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Board will take up naming schools

By Paul Garber

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Work has already begun on new schools in Clemmons and Walkertown, and tonight the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School board will take another step to give the schools an identity.

The school board will hear a list of 17 suggested names for the Clemmons school and five suggestions for the new combined middle and high school in Walkertown.

A decision on names will likely not be made until the next school board meeting on Oct. 12, said Theo Helm, a spokesman for the school system.

Most of the suggestions have to do with place names in the surrounding community.

The new Clemmons school is being built off Harper Road near a hospital that Novant Health Inc. plans to build. There have been 17 suggested names for the school. Many are for place names nearby, such as Tanglewood, Reynolds Lake and Village Point.

There's also a suggestion to call the school Harper Valley. That may seem like an reference to the hit country song about hypocrisy at the PTA, but actually there's a Harper Valley neighborhood nearby close to Peace Haven Road.

Clemmons council member Larry McClellan suggested naming the school Novant Elementary for the company's effort to develop the land.

The system's three newest schools — Flat Rock, Kimmel Farm and Caleb's Creek elementary schools — were all named for places around them. All three opened in 2009.

Despite that recent trend, there have been recommendations to name the school after people rather than places, including a nod to former local educators.

Barbara Mahannah and others have started a petition drive to name the school after W. Frank Morgan, a former teacher and principal in the Clemmons community for more than 30 years.

Mahannah said Morgan was a fixture in the community during his time as an educator and has remained a vital part of the community since his retirement in 1984.

She also noted that Morgan served in World War II and was a prisoner of war in Germany after the plane he was in was shot down.

She said supporters of naming the school for Morgan will attend tonight's meeting.

There also was a suggestion that the Clemmons School be named after Dalton Folwell, the son of State Rep. Dale Folwell. Dalton Folwell died in 1999 at age 7 when he was struck by a driver who passed a stopped school bus in 1999.

In an interview Friday, Dale Folwell said he was unaware that someone had suggested his son's name for the school, and he opposes the idea.

Folwell, who was a member of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School Board at the time of his son's death, said that when he was a board member he opposed naming schools after people because deserving people invariably get left out.

He also said he didn't want his son's death exalted over the deaths of other children.

Walkertown hasn't graduated a high-school class since the early 1960s, when the former Walkertown High School was switched to a middle school, as the Winston-Salem and Forsyth County school systems merged.

Walkertown High School is one of the suggested names for the school. Another suggestion is to name the school for the high school's former principal, C.O. McLamb.

The alumni of Reynolds High School have suggested naming it after Claude Joyner, a former Reynolds principal.

Another suggestion is to name the school after Palmer Friende. Friende was for years the school system's highest ranking black administrator, and was named to system's associate superintendent — the No. 2 position in the administration — in 1978. He died in 2004.

Both schools are scheduled to open in the fall of 2011, Helm said.

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