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# **BOARD VOTES TO RENAME PORTOLA MIDDLE SCHOOL AFTER FRED T. KOREMATSU**

RICHMOND—The West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) Board of Education at its meeting on Wednesday night voted unanimously to rename Portola Middle School after Japanese American civil rights icon Fred T. Korematsu.

Board President Charles Ramsey originally suggested the name change, saying that honoring Korematsu is “a reminder that injustice should never be accepted and to teach our children to always stand up against injustice.”

“I am proud that a school in El Cerrito can be a part of the civil rights legacy Mr. Korematsu championed through his willingness to challenge injustice,” Ramsey said. “This is not simply about a name; this is about honoring people who have risked their lives battling injustice and ensuring that our children come to know about their sacrifices.”

The committee tasked to evaluate the name change hosted four public hearings on the subject and the district received hundreds of written and verbal comments from community members before recommending the change to the Board of Education.

During World War II, Japanese-American citizens were ordered to internment camps despite the lack of cause for the detentions. Korematsu was arrested and convicted for defying the internment order. On appeal, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld his conviction. In 1983, the case was overturned in U.S. District Court and President Bill Clinton later awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom. After 9/11, Korematsu spoke out to protect the civil rights of Muslim inmates and U.S. citizens.

The school is currently housed in portable buildings as its new campus is being built on Donal Avenue, four blocks away from its original location on Navellier Street between Moeser Lane and Portola Drive. The school is scheduled to open in its new location in January 2016.