu was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. And like King and Chavez, Korematsu deserves to have a school named after him. Such an act would send a message to all, particularly our youth, that one courageous individual can right a wrong.

Yours truly,

Margaret Fujioka

--

Margaret J. Fujioka
[REDACTED]

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: Name change for Portola Middle School
Date: Thursday, June 19, 2014 7:44:46 AM

From: Joan MacMaster [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 18, 2014 7:10 AM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Name change for Portola Middle School

Dear Mr. Ghidella,

My name is Joan H. MacMaster. I am a retired History Professor and three of my grandsons attended Portola Middle School. I strongly support the West Contra Costa Unified School District's proposal to change the name of Portola Middle School in El Cerrito to the Fred Korematsu Middle School.

Mr. Korematsu stands for the principle that a U.S. citizen is entitled to due process of law, and that right cannot be taken away on the basis of race, color or creed. He did not sue the government for money or profit. He did not set out to become a civil rights hero. He was an ordinary man who had the strength and courage to challenge the government when it was wrong. History has vindicated him and President Bill Clinton bestowed upon him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998. He deserves this honor too, and I would be proud to have the middle school named in his honor. It would send a message to our future generations about what it means to be an American citizen. Not only does one have rights, but one must stand up to defend those rights.

Your name

Joan H. MacMaster

[REDACTED]



This email is free from viruses and malware because [avast! Antivirus](#) protection is active.

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: [Walton, Marcus](#); charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net
Subject: FW: Fred Korematsu/Portola Rename
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2014 4:00:26 PM

received this afternoon

From: Karen Shebek [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 26, 2014 3:56 PM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: RE: Fred Korematsu/Portola Rename

Hi,

My two kids have been schooled at WCCUSD the last 14 years, my youngest now at El Cerrito High School. I wanted to say that our family supports renaming Portola in honor of Fred Korematsu.

Sincerely,

Karen Shebek

Parent volunteer, ECHS

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: Fred Korematsu
Date: Monday, June 23, 2014 11:08:20 AM

additional comments from Dale Minami

From: Dale Minami [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2014 10:46 AM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: RE: Fred Korematsu

Dear Mr. Ghidella,

Thank you for your kind email. I happened to read Mr. Zimmerman's claims which are so inaccurate from a historical point of view. His confusion about Japanese who attacked Pearl Harbor and the Japanese Americans who were imprisoned without due process rights was the main reason 120,000 AMERICANS of Japanese Ancestry were incarcerated. Not one American of Japanese Ancestry was arrested or convicted of espionage or sabotage and the fact that the Japanese Americans in Hawaii were not incarcerated en masse (despite the situs of Pearl Harbor, our Pacific Naval Fleet, and the large proportion of Japanese Americans) speaks to the racism which propelled the decision to only imprison mainland Japanese en masse. His statements strongly support the naming of the school after Fred Korematsu as the ignorance which caused the mass violation of civil rights would be exposed by the symbolic naming of the school. Sorry to go on and on, but his statements were so clearly wrong from a historical and moral perspective, I had to email again.

Dale

Dale Minami
Minami Tamaki LLP
360 Post St., 8th Fl.
San Francisco, CA 94108

[REDACTED]
Website: <http://www.minamitamaki.com/>

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-----Original Message-----

From: James Ghidella [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 20, 2014 5:22 PM
To: Dale Minami
Subject: RE: Fred Korematsu

Dale, Thank you so much for your excellent letter; I have forwarded it to the Committee and it will be posted on the District website. I am very encouraged by the outpouring of support for the name

change. Jim Ghidella
From: Dale Minami [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 20, 2014 5:02 PM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Fred Korematsu

Dear Mr. Ghidella,

Please accept this letter of support in favor of naming the name of Portola Middle School to Korematsu Middle School. Thank you for your consideration.

Dale Minami

[cid:image003.png@01CF8CA9.78D37780]

Dale Minami
Minami Tamaki LLP
360 Post St., 8th Fl.
San Francisco, CA 94108

[REDACTED]

Website: <http://www.minamitamaki.com/>

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From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: Change PMS' Name
Date: Thursday, June 19, 2014 7:44:06 AM

From: Cori Crooks [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 18, 2014 2:07 PM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Change PMS' Name

Dear Mr. Ghidella,

My name is Corina Crooks. I am an El Cerrito Resident and my child will be attending Portola Middle School in the Fall. I support the West Contra Costa Unified School District's proposal to change the name of Portola Middle School to the Fred Korematsu Middle School.

Thank you,

Corina Crooks
Behrens Street, El Cerrito

RECEIVED
JUN 13 2014
SUPERINTENDENT

Office of the Superintendent
1108 Bissell Avenue
Richmond, CA 94801-3135

Dear Sir;

I respectfully am submitting a few thoughts regarding the proposed name change at Portola Middle School:

“Portola” the name of a Spanish land holder in the El Cerrito area many years ago. An opportunity is presented to teach the youngsters about the magnificent Spanish heritage in this area and throughout California in it’s historic formative years.

“Fred T. Korematsu Middle School”. Are we sure that we want to teach our youngsters that it is good to defy government edicts? Be they right or wrong, these edicts were presented as a result of limited information on the possibility of a major problem. Computers were in their infancy—The president did what he felt was right and issued the edict.

Thousands of American and British stormed into hell at Omaha Beach 70 years ago. Heros who had responded to the draft. They didn’t run and hide because they didn’t agree with an order.

Do we have any D-Day vets in the area?

“Myamoto” – the name of one of several Japanese familys who lived and worked in the El Cerrito area who were sent to various camps for

the duration. Most were respected and prominent business people who made great sacrifices and followed the unfair and calloused orders.

“Myamoto Middle School” Why Not?

Sincerely, James H. Mobley



Kensington, CA 94707
June 12, 2014

RECEIVED

JUN 13 2014

SUPERINTENDENT

Office of the Superintendent
1108 Bissell Avenue
Richmond, CA 94801-3135

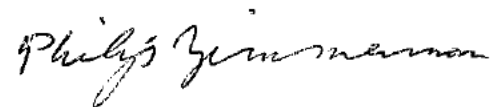
Dear Sirs:

Please direct this letter to the decision-making body considering the name change for Portola Middle School.

I list below reasons the proposed name change is a poor idea, in no particular order. You need to review the history of the period, since you are even considering this idea.

1. Japanese Americans were not treated particularly badly during WWII. Though they often lost their property as a result of the internment, it was not purposefully harsh, and in no way compared to the way Americans in Japan and American prisoners of war were treated by the Japanese Empire.
2. The fact that Fred Korematsu survived and later flourished in our society despite his activities is to America's credit, not his.
3. Japanese espionage in Hawaii before, during, and after the attack on Pearl Harbor is a fact, and made the internment justifiable. Recall that invasion currency was printed in contemplation of an attack on our soil.
4. Japanese Americans are not a particularly neglected or abused minority in our society, compared to several other groups with very real grievances. Giving any one of them an inspirational name of a public building is a better idea.
5. The fact is that the current name honors one of these groups should be sufficient reason to leave it as it has been.
6. Members of the group honored by its current name could feel disrespected by this change.
7. Portola is a name with strong local historical roots.
8. It is also a part of the personal memories and identities of each student who has attended it.
9. Portola is easy to say and spell. It must be used many times each day by the thousands of children and adults who will pass through the new school. Not so your alternative.

Sincerely,



Philip Zimmerman

ATTENTION: Bruce Harter, Superintendent Schools
West Contra Costa County Schools
1108 Bissell
Richmond, California 94801

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

PHILIP A. LEE was born in Utah May 9, 1881. He was raised in Nevada. He married Olga Carling in Nevada in 1905. They came to RUST (EL CERRITO) in 1911. When EL CERRITO became incorporated in 1917 Philip A Lee was on El Cerrito's first City Council. He was an honest and hard-working man. People recognized this and elected him as the first mayor of El Cerrito and he served seven terms between 1917 and 1928. Sometimes he was a councilman and one time he was the street commissioner. Philip was steadily employed as a steamfitter for the Standard Oil Richmond Refinery until 1923. At that time he took charge of his first business venture - a filling (full service) gas station - on the corner of Fairmont and San Pablo Avenue with his wife assisting. Their home was located next to the station and is still standing today (2014). Behind their home was the city's one-cell jail. They had a son and a daughter who attended Fairmont School and graduated from Richmond High School (1933 and 1938). Olga was president of the PTA at Fairmont School and President of the Auxillary Post of American Legion in El Cerrito. Philip A. Lee passed away in 1945.

PHILIP A. LEE was his daughter's (Vilate Veirs) Pal. They enjoyed fishing and camping and sometimes he took her to the Oakland Oaks ball games in Emeryville. Vilate Veirs is 94 years old and still lives in El Cerrito today (2014). She was proud to be the speaker for her dad's sidewalk paver (located at the corner of Fairmont and San Pablo Avenue) in an audio tour the City of El Cerrito put together. She and her husband, Jack Veirs, raised their three children in El Cerrito. They attended Mira Vista Elementary School and El Monte and Portola Jr. High School and graduated from El Cerrito High School (1959, 1961, 1963).

We respectfully request that you seriously consider renaming Portola Middle School with his name PHILIP A. LEE Middle School in honor of his dedication to this city and his dream for its growth.

Thank you!

Most Sincerely,

PHILIP A. LEE'S FAMILY

RECEIVED
JUN 16 2011
SUPERINTENDENT

From: [Sharon](#)
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: Changing the Name of Portola Middle School
Date: Friday, June 13, 2014 10:12:53 AM


When we married we moved from Albany to El Cerrito. We used to watch Portola being built. Later on we sent our five children to Madera, Portola and El Cerrito High.

Now in our declining years we watch as a new group of kids are being educated in El Cerrito. The idea of renaming the school surprised me. As my children dropped in and saw the card you sent they were surprised. But also they were shocked at the idea of honoring someone whom they had never heard of. I'm sure that the person is someone worthy of being honored .

But our children suggested someone whom we have all appreciated through our years. My oldest son tried to help Sundar Shadi as he prepared the marvelous display which has become so well known. Eventually Mr Shadi did relent and accepted help from others. Here is a man, not a Christian, who gifted our city with a thoughtful expression. He was paying us back by doing so as he was so appreciative of being able to come here and raise his family here.

I feel we should choose Sundar Shadi, a neighbor, whose contribution to the children and people of El Cerrito has been so evident.

I am sorry to have missed the meeting but getting around has become difficult for me.

Sincerely,
Sharon Layton 

From: [Joan Bartulovich](#)
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: yes, i'm in favor of giving portola a japanese name.
Date: Monday, June 09, 2014 2:22:38 PM

there died this week a japanese woman, i think she was from el cerrito or berkeley who was an activist. She may be preferable.

Joan Bartulovich



El Cerrito

From: [Marsha Saxton](#)
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: supporting name change to Korematsu Middle School
Date: Tuesday, June 10, 2014 10:38:56 AM

Hello,

I am writing to support the name change of Portola Middle School to the Fred Korematsu Middle School. This is an excellent name for a school! I thank whoever had this good idea.

I've lived in El Cerrito almost all my life, and attended Portola ("Junior High" then.) As a child, I remember learning about the history of Gaspar de Portola, and thinking, "this isn't a hero for our times." As you know, Portola was part of the Spanish regime to control the land that became the state of California. This is not about a proud history of human rights.

The name, Korematsu, will enable students to learn about one of our true leaders for human rights in our recent history. Mr. Korematsu was willing to fight for justice for Japanese Americans, a model for every movement for civil rights. Our children deserve to have true heroes for the names of our schools, to motivate them to learn and talk about our history in hopeful ways.

Thanks for informing the community of this opportunity.
Best wishes,
Marsha Saxton

--

Marsha Saxton, PhD
World Institute on Disability
Disability Studies Program, University of California, Berkeley
3075 Adeline St. Suite 280
Berkeley, CA 94703

[REDACTED], [REDACTED]

From: [Norman La Force](#)
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: Renaming Portola to Korematsu School
Date: Sunday, June 08, 2014 2:30:58 PM

Dear School Board,

I support the proposal to rename the Portola Middle School for Fred Korematsu. It is an excellent idea.

Sincerely yours,

Norman La Force



El Cerrito, CA 94530

From: [Rima Kittner](#)
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: Renaming Portola Middle School
Date: Monday, June 09, 2014 2:21:40 PM

This member of the community heartily approves of the proposed name change to Fred T. Korematsu Middle School. Please do make this change; recognition of this man is long overdue.

Rima Kittner

From: MARLENEKELLER9577
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: Re Proposed Name Change for Portola Middle School
Date: Friday, June 13, 2014 12:19:45 PM

My husband and I strongly support the proposed name change from Portola Middle School to Fred T. Korematsu Middle School.

The name change would recognize the major contribution of Asian Americans, particularly Japanese Americans, to El Cerrito and California history. This has been so long in coming !

Marlene Keller and Christian G. Fritz


El Cerrito, CA 94530-2547

From: [Nancy Davis](#)
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: Portola
Date: Monday, June 09, 2014 2:22:14 PM

I would like to see the school district keep the name Portola. My children went there and my children's children went there. I'd like to see the name continue as a familiar name to all of us. I don't think Mr. Korematsu has any place in El Cerrito as a protester to American policy during the war. He has nothing to do with El Cerrito or Richmond.

He may be an honorable citizen but he is not a historical figure. I have lived in this area for 80 years and I have never heard of him. Please keep the name of Portola to honor our early history.

Nancy Davis
El Cerrito Resident

From: [Karen Shebek](#)
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: Portola rename
Date: Saturday, June 07, 2014 12:34:54 PM

I am unlikely to be able to attend the meetings; I am supportive of renaming Portola after Fred Korematsu, but want to make sure the wishes of the Japanese American local community are respected. If they are in favor, I am in favor.

Karen Shebek parent

From: [Terry Stauduhar](#)
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: portola name change
Date: Friday, June 13, 2014 9:06:51 AM

The name change from Portola to Fred T. Korematsu Middle School is particularly appropriate given the part Japanese-Americans have played in El Cerrito's history.

I would hope that the history of Japanese and Japanese-Americans in this part of California and their internment during WWII could be worked into the curriculum, perhaps with the aid of the JACL or in conjunction with the Japanese-language program at El Cerrito High. We shouldn't forget.

I'm sorry that I'm unable to go to a 7:00 p.m. meeting.

Terry Stauduhar,

From: [Lillie Braudy](#)
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: Portola name change
Date: Saturday, June 07, 2014 6:14:01 PM

I am absolutely positively against changing the name of Portola to Korematsu.
Firstly, Portola name has been loved by all including my 2 -50 plus-year old sons

Alumni would not know what school is being talked about. whoever Mr. K was or is
was valiant; but not on a well known school - find some new school for him. not PORTOLA

From: [Dawn Dukes](#)
To: [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: Portola name change
Date: Sunday, June 08, 2014 1:59:14 PM

Hello- I am writing on behalf on many mothers and community members at Kensington Hilltop School who oppose the added time & expense to effect a name change on Portola. It is a superficial way to deal with change, we much prefer those resources for new stationary, signage,etc be used toward tangible benefit for our children. Leave the name alone and work on the substance! Dr. Dawn Dukes

From: [Nancy Davis](#)
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: Portola name change
Date: Monday, June 09, 2014 2:22:36 PM

I attended Portola in 1971. I think the name should remain the same. This name represents the early explorers of California and I think it should remain as a part of our early history. It is a Landmark name that the city of El Cerrito is familiar with and there is no reason to discard it for something else.

Laurel Bowden

From: [Mike Douthit](#)
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: Portola Name Change and The Sakai Family
Date: Saturday, June 07, 2014 3:56:28 PM

I am in full support of the name change to Fred T. Korematsu Middle School. I think that is just awesome to recognize publicly such an overlooked part of our history. And with so many Japanese-Americans in the east bay, it will not go unnoticed.

I attended Portola from 1967-70 and I still live within 2 blocks of the site, at [REDACTED]. I would love to see renderings of the new building. Can you tell me where I can find those, if possible?

Also, about my next door neighbors, The Sakai family, at [REDACTED]: All 4 Sakai children attended Portola and are now in their 40s-50s and have moved elsewhere. The youngest son, Brian Sakai, however, does still live alone in the family home next door (which is still crammed full of his parents' furniture and belongings years after they died, as if they never left!). The oldest son, Steve Sakai, works for [REDACTED] as some sort of manager. Their parents came here from Japan as young newlyweds with hopes and dreams for a bright future –but they were quickly moved to the internment camps. Mr. Sakai, the father, never got over it and was angry about it all his life until the day he died. I believe that anger affected everyone in that family, and maybe still does.

May I suggest you contact them? To honor their family, and their mother and father's memory, by doing something such as a special invite to the opening or something? They have always been very private people, but I have a feeling they would welcome anything you could do to honor their parents, who were amazing hard-working Americans all their life, even after such a horrible experience at such a young age that changed everything for them. I cannot even imagine.

In fact, they are so private that my family has lived next door to their family for over 50 years –but rarely have they spoken to any of us, and not for lack of trying. After the father died long ago, the elderly mother started to come over and actually visit us and talk! It was astonishing! She would sit and talk and talk for hours on end if we allowed it, and she was so fascinating. It wasn't until she did that, in 2004, I think it was, that we found out about their history. We knew nothing about the camps until then! She was so overjoyed to be able to sit with us for the first time and talk about her life (I think her husband prohibited it when he was alive. He was very much in control of that household). She was very short and petite and humble, like you can imagine a Geisha would be, but the look on her face and in her eyes when she started talking to us was just so moving. Imagine how shocked we were to first hear about their internment camp life in 2004! She died in 2005, I think.

Please try to come up with something to honor their family, in connection to the new name change. I think it would resonate hugely with all Japanese-Americans everywhere, especially if it got some positive media attention. Theirs is certainly a very moving human-interest story and this name change is the perfect opportunity to honor them, and in doing so, honor all of those who had their lives affected and altered by those camps.

Why, I'll bet most kids in high-school these days are not even aware of what the US Government did to those Japanese. Now, in this modern era, is a good time to bring it up again so we never forget.

Thank you!

Mike Douthit



From: [NORMA DEPIANTO](#)
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: Portola Middle School
Date: Friday, June 06, 2014 12:15:22 PM

Times have changed, however during the fear of the war many harmful things were done. However, at the time, Korematsu, was considered a criminal. He is now vindicated. I'm not sure he should become an icon. Please find a less contrary name for the school.

Norma De Pianto, El Cerrito resident

From: [Julie Wakelee-Lynch](#)
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: Portola Middle School, and mailing contact correction
Date: Friday, June 06, 2014 9:38:43 PM

Dear folks,
Thanks for the postcard about the proposed name change for Portola Middle School. I am unable to attend any of the community meetings, but I fully support the plan.

Also, the card came addressed to Joseph Lynch, who has never lived at this address. Please correct to Julia Wakelee-Lynch ([REDACTED], El Cerrito, CA 94530-4139)

Thanks!

--

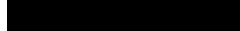
Julie Wakelee-Lynch
[REDACTED]

From: [Martie Martin](#)
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: Portola Middle School Name Change
Date: Tuesday, June 10, 2014 10:28:15 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

While I appreciate that Korematsu is an important figure in our history, I would prefer to see a more local name given to the school, such as Adachi or Castro. I feel the Letter to the Editor in The Journal was accurate in stating that honoring individuals local to our community allows the students to feel more connected to the city where they grew up.

Martie Conner



El Cerrito, CA 94530

From: [Robert Vallejo](#)
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: Portola Middle School Name Change - Opposition
Date: Friday, June 06, 2014 1:59:30 PM

Hi there - Just received a mailing asking me to comment on the proposed name change to Fred T Korematsu. Please note that my wife and myself are against this name change. No disrespect to Fred Korematsu intended in any way. Unfortunately there are too many structures (bridges, airports, schools, etc. around this country losing their location identity to a fad of name changing!!! Not to mention the confusion and cost associated with dealing with the name change for many years to come (facility signs, stationary, web site changes etc.) Anymore one can not even know where an airport is located without having to refer to a description online or similar. Portola Middle School is a perfectly well established and functional name! Please count us out. - thanks for your consideration

From: [Clem Underhill](#)
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: new school name
Date: Monday, June 09, 2014 10:03:50 AM

Portola or Castro, please.

Clem Underhill (El Cerrito)

From: [Isabel Alegria](#)
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: New Name for Portola Middle School
Date: Sunday, June 08, 2014 5:35:26 PM

To Whom it May Concern:

Hello, I recently received some information about the renaming of Portola Middle School, including an invitation to a public hearing on the question. I am not able to attend the hearing, but I would like to convey my view on the matter.

I am wholeheartedly in support of the renaming of Portola Middle School to honor Fred T. Korematsu, whose bravery and exemplary leadership in defiance of internment orders during World War II should be a model for anyone who considers themselves a patriotic American and defender of civil liberties and human rights.

I applaud you for this wonderful idea, and hope that it is made a reality. Thank you
Isabel Alegria

Sent from my iPad

From: [Michelle BAPTISTE](#)
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: Great idea: Korematsu Middle School
Date: Sunday, June 08, 2014 10:19:33 PM

Dear WCCUSD

I just want to say I love the idea of renaming the middle school with a name meaningful to history, to this area!

Thanks,
Michelle Baptiste

[REDACTED] El Cerrito

--

Michelle Baptiste
Continuing Lecturer &
Second Language Specialist

College Writing Programs
118A Wheeler Hall
Berkeley, California 94720-2500

[REDACTED] also works)


From: [REDACTED]
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: Fred Korematsu School
Date: Monday, June 09, 2014 9:27:51 PM

I think it's a great idea to name the new middle school in El Cerrito after Mr. Korematsu. I live near the old Castro School site and I was very disappointed to lose our neighborhood elementary school. Naming the school after Mr. Korematsu will help to leave some of the bitterness behind and give us a new beginning...something to be proud of instead of a continual reminder of losing our school. Plus it is a good thing to honor a man who stood up for what was right when such action was difficult.

Thanks,
Teresa Albro

From: [Charles Ramsey](#)
To: ["Joni Hiramoto"](#)
Cc: [James Ghidella](#); [Walton, Marcus](#); [Enos, Randall](#); [Karen Korematsu](#); [Karen Fenton](#); [cricketjoy](#)
Subject: FW: Castro School
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2014 4:44:44 PM

-----Original Message-----

From: Teresa Myintoo [<mailto:> ]
Sent: Thursday, June 26, 2014 11:15 AM
To: Charles Ramsey
Cc: Todd A.Groves
Subject: Castro School

Dear Committee and Mr. Enos,

I attended recently the presentation on Juan Bautista de Anza land expedition from Sonora to Northern California in 1774 presented at the El Cerrito Historical Society.

The role of Spanish Mexican pathfinders and settlers is very important in early California and cannot be forgotten.

Therefore I would like to keep the name of Don Victor Castro (Mexican settler in El Cerrito area in the 19th century and decendant of Francisco Castro who came as a

child with Anza's expedition or the name of Portola who discovered the San Francisco Bay in 1769.

I believe the names of Castro or Portola school should be kept as part of the Spanish heritage of this area.

Sincerely,

Teresa Myintoo

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: Changing name of Portola Middle School to Korematsu Middle School
Date: Sunday, June 29, 2014 11:07:15 AM

received this morning

From: Toni Arko [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, June 29, 2014 9:58 AM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Changing name of Portola Middle School to Korematsu Middle School

My name is Toni Oklan-Arko. I am a retired school administrator who worked for 39 years in the West Contra Costa Unified School District.

I am writing to add my voice of support for the renaming of Portola Middle School to Korematsu Middle School. I believe that it is most appropriate to name the school for Mr. Korematsu. Over the years schools have been renamed at the time of their reconstruction, for example Belding Elementary became Cesar E. Chavez Elementary.

The Japanese interment during WWII is a very sad chapter in our nation's history. While I received an incredible education in NY as a child, I never heard a single word about it and only discovered what had happened after I came to live in California at age 23. It is very important for the youth of today to understand what happened so such actions will never be repeated.

Thank you for your work on this important committee.
Toni Oklan-Arko
Executive Director of State and Federal Programs, WCCUSD, retired

From: [James Ghidella](mailto:James.Ghidella)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; [Walton, Marcus](mailto:Walton.Marcus)
Subject: FW: changing name of Portola to Fred Koramatsu Middle School
Date: Saturday, June 28, 2014 7:56:10 AM

received this morning

From: Nancy Lemon [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, June 28, 2014 12:19 AM
To: James Ghidella
Cc: Joni Hiramoto
Subject: changing name of Portola to Fred Koramatsu Middle School

JGhidella@psalaw.net

Mr. Jim Ghidella

Chair of WCCUSD Committee on Changing Name of Portola Middle School to Korematsu Middle School

Dear Mr. Ghidella,

My name is Nancy Lemon. For the last 26 years, I have been a Lecturer at Berkeley School of Law, at the University of California. I write in support of the West Contra Costa Unified School District's proposal to change the name of Portola Middle School in El Cerrito to the Fred Korematsu Middle School.

Mr. Korematsu stands for the principle that a U.S. citizen is entitled to due process of law, and that right cannot be taken away on the basis of race, color or creed. He did not sue the government for money or profit. He did not set out to become a civil rights hero. He was an ordinary man who had the strength and courage to challenge the government when it was wrong. History has vindicated him and President Bill Clinton bestowed upon him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998. In 2010 the California Legislature passed AB 1775 which designated January 30 as Fred Korematsu Day in California. Based on these honors, it is appropriate for a school anywhere in the nation, but especially in California, to bear his name.

The WCCUSD has schools named after Martin Luther King, Jr, and Cesar Chavez. Like Fred Korematsu, they were awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for their work to advance the cause of civil rights in this nation. The internment of the 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans was a violation of due process, motivated by war hysteria and lacking in any evidence of disloyalty or espionage by the Japanese and Japanese American community. Although Korematsu's conviction was overturned in 1983, after the *coram nobis* team proved to Judge Marilyn Hall Patel that the original conviction was based on falsified evidence, Fred himself suffered the ramifications of a wrongful conviction -- in lost job opportunities -- for 40 years.

It is entirely appropriate in this instance to name a school after someone who "broke the law." Our hope for the future depends on our children's understanding of civil disobedience, due process of law and courage. It is time to recognize Fred Korematsu, an Asian American whose strength and courage helped our nation redeem its shameful conduct during World War II.

I urge you to support this worthy proposal.

Nancy K. D. Lemon, J.D.
Lecturer, Boalt Hall School of Law
UC Berkeley
Berkeley, Ca. 94720

From: [James Ghidella](mailto:James.Ghidella)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; [Walton, Marcus](mailto:Walton.Marcus)
Subject: FW: Changing Name of Portola to Korematsu Middle School
Date: Monday, June 30, 2014 3:01:59 PM

Received this pm

From: Genevieve Simmons [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 30, 2014 2:01 PM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Changing Name of Portola to Korematsu Middle School

Dear Mr. Ghidella,

My name is Genevieve Simmons, I am a graduate of El Cerrito High, and I strongly support the West Contra Costa Unified School District's ("WCCUSD") proposal to change the name of Portola Middle School in El Cerrito, California, to the Fred Korematsu Middle School.

Mr. Korematsu stood for the principle that a U.S. citizen is entitled to due process of law, and that right cannot be taken away on the basis of race, color or creed. He did not sue the government for money or profit. He did not set out to become a civil rights hero. He was an ordinary man who had the strength and courage to challenge the government when it was wrong. History has vindicated him and President Bill Clinton bestowed upon him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998. In 2010 the California legislature passed and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed AB 1775 which designated January 30 as Fred Korematsu Day in California. Based on these honors, it is appropriate for a public school anywhere in the nation, but especially in California, to bear his name.

This is a chance for this community to stand up and say, "The internment of the Japanese and Japanese Americans from El Cerrito was based on their race. We name this school in honor Mr. Korematsu for standing up to say this was wrong and to show we stand with the Japanese and with ALL AMERICANS to recognize this was wrong and should never happen again."

There are no schools named after an Asian person in this District. The WCCUSD has schools named after Martin Luther King, Jr, and Cesar Chavez. Like Fred Korematsu, they were awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for their work to advance the cause of civil rights in this nation. The internment of the 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans was a violation of due process, motivated by war hysteria and lacking in any evidence of disloyalty or espionage by the Japanese and Japanese American community. Mr. Korematsu's conviction for disobeying the internment order was overturned in 1983, after the coram nobis team proved to Judge Marilyn Hall Patel in federal court in San Francisco that the original conviction was based on falsified evidence. By that time, Fred had suffered the ramifications of a wrongful conviction -- in lost job opportunities -- for 40 years.

It is entirely appropriate in this instance to name a school after someone who "broke the law." Our hope for the future depends on our children's understanding of civil disobedience, due process of law, and courage. It is time to recognize Fred Korematsu, an American citizen whose strength and courage helped our nation redeem its shameful conduct during World War II.

Sincerely,
Genevieve Simmons

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: Fred T. Korematsu
Date: Monday, June 30, 2014 7:29:19 AM

received overnight

From: Yosh [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, June 29, 2014 11:10 PM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Fred T. Korematsu

Mr. Jim Ghidella, Chairman of Committee to Name New Middle School..

My Name is Yosh Murakawa and I've been an El Cerrito resident now for 45 years... My three children were raised in El Cerrito and all attended West Contra Costa Unified School District schools and my youngest was a student at Portola Middle School....I and my family are strong supporters of naming the newly built school the Fred T. Korematsu Middle School..

I, like Fred Korematsu was incarcerated at Topaz, Utah along with all the members of the Murakawa family, all US citizens during WWII. ..My grandparents immigrated to the United States in the late 1890's..

After years of legal battles over his arrest and detention without due process, Mr Korematsu was victorious in his civil rights battle and the court ruled that a U.S. citizen is entitled to due process of the law and that this right could not be taken from him based on race, color, or creed... This legal issue, of course, determined that ALL Japanese-Americans were illegally incarcerated resulting in an apology from the President of the United States and reparation... But Mr. Korematsu's "fight" for his rights and freedom was a fight for all Americans, in the same vain as the historical civil rights battles by African-American leaders, and all peoples struggle for equality and freedom...

The significance of naming the new school in El Cerrito for a Japanese-American "hero" is a powerful one... For years Japanese-Americans have lived in this area, worked hard, and contributed to the community and the economy... And yet for many years they could not live in the hill areas of El Cerrito even in the 50's when Portola Middle School was opened, restricted by racial housing covenants..To me, the name Portola is old history.. It is the U.S. history books of the 40's, 50's and into the 60's that left out so much, or only devoted a few pages to the history of African Americans and slavery and their struggles, to the Native Americans and their "extermination", and to other "minorities"...The 350 page history books of old, perhaps accurate for its time, left out so much, when in fact the history book should have been some 700 pages of more inclusive information...

The Fred Korematsu Day is about Civil Liberties and the Constitution.... Fred Korematsu represents civil liberties, minorities, and all peoples. We live in an area of wonderful diversity and Fred Korematsu represents this diversity....

Education matters; history matters; and change matters... In my mind, this is a done deal....the new school should be named Fred T. Korematsu Middle School...

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: in support of Korematsu
Date: Sunday, June 29, 2014 6:52:00 PM

received this afternoon

From: Claudia & Richard Lindsay [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, June 29, 2014 4:33 PM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: in support of Korematsu

Dear Mr. Ghidella,

My name is Claudia Lindsay and I am a former teacher, now working for WCCUSD in English Learner services.

Mr. F. Korematsu stepped outside the "box" to seek justice for those treated poorly, just as Martin Luther King, Cesar Chavez, and others who are not so famous. The important point is he persevered for justice! Isn't that what our education system should teach our youth?!?!?!?

I highly recommend the committee/School District vote to change Portola to Korematsu.

Thank you,
Claudia Lindsay

[REDACTED] [mailto:\[REDACTED\]](mailto:[REDACTED]) >

From: [James Ghidella](mailto:James.Ghidella)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; [Walton, Marcus](mailto:Walton.Marcus)
Subject: FW: In support of renaming Portola Middle School after Fred Korematsu
Date: Tuesday, July 01, 2014 9:23:12 AM

From: meltsner@gmail.com [REDACTED] on behalf of Ken Meltsner [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 30, 2014 10:05 PM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: In support of renaming Portola Middle School after Fred Korematsu

Dear Mr. Ghidella,

My name is Ken Meltsner. I am a graduate of Kennedy High School way back in 1979 and am now a resident of Wisconsin. I write in support of the West Contra Costa Unified School District's proposal to change the name of Portola Middle School in El Cerrito to the Fred Korematsu Middle School. I have maintained ties to friends in El Cerrito and Richmond, and support their efforts to recognize a genuine American hero, a man who retained his belief in American justice even when that justice was not available for him and others of his national origin.

Mr. Korematsu consistently stood for the principle that a U.S. citizen is entitled to due process of law, and that right cannot be taken away on the basis of race, color or creed. This has been true from when the loss was his freedom during the Japanese internment to his recent support of due process of law for Muslims and other targets of hysteria.

He did not sue the government for money or profit; he was an ordinary man who challenged the government to prove its case against the Japanese. While he was convicted initially, this was overturned because that decision was based on falsified evidence. Nonetheless, he suffered for nearly 40 years and even his family did not know his history.

Time and changing attitudes have caught up with his stance on rule of law. President Bill Clinton bestowed upon him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998. In 2010 Governor Schwarzenegger signed AB 1775 which designated January 30 as Fred Korematsu Day in California. Based on these honors, any school should be proud to take his name, and his example should serve to inspire students, and to reinforce the belief that in America, justice comes to all of us eventually.

The WCCUSD has schools named after Martin Luther King, Jr, and Cesar Chavez. Like Fred Korematsu, they were awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for their work to advance the cause of civil rights in this nation. The internment of the 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans was a violation of due process, motivated by war hysteria and lacking in any evidence of disloyalty or espionage by the Japanese and Japanese American community. It is time to recognize Fred Korematsu, an Asian American whose strength and courage helped our nation redeem its shameful conduct during World War II.

Ken Meltsner
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: Korematsu middle school
Date: Monday, June 30, 2014 3:05:45 PM

received this pm

From: Ken Yamaoka <http://www.fresno.gov/NR/rdonlyres/B9D68408-AECE-40F8-9A28-D6B605BB0825/0/RT26.pdf> [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 30, 2014 2:21 PM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Korematsu middle school

Dear Mr. Ghidella

I Kenneth Yamaoka a former student. Soon to be retired Amtrak employee of 34 years would appreciate the name change. We lived only two blocks from the school. My father was put in camp Amachi. Although he is no longer here to see this. I'm sure he would have loved this.

Thank You
Ken Yamaoka

Sent from my iPhone

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: Name Change of Portola Middle School to Korematsu Middle School
Date: Monday, June 30, 2014 2:57:09 PM

sent this pm _____

From: Donna Davis [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 30, 2014 1:27 PM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Name Change of Portola Middle School to Korematsu Middle School

TO: Mr. Jim Ghidella
Chair of WCCUSD Committee

RE: Name Change of Portola Middle School to Korematsu Middle School

Dear Mr. Ghidella,

My name is Donna Davis, a resident of El Cerrito and strong supporter the West Contra Costa Unified School District's proposal to change the name of Portola Middle School in El Cerrito, California, to the Fred Korematsu Middle School.

Although many may not be familiar with who he is or what he has done, by now you are aware of his history and accomplishments. This proposal is an excellent opportunity to educate and share his legacy with the community-at-large. Not only is it important to acknowledge that this significant civil rights advocate was born and remained in the Bay Area but it can also be a valuable lesson that will teach our children that El Cerrito and the WCCUSD supports the equality of people of all races, color or creed.

As a parent and supporter of public schools, I would be proud to have the new middle school dedicated to Mr. Fred Korematsu.

It is my hope that you and the WCCUSD Committee will vote to pass this historic proposal.

With kindest regards,
Donna Davis

[REDACTED] <[mailto:\[REDACTED\]](mailto:[REDACTED])>

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: Name change of Portola to Fred Korematsu Middle School
Date: Sunday, June 29, 2014 12:34:07 PM

received this am _____

From: May Yamaoka [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, June 29, 2014 11:32 AM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Name change of Portola to Fred Korematsu Middle School

Dear Mr. Ghidella,

My name is May Yamaoka, now retired. I strongly support the West Contra Costa Unified School District's ("WCCUSD") proposal to change the name of Portola Middle School in El Cerrito, California, to the Fred Korematsu Middle School.

Mr. Korematsu stood for the principle that a U.S. citizen is entitled to due process of law, and that right cannot be taken away on the basis of race, color or creed. He did not sue the government for money or profit. He did not set out to become a civil rights hero. He was an ordinary man who had the strength and courage to challenge the government when it was wrong. History has vindicated him and President Bill Clinton bestowed upon him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998. In 2010 the California legislature passed and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed AB 1775 which designated January 30 as Fred Korematsu Day in California. Based on these honors, it is appropriate for a public school anywhere in the nation, but especially in California, to bear his name.

There are no schools named after an Asian person in this District. The WCCUSD has schools named after Martin Luther King, Jr, and Cesar Chavez. Like Fred Korematsu, they were awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for their work to advance the cause of civil rights in this nation. The internment of the 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans was a violation of due process, motivated by war hysteria and lacking in any evidence of disloyalty or espionage by the Japanese and Japanese American community. Mr. Korematsu's conviction for disobeying the internment order was overturned in 1983, after the coram nobis team proved to Judge Marilyn Hall Patel in federal court in San Francisco that the original conviction was based on falsified evidence. By that time, Fred had suffered the ramifications of a wrongful conviction -- in lost job opportunities -- for 40 years.

It is entirely appropriate in this instance to name a school after someone who "broke the law." Our hope for the future depends on our children's understanding of civil disobedience, due process of law, and courage. It is time to recognize Fred Korematsu, an American citizen whose strength and courage helped our nation redeem its shameful conduct during World War II.

Sincerely yours,

May Yamaoka
[REDACTED]
El Cerrito, CA 94530
[REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; [Walton Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: Portola name change
Date: Monday, June 30, 2014 7:21:57 AM

received this morning

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 30, 2014 7:07 AM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Portola name change

Mr Ghidella

I grew up in El Cerrito and went to Portola. As a Japanese-American - I support the name change to Korematsu.

Mr. F. Korematsu stepped outside the "box" to seek justice for those treated poorly, just as Martin Luther King, Cesar Chavez, and others who are not so famous.

The important point is he persevered for justice! Isn't that what our education system should teach our youth?!?!?

For so long the contributions of Japanese to our community has been overlooked - to have this tribute to someone who "did the right thing" is, an important message for our children to be made aware of.

I highly recommend the committee/School District vote to change Portola to Korematsu.

Sincerely

Jacqui Yamaoka

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: Regarding the proposal to name the newly built school, the Fred Korematsu Middle School
Date: Monday, June 30, 2014 7:37:11 AM

received yesterday.

From: Chris Stephenson [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, June 29, 2014 8:26 PM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Regarding the proposal to name the newly built school, the Fred Korematsu Middle School

To: Jim Ghidella, Chairman

From: Chris Stephenson
Email address: [REDACTED]

I am totally in support of the proposal to name the newly built school, The Fred Korematsu Middle School. Mr. Korematsu is a true American hero, and his courage in standing up for what was right is an inspiration and fine example for our children. He has been recognized and honored by the Federal government and by the State of California, and now the WCCUSD has an opportunity to honor him further by naming a school for him. What a wonderful gift and lesson this would be for our children.

From: [James Ghidella](mailto:James.Ghidella)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; [Walton, Marcus](mailto:Walton.Marcus)
Subject: FW: Rename Portola Yes!
Date: Monday, June 30, 2014 6:51:05 AM

received this morning

From: Melina Miyoshi [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, June 29, 2014 10:27 AM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Rename Portola Yes!

Dear Mr. Ghidella,

I am writing in support of the WCCUSD name change of Portola Middle School. I am a lifelong East Bay resident and former school teacher.

Mr. Korematsu stood for the principle that a U.S. citizen is entitled to due process of law, and that right cannot be taken away on the basis of race, color or creed. He did not sue the government for money or profit. He did not set out to become a civil rights hero. He was an ordinary man who had the strength and courage to challenge the government when it was wrong. History has vindicated him and President Bill Clinton bestowed upon him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998. In 2010 the California legislature passed and Governor Schwarzenegger signed AB 1775 which designated January 30 as Fred Korematsu Day in California. Based on these honors, it is appropriate for a public school anywhere in the nation, but especially in California, to bear his name.

The WCCUSD has schools named after Martin Luther King, Jr, and Cesar Chavez. Like Fred Korematsu, they were awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for their work to advance the cause of civil rights in this nation. The internment of the 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans was a violation of due process, motivated by war hysteria and lacking in any evidence of disloyalty or espionage by the Japanese and Japanese American community. Mr. Korematsu's conviction for disobeying the internment order was overturned in federal court in 1983, when Judge Marilyn Hall ruled that the original conviction was based entirely on falsified evidence. By that time, Fred had suffered the ramifications of a wrongful conviction -- in lost job opportunities -- for 40 years.

It is entirely appropriate in this instance to name a school after someone who "broke the law." Our hope for the future depends on our children's understanding of civil disobedience, due process of law, and courage. It is time to recognize Fred Korematsu, an American citizen whose strength and courage helped our nation redeem its shameful conduct during World War II.

Sincerely yours,

Melina Miyoshi

Sent from my iPad
Typos inevitable

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbqglobal.net; [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: renaming Portola Middle School
Date: Monday, June 30, 2014 7:19:16 AM

received this morning

From: Lou Panzella [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 30, 2014 7:14 AM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: renaming Portola Middle School

I support changing the name of Portola to Korematsu MS
Thank you

Lou Panzella
LosMedanosVolleyball
DeerValleyMensVolleball
DiabloValleyVolleyballClub



From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: Renaming Portola Middle School
Date: Friday, June 27, 2014 10:14:36 PM

From: Suzanne Stroh [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 27, 2014 9:12 PM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Renaming Portola Middle School

Dear Mr. Ghidella,

My name is Suzanne Stroh. I am a long-time resident of this area and I strongly support the West Contra Costa Unified School District's ("WCCUSD") proposal to change the name of Portola Middle School in El Cerrito, California, to the Fred Korematsu Middle School.

Mr. Korematsu stood for the principle that a U.S. citizen is entitled to due process of law, and that right cannot be taken away on the basis of race, color or creed. He did not sue the government for money or profit. He did not set out to become a civil rights hero. He was an ordinary man who had the strength and courage to challenge the government when it was wrong. History has vindicated him and President Bill Clinton bestowed upon him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998. In 2010 the California legislature passed and Governor Schwarzenegger signed AB 1775 which designated January 30 as Fred Korematsu Day in California. Based on these honors, it is appropriate for a public school anywhere in the nation, but especially in California, to bear his name.

The WCCUSD has schools named after Martin Luther King, Jr, and Cesar Chavez. Like Fred Korematsu, they were awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for their work to advance the cause of civil rights in this nation. The internment of the 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans was a violation of due process, motivated by war hysteria and lacking in any evidence of disloyalty or espionage by the Japanese and Japanese American community. Mr. Korematsu's conviction for disobeying the internment order was overturned in federal court in 1983, when Judge Marilyn Hall ruled that the original conviction was based entirely on falsified evidence. By that time, Fred had suffered the ramifications of a wrongful conviction -- in lost job opportunities -- for 40 years. This is disgraceful.

It is entirely appropriate in this instance to name a school after someone who "broke the law." Our hope for the future depends on our children's understanding of the positive uses of civil disobedience, due process of law, and courage.

Sincerely yours,
Suzanne Stroh
[REDACTED]

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: renaming Portola School
Date: Friday, June 27, 2014 5:12:50 PM

From: sharlene loretz [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 27, 2014 5:06 PM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: renaming Portola School

I live in El Cerrito close to the old Portola School. I am in favor of the school being named after Fred Korematsu.
He was very brave to stand up for his rights at a very dangerous time for him and all the residents of Japanese ancestry.
We should honor such courage.

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: Renaming Portola to Fred Korematsu Middle School
Date: Monday, June 30, 2014 9:42:36 PM

From: Glenn Davis [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 30, 2014 8:55 PM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Renaming Portola to Fred Korematsu Middle School

Dear Mr. Ghidella,

I am Glenn Davis, an El Cerrito resident who strongly supports the renaming of Portola Middle School to the Fred Korematsu Middle School.

El Cerrito has a rather large population of Japanese-American families for whom this decision is very significant. But it also significant to all residents of our city as we all benefit from the lessons of past injustice and the stories of heroism and individual courage to be learned from the experience and the struggle of Mr. Fred Korematsu. To rename the school in his honor by itself creates a reason to study this powerful chapter of American history, a chapter that shows Mr. Korematsu to be a lone voice for fairness, justice and the rule of law.

Students at the newly renamed school and schools throughout the district, will learn about an average person who said "No" in the face of injustice and continued to fight until his battle was won. His is the American story. During a time when the loyalty of Japanese-Americans was being questioned, the moral position he took carries with it a lesson for us all, even today.

Some, out of convenience, or a misunderstanding of exactly what Mr. Mr. Korematsu stood for may find comfort in keeping things as they are or offering this honor to someone they feel may be more deserving. Certainly I understand their position but after great consideration I find Mr. Korematsu the most ideal candidate based upon his faith in America and his belief that his country would correct the injustice visited upon his people and himself.

I ask that you carefully consider Mr. Fred Korematsu when you choose to rename Portola Middle School. [\[https://ssl.gstatic.com/ui/v1/icons/mail/images/cleardot.gif\]](https://ssl.gstatic.com/ui/v1/icons/mail/images/cleardot.gif)

Sincerely,
Glenn Davis

[REDACTED] >

From: [James Ghidella](mailto:James.Ghidella@comcast.net)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; [Walton, Marcus](mailto:Walton.Marcus@comcast.net)
Subject: FW: Renaming Portola to Fred Korematsu
Date: Monday, June 30, 2014 4:57:37 PM

received this afternoon

From: Donald Ellis [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 30, 2014 4:04 PM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Renaming Portola to Fred Korematsu

Dear James Ghidella,

Regarding the possible name change of Portola Middle School to the Fred Korematsu Middle School, I would agree to the renaming.

When I began kindergarten at Jefferson grammar school in Berkeley in 1946, there were many Japanese American kids beginning kindergarten there with me, but at the time, I was unaware that they may have spent the first few years of their lives in an internment camp during WWII.

In Garfield Jr. High, changed later to Martin Luther King Jr. High, I became aware that many Japanese American citizens had been interned and in fact were some of the kids and parents of the kids I knew. I remember talking about it in various history classes.

At Berkeley High in the late 1950s I wrote an essay for a sociology class titled THE EVACUATION AND RELOCATION OF THE JAPANESE FROM THE WEST COAST DURING WORLD WAR II. I was very much aware that Japanese citizens from this area were sent to the Tanforan Race Track on the Peninsula and moved to various prison camps during the war.

Years later I became a publisher and in 1988 I published Yoshiko Uchida's JOURNEY TO TOPAZ, the story of a young Japanese American Berkeley girl, who with her family, was sent to Topaz Camp in Topaz, Utah with only what they could carry. Try to imagine what you would do as an American citizen being sent to prison just because your ancestor came from another country.

Fred Korematsu fought his imprisonment all the way to the Supreme Court and ended up losing, but upon appeal his case was finally overturned. California has recognized Mr. Korematsu by celebrating the "Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution" each January 30. This great civil rights activist and champion of our civil liberties deserves to be the first Asian American to have a school named after him in West Contra Costa County.

As an El Cerrito resident and the grandfather of twins in Harding School, I encourage the West Contra Costa School Board to unanimously vote to change Portola Middle School to the Fred Korematsu Middle School.

Thank you,

Donald S. Ellis

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: Renaming Portola to Koremitsu Middle--yes!
Date: Sunday, June 29, 2014 6:57:39 PM

received this afternoon

From: Gay Lester [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, June 29, 2014 4:39 PM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Renaming Portola to Koremitsu Middle--yes!

Dear Mr. Ghidella:

I write in support of the proposed name change for Portola Middle School. As an East Bay mother and grandmother with a long history of support of our public schools, I see many reasons why the name Fred Korematsu Middle School is so very right and indeed necessary for our time.

We are a Pacific Rim nation, never more so than here in the Bay Area of California, where we are noted for our diverse population and our long tradition of civil rights activity on behalf of ethnic minorities. Unfortunately our national history also includes the mass denial of liberty to thousands of our Japanese-American citizens during World War II.

The story of Fred Korematsu's 40-year struggle through the courts to overturn his federal conviction for resisting internment plus his subsequent education efforts for civil liberties has been a powerful civics lesson for schoolkids both here and around the country. His message needs to be spread further. Our democracy can mistakenly undermine its stated beliefs—to its great detriment—but it can also correct those errors of judgment and executive action—to its credit—over time. Resisting a bad law—civil disobedience—is not revolution, nor is it any form of treason. Ultimately, resistance often expresses one's deepest love and attachment to country, a patriotism that is forever constant while forever unsatisfied with inhumane or unjust laws.

This is the essence of Korematsu's story, and what a powerful civics lesson it is—for all of us. Our education starts with noting the new name for the reconstructed school: the Fred Korematsu Middle School.

Respectfully,
Elizabeth Lester

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: Renaming Portolan Middle School
Date: Monday, June 30, 2014 7:32:28 AM

received overnight

From: Joanne Sakai [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, June 29, 2014 10:03 PM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Renaming Portolan Middle School

Dear Mr. Ghidella:

I write to add my voice to the many others who support a proposal for the West Contra Costa Unified School District ("WCCUSD") to change the name of Portola Middle School in El Cerrito, California, to the Fred Korematsu Middle School. My name is Joanne Sakai, and I am a Northern California native, third generation Japanese American, and past president of the Asian American Bar Association of the Greater Bay Area.

As a daughter of a Nisei veteran of World War II, I grew up knowing many who had participated in casualty-filled campaigns in France and Italy. They were ordinary men who were only recently recognized for their bravery, sacrifice, and heroism by the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Fred Korematsu was also an ordinary man whose bravery in defying Executive Order 9066 and in choosing to be the face of the uphill legal battle that finally found in 1983 the removal and detention of Japanese Americans from the West in World War II to be unconstitutional. He is not just an Asian American hero, he is an American hero, as demonstrated by President Clinton's award of the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998 and the designation of [January 30](#) as Fred Korematsu Day in California by AB 1775 (2010). Naming a public school to bear his name, especially near his home in Northern California, is such an appropriate and overdue honor.

In closing, WCCUSD has the opportunity to make a decision that reinforces to its students the notion that ordinary people can be heroes by following their hearts and convictions.

Please honor history and Fred. Approve the renaming!

Sincerely,
Joanne Sakai

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: Renaming Prtola JUnior High School
Date: Monday, June 30, 2014 10:59:11 AM

received today

From: Joshua Genser [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 30, 2014 10:48 AM
To: James Ghidella
Cc: Joni Hiramoto
Subject: Renaming Prtola JUnior High School

Mr. Jim Ghidella
Chair of WCCUSD Committee on Changing Name of Portola Middle School in El Cerrito, California, to Korematsu Middle School

Dear Mr. Ghidella,
My name is Joshua Genser. I am a lifelong resident of Richmond, a graduate of Kennedy High, Stanford and UC Berkeley . I am Chair of the Richmond Community Foundation Board of Directors, a member of the Richmond Rotary Club and a past Chair of the Richmond Chamber of Commerce. I write in my individual capacity to support the West Contra Costa Unified School District's ("WCCUSD") proposal to change the name of Portola Middle School in El Cerrito, California, to the Fred Korematsu Middle School.

Mr. Korematsu stood for the principle that a U.S. citizen is entitled to due process of law, and that right cannot be taken away on the basis of race, color or creed. He did not sue the government for money or profit. He did not set out to become a civil rights hero. He was an ordinary man who had the strength and courage to challenge the government when it was wrong. History has vindicated him and President Bill Clinton bestowed upon him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998. In 2010 the California legislature passed and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed AB 1775 which designated January 30 as Fred Korematsu Day in California. Based on these honors, it is appropriate for a public school anywhere in the nation, but especially in California, to bear his name.

Japanese and Japanese Americans from this District, including friends of mine and of my family's, were sent away from El Cerrito and Richmond. This is a chance for our District to recognize the unconstitutional wrong that happened right here in our community and to stand in support of our Japanese American friends and neighbors in a way that we did not 70 years ago.

There are no schools named after an Asian person in this District. The WCCUSD has schools named after Martin Luther King, Jr, and Cesar Chavez. Like Fred Korematsu,

they were awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for their work to advance the cause of civil rights in this nation. The internment of the 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans was a violation of due process, motivated by war hysteria and lacking in any evidence of disloyalty or espionage by the Japanese and Japanese American community. Mr. Korematsu's conviction for disobeying the internment order was overturned in 1983, after the *coram nobis* team proved to Judge Marilyn Hall Patel in federal court in San Francisco that the original conviction was based on falsified evidence. By that time, Fred had suffered the ramifications of a wrongful conviction -- in lost job opportunities -- for 40 years.

It is entirely appropriate in this instance to name a school after someone who "broke the law." Our hope for the future depends on our children's understanding of civil disobedience, due process of law, and courage. It is time to recognize Fred Korematsu, an American citizen whose strength and courage helped our nation redeem its shameful conduct during World War II.

Joshua Genser, Esq.
[REDACTED]

--

Joshua G. Genser
Genser & Watkins LLP
125 Park Place, Suite 210
Point Richmond, CA 94801
Phone: [REDACTED]
Fax: [REDACTED]

www.genserandwatkins.com

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From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: Support for the Fred Korematsu Middle School
Date: Monday, June 30, 2014 3:09:05 PM

From UCLA Faculty Member

From: Renee Tajima-Pena [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 30, 2014 2:36 PM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Support for the Fred Korematsu Middle School

Dear Chair Ghidella,

I am excited to hear that the West Contra Costa Unified School District may change the name of Portola Middle School in El Cerrito to the Fred Korematsu Middle School. Mr. Korematsu is a towering figure in the history of democracy, equality and due process of law. I have no doubt that his legacy will serve as an inspiration and source of pride for the students, families, and teachers at the school and in the district.

By way of introduction, I am a Professor of Asian American Studies at UCLA, the Director of the Center for EthnoCommunications, an Academy Award-nominated documentary filmmaker, and the child of a Japanese American World War II camp internee. For many years I have been steeped in Mr. Korematsu's story, professionally and personally, and I am committed to seeing that future generations learn about his historic act of citizenship and patriotism. Fred Korematsu was an ordinary man who sued the US government on behalf of the civil rights and constitutional protections for all Americans, and without regard to personal gain. He was vindicated by history, as affirmed when President Bill Clinton awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998. In 2010, the California state legislature passed AB 1775, designating January 30 as Fred Korematsu Day. It is fitting that he is recognized by the WCCUSD, alongside schools named after Martin Luther King, Jr. and Cesar Chavez.

I would like to tell you a personal story. When I was a 10-year-old attending California public schools, I once wrote an oral report about my family's World War II experience. My grandfather was a Christian theologian, who came to America to escape religious persecution in Japan. My father and uncles served in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II--in the Military Intelligence Service in the Pacific theater, and with the 100th battalion in Europe. Despite their demonstrated dedication to the ideals of American democracy, my family was first detained in the horse stables at the Santa Anita racetrack, and then imprisoned in an incarceration camp at Heart Mountain, Wyoming. My mother was only in middle school at the time. When I told this story in the oral report, my teacher accused my mother of lying and fabricating the whole history. She told me, "Nothing like that could ever happen in America."

I believe nothing like that will ever happen again, because that history is now being taught to school children and discussed in public forums. We will not repeat the mistakes of that history, because of people like Fred Korematsu had the courage to stand up in the name of justice, even when public opinion and the courts were against him. As you may know, Mr. Korematsu's conviction for disobeying the evacuation order of Japanese Americans was overturned in 1983. By that time, he and the other coram nobis defendants, had already suffered the ramifications of 40 years of a wrongful conviction. But they stood firm.

As the mother of a student in a California public school, and teacher at UCLA, I am deeply aware of the power of stories like Fred Korematsu's for future generations. He is not a man who "broke the law," he is an American who upheld the fundamental ideals that our nation was built upon. I hope you will vote to honor this great man, and the legacy he represents. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Renee Tajima-Peña

Renee Tajima-Peña
Professor, UCLA Asian American Studies Department
Director, UCLA Center for EthnoCommunications
Endowed Chair in Japanese American Studies
3325 Rolfe Hall
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1546
phone: [REDACTED]

From: [James Ghidella](#)
To: charamsey@comcast.net; randallenos@sbcglobal.net; [Walton, Marcus](#)
Subject: FW: Support Letter for Fred Korematsu Middle School
Date: Sunday, June 29, 2014 3:12:10 PM
Attachments: [RAMF-Korematsusupport-062914.pdf](#)

Excellent letter attached

From: Robert Fukushima [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, June 29, 2014 2:16 PM
To: James Ghidella
Subject: Support Letter for Fred Korematsu Middle School

Mr. Ghidella,

Attached is a letter outlining my interest and support for the naming of the new middle school campus in honor of the legacy of Fred Korematsu. Although I now live in San Leandro (interestingly, the city that has already honored Mr. Korematsu) I am still proud of my Richmond and El Cerrito roots and remain connected to the community. I would love to see the new campus with its new name.

Bob Fukushima
Fukushima Landscape Architecture

Tel. [REDACTED]

Email. [REDACTED]

From: [Amy Shinsako](#)
To: [Communications](#)
Subject: Korematsu
Date: Tuesday, July 01, 2014 12:15:24 PM

From: Amy Shinsako
El Cerrito, CA

To: Mr. James Ghidella
Chair of WCCUSD Committee on Naming School Korematsu Middle School

Dear Mr. Ghidella,

I am an El Cerrito resident, graduate of the former Richmond Unified School District schools, parent of a former El Cerrito WCCUSD student, and a retired WCCUSD elementary school teacher. I have heard from several people on both sides of the controversy over naming our new middle school after Fred Korematsu. I have just read the many comments on the committee website. After thinking about and weighing both sides of the argument my personal conclusion is that there isn't a sustainable rationale for naming the new school Portola and many good reasons to name it in honor of Mr. Korematsu.

One of the most frequent arguments is that it has always been Portola and it should just stay that way. Along that same line of thinking is that it is difficult to change the name of schools and present and former students wouldn't like it. In my history as a student of the district they have changed my elementary school from Pullman to King, my junior high school from Granada to what is now Kennedy High School, my high school from Harry Ells to what is now Lavonya DeJean, and the school district from RUSD to WCCUSD. I don't feel any remorse about the changes and today I asked some current students how they felt and they thought it would be a good change for the school.

Another suggestion was that another name might be more appropriate. The one that comes up frequently is Castro. Who was Castro? He was someone who felt more a part of Mexico and fought to oust the French from Mexico while later losing his vast land grant to gambling and subsequently moved to Chile. Other names from our Spanish colonial history have been suggested. There was a time when our history was more Euro-centric and exploration, discovery, and conquest was less nuanced. The history I learned was different from what I know today. When I think of the missions and ranchos I now think of the native Californians who were forced to leave their traditional culture, adapt to a totally different way of life, and some estimate lost 90% of their population. There are other schools in the district honoring Spanish historical figures so they are not being ignored, a fear expressed by some writers.

This conversation over the naming controversy hopefully has been educational for all. I hope that people on both sides of the issue have been listening to each other. Fred Korematsu is deserving of having a school named after him and hopefully those opposed to the new name have learned something about him and have learned to respect that he took a courageous stand for his constitutional rights and continued to fight for those same rights for other minority groups. He isn't just a Japanese American hero, he wanted to assure that all Americans have the same rights and to take those rights away from anyone is not what our country stands for. Other names have been proposed during this process, people worthy of being honored with a school or building named after them. There are schools in El Cerrito with names that could be changed (Harding (a less than exceptional president), Fairmont, Madera). We should look towards having schools in El Cerrito named to reflect our city and country's values.

Sincerely,
Amy Shinsako



ASIAN AMERICANS
**ADVANCING
JUSTICE**
ASIAN LAW CAUCUS

June 30, 2014

Mr. Jim Ghidella
Chair of WCCUSD Committee on Changing Name of Portola Middle School in El Cerrito,
California, to Korematsu Middle School
JGhidella@psalaw.net

Dear Mr. Ghidella,

Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus (“Advancing Justice – ALC”) strongly supports the West Contra Costa Unified School District’s (“WCCUSD”) proposal to change the name of Portola Middle School in El Cerrito, California, to the Fred T. Korematsu Middle School. Founded in 1972, Advancing Justice – ALC is the nation’s first Asian American public interest law organization in the country. We are a founding member of the national civil rights affiliation, Asian Americans Advancing Justice, with sister affiliates in Chicago, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C.

Mr. Korematsu stood for the principle that a U.S. citizen is entitled to due process of law, and that right cannot be taken away on the basis of race, color or creed. He did not sue the government for money or profit. He did not set out to become a civil rights hero. He was an ordinary man who had the strength and courage to challenge the government when it was wrong. History has vindicated him and President Bill Clinton bestowed upon him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998. In 2010 the California legislature passed AB 1775 which designated January 30 as Fred Korematsu Day in California. Based on these honors, it is appropriate for a public school anywhere in the nation, but especially in California, to bear his name.

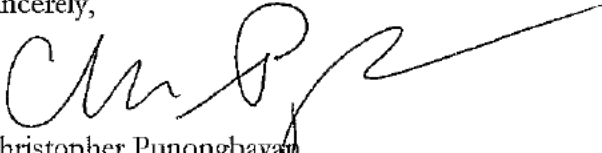
The WCCUSD has schools named after Martin Luther King, Jr, and Cesar Chavez. Like Fred Korematsu, they were awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for their work to advance the cause of civil rights in this nation. The internment of the 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans was a violation of due process, motivated by war hysteria and lacking in any evidence of disloyalty or espionage by the Japanese and Japanese American community. Mr. Korematsu's conviction for disobeying the internment order was overturned in 1983, after the coram nobis team proved to Judge Marilyn Hall Patel in federal court in San Francisco that the original conviction was based on falsified evidence. By that time, Fred had suffered the ramifications of a wrongful conviction -- in lost job opportunities -- for 40 years.

It is entirely appropriate in this instance to name a school after someone who "broke the law." Our hope for the future depends on our children's understanding of civil disobedience, due

process of law, and courage. It is time to recognize Fred Korematsu, an American citizen whose strength and courage helped our nation redeem its shameful conduct during World War II.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions at [REDACTED]
or [REDACTED]

Sincerely,



Christopher Punongbayan
Executive Director



June 27, 2014

RECEIVED

JUL 01 2014

SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Bruce Halter

Mr. James Ghidella

1108 Bissell Avenue

Richmond, CA 94801-3135

Dear Sirs:

As an alumnus, years 1965-68, I have some grave concerns about the proposed name change of Portola Jr. High to Korematsu Middle School.

I am a daughter of parents who were raised during the WWII years. Throughout those years, the Nation unified immensely after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Men went to war, women worked in factories, supplies were rationed and recycling of metals was a household norm. America was living in fear and feared the enemy who were the Japanese. The majority of the Japanese were U.S. citizens who assimilated to the American way of life, but there was distrust with merit. Relocation was the answer. Was it the correct answer; undoubtedly no. However, during WWII it seemed to be the clear solution.

Fred T. Korematsu was an American. He had so much pride as an American that he changed his name and appearance to avoid relocation. I wish I could be as brave! However, Mr. Korematsu's civil disobedience could be deemed as a threat to our National security.

As a retired educator, I fully understand the education of our youth to be critical thinkers and to be able to express their first amendment rights. But in this case, as our WWII veterans are passing on each day, this is clearly not the honorable choice. Above all, the name change would be offensive to our WWII veterans who fought to keep our Nation safe for all of us to enjoy our expression of freedom.

Personally, Portola Jr. High represents the "doorway" to learning. I received an exemplary education and am proud to be an alumnus. In fact, I still can remember many of the names of my great teachers!

Sincerely;

Sally Woolard


Scottsdale, Arizona

RECEIVED

JUL 01 2014

SUPERINTENDENT

Gale J. Lederer

El Cerrito, CA 94530

June 29, 2014

RE: Proposed name change for Portola Middle School

To Whom it May Concern:

I cannot come to any of your meetings to discuss the proposal to change the name of Portola Middle School so as to honor the civil rights icon Fred T. Korematsu, but I heartily support this idea.

As a thirty-year public middle and high school social studies teacher, I had many occasions to discuss Mr. Korematsu's principled stand against massive racism and injustice and his willingness to suffer for his beliefs. My students were always impressed with Mr. Korematsu's intelligence and courage in standing up for what he knew was right, and I feel that naming this school in honor of this true American hero would help the next generation of West County students think more closely about how one person can act on his or her principles, stand up for justice, and make a difference to our society.

My two children, now adult, productive, concerned citizens, attended Madera and Kensington Elementary Schools, Adams Middle School, and El Cerrito High School and experienced many fine teachers. Therefore, as both a teacher and a parent, I think the West Contra Costa County School District should do everything it can to create active, concerned, courageous citizens. It seems to me that this name change honoring Fred Korematsu is most definitely a step in this direction.

Again, I am sorry I cannot attend your meetings, and I hope you will consider my views as presented in this letter.

Sincerely,



Fukushima

Landscape Architecture

June 29, 2014

Mr. Jim Ghidella
Phillips, Spallas & Angstadt LLP

RE: RENAMING OF PORTOLA JR. HIGH SCHOOL TO HONOR FRED KOREMATSU

Dear Mr. Ghidella;

My name is Robert Fukushima, I am writing to express my support for the renaming of the new Junior High School campus from Portola to Fred Korematsu Middle School. From the time my family settled in the United States, we were members of the community in Richmond and El Cerrito, all of my parents' generation were products of the Richmond Schools, as am I, having attended Verde, Broadway and El Monte Elementary Schools, Adams Junior High and John F. Kennedy High School, before going on to graduate from CAL. I received an outstanding education from the school system that I am now asking to honor Mr. Fred Korematsu.

My family is of Japanese ancestry, and prior to 1942, had been growing flowers in Richmond, California for almost 40 years. The events following the events at Pearl Harbor were devastating to my family, and its fortunes. My Grandfather was not given the chance to resist, being arrested as an enemy combatant before even the Executive Order was written. Both my father's family and mother's family were forced to relocated, abandoning their flower growing operations with little notice. The effects of having your country strip you of your rights, and even your basic humanity, cannot be easily forgotten, and in a country that espouses equality and civil rights, the measure of this injustice is still felt by many. People often speak of the economic loss, or the production loss, but, the real cost of the relocation was the sense that your own country considered you to be less of a citizen, by virtue of skin color and ethnicity. There is no doubt that more than 5 years of lost production, the destruction of our houses and production facilities and all of our equipment was problematic, but, the desire to not speak of those things, to hide "our shame", was the real cost to our community.

Mr. Korematsu, in his choice to defy the order, has worn many labels over the years, with even his own community of Japanese people often rejecting his actions. It is very important to note however, that it is through his actions, that we see that civil disobedience, and the act of standing up for your basic American rights, while costly, is worth the cost, in reminding all of us, what we all value about being American. I think there is great value in honoring the small heroes who remind us of what is inherently great about the United States, and while he was not from El Cerrito, he was an American citizen, and in the end, a great person who challenged the government when it stepped over the guarantees in the Constitution. In this way, naming a school after him is an entirely appropriate action, as he remains a symbol of how we each must fight our societal fears and differences.

The WCCUSD represents a population base that includes many ethnicities and cultures, honoring the Japanese and Japanese-Americans; for whom, Mr. Korematsu eventually stood for in front of the opposition of his own government is an entirely worthy use of this rare opportunity to rename the new campus. While it is true that many in the Japanese-American community see Fred Korematsu as our Civil Rights Hero, in truth, he stood for all of us, against the government and in favor of each of us to have the basic inalienable rights each of us are entitled to. In that single way, he deserves this legacy.

PMB 257, 1271 Washington Avenue
telephone [REDACTED]

San Leandro, California 94577
facsimile [REDACTED]

I don't believe that the crux of the renaming should come down to some measure of the population, or simply not wanting to change what has always been. When we choose to honor a legacy with a person's name, I think the valid question is 'did this person make a difference for this community?' and I think it is clear that by standing for his Civil Rights, Mr. Korematsu did exactly this.

Let us take this rare opportunity to honor a person who fought the good fight, one that we still fight today.

Sincerely;

Robert Fukushima

PMB 257, 1271 Washington Avenue
telephone [REDACTED]

San Leandro, California 94577
facsimile [REDACTED]

RECEIVED

JUN 30 2014

SUPERINTENDENT

Let me preface my comments with some questions and observations

What's in a name? A name represents the history of a persons cultural heritage.

Why are you trying to change a name that has a rich historical cultural heritage?

History is history—we are all products of our past which makes us who we are today.

Why are you trying to change the name of Portola Middle School?

Is there something wrong with the name of Portola that has just been uncovered? Is he guilty of something? If so, what?

Why are you rushing to judgement to have a decision ready in this matter by the board meeting on July 9th? Isn't that a little premature.

Schools are on vacation and the school organizations are all closed.

Why are you only concentrating on changing the schools name to one particular individual?

Why have you deleted Kensington School as site for these meetings? After all, Kensington School is a feeder school to Portola.

Why are school board members on this committee? Mr. Ramsey proposed this name change. Isn't it a conflict of interest? Doesn't that show a bias of interest? Is this an impartial process?

Is this just window-dressing to advance someones political agenda?

A small minority is trying to put something over on the larger majority.

Some people believe that this name change is a done deal—no matter what is said here. They feel that any input from them will fall on deaf ears.

Why waste their time? Too bad they have lost their faith in the process.

It seems that this unnecessary name query wrecks with impropriety and a lack of transparency.

From what I have read about Mr. Kurematsu, and the comments made by these committee members during the first two meetings, I wonder if he would approve of the lack of integrity at these proceedings and deme them as an injustice to him and what he stood for.

I really hope that this flawed process will still help to make us all more aware of the contributions of Mr. Kurematsu's legacy. But that is not to say, Portola Middle Schools' name needs to be changed.

Ray Dennen, WCCUSD resident

I will now comment on the WCCUSD criteria for naming a school.

#1. Individuals, living or deceased, who have made outstanding contributions to the WCCUSD or the educational community.

Mr. Korematsu has not made an outstanding contribution to the WCCUSD or the larger educational community. Mr. Gaspar de Portola is an icon in this area.

#2. Individuals, living or deceased, who have made contributions of state, national or worldwide significance.

Mr. Korematsu is not recognized as one of the most prominent and accomplished 20th century state, national or worldwide activists. (As confirmed by various searches). Mr. Portola did things that brought worldwide recognition to his name.

#3. Recognition of the geographic areas in which the school or building is located.

Mr. Korematsu has no connection to the geographic of area of Portola School. Mr. Portola does have a direct connection to this geographic area. In fact, Mr. Portola has strong local historical roots here.

#4. Criteria does not apply.

#5. The renaming of existing schools or major facilities shall occur only under extraordinary circumstances and after through study.

There are no extraordinary circumstances that exist to change the name of Portola Middle School. It has not been established that there has been a through study of this proposed name change.

In summary, the name "Portola Middle School" should be kept. There has been no proven need for any name change.

Ray Dennen, WCCUSD resident