

Letters for Citizens' Forum

From Claudia Lynch

To;Dover School Board

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 concerns, please read my email into the record as part of Citizen's Forum:

My name is Claudia Lynch. I have been a Dover resident for 38 years and was the Woodman Park School Nurse for 24 years. I strongly support the Horne Street School renaming proposal. Dover is a wonderfully diverse community with all socio-economic levels represented within our school system. We are challenged to partner and serve our families and students to the best of our abilities on a daily basis.

Fran Hopkins, RN was Horne Street School's nurse for 25 years and served her families well every day! She was a mentor to her faculty, fellow school nurses, and families. She advocated for each student and served as a liaison between families and the health care system. Arranging for extra clothing for students, snacks, transportation to appointments, home visits, NOTHING was too much effort for Fran. Fran also worked tirelessly for the emotional "health" of Horne Street school as a unified institution. She recognized that the school's "heart" was the collective message expressed by the teachers and staff. She strived for improvement, always!

I enthusiastically support the renaming of Horne Street School as "Frances Hopkins Elementary" for the single reason that, especially in this era of conflict, WORDS MATTER.

Love in all things, positive endless energy, good deeds, intentions of hope, and good friend are qualities that the name, Frances Hopkins embodies. As we strive to lift our community out of this difficult time and society finds improved ways of coping, this memorial gesture can ensure that we stay focused on our visions. It was an honor to have worked with her in our friendship!

From Allison Montecalvo

Dear Dover School Board,

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 concerns, please read my email into the record as part of Citizen's Forum. I am honored to be writing to you to share with you why I feel Horne Street School should be renamed "The Francis Hopkins Elementary School."

As I started this letter, I was thinking of my feelings but I was quickly reminded that I was not the only one who was privileged enough to know Mrs. Hopkins. She touched so many hearts and set an example for us all. I am here today sharing with you the words and thoughts of those who love her. Here are a few quotes from letters that were written to Fran when she retired from Horne Street school:

"Thank you for being the calm, steady presence all these years."

“The most useful asset of a person is not a head full of knowledge but a heart full of love, with ears open to listen, enhance willing to help.”

“You have loved and cherished our precious children and their families, meeting multiple needs outside of the realm of school and your job description. You have nursed and cared for us as a staff, and given us many wonderful years of advice and encouragement.”

“You genuinely care about everyone and are even willing to call our husbands when we are out too late with your daughter!”

“Over the years you have been a nurse to me and my boys, a caring figure of my students, a warm smile when I’m having a tough day, a mother who made sure I took care of myself when I was pregnant, and an amazing sounding board.”

“Unbelievable,” a word Fran frequently used is in fact a word that best describes her career and all she has done. Her devotion to her job and her ability to reach out to those around her. Horne Street School was blessed to have her for 25 years.”

Fran Hopkins was more than just a school nurse. She touched so many lives and was the most generous, loving and selfless person. These are just a few reasons why I think Horne Street School should be renamed, not only to honor Fran and her service to our community but as a reminder that we should all try to be more like her. Her light will forever shine on Horne Street School.

Sincerely,
Allison Montecalvo

From Suzanne Weete

To the Dover School Board -

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 concerns, please read my email into the record as part of Citizen’s Forum.

I am writing in support of changing the name of Horne Street School to the Frances Hopkins Elementary School.

My three children all attended Horne Street School while Mrs. Hopkins served as the school nurse. Over those many years we all got to know Mrs. Hopkins, and instantly knew she was not only an exceptionally caring and skilled nurse for all of the children AND staff at HSS but someone who consistently worked to solve larger issues of food insecurity and displayed genuine

compassion for at risk children. Mrs. Hopkins always went well beyond what was required of her role at Horne Street School.

Renaming Horne Street school to the Frances Hopkins Elementary School is a perfect tribute to Mrs Hopkins. Over the 25 years she served as school nurse, she must have cared for over 10,000 children! There are not many people in our town, if any, who could claim a legacy such as this.

She has been and always will remain a bright light to thousands of children and their families in Dover.

Fran's passing has been devastating to her family, friends and all who knew her. But the memory of her care, compassion, quick wit and wisdom will remain within the Dover community for generations to come.

I fully support this fitting tribute of renaming Horne Street School to the Frances Hopkins Elementary School.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal and your service to our Dover school district.

Suzanne Weete

From Natalie Koelmer

I am writing to you in regards to the proposal to rename current Horne Street School after Fran Hopkins, as you probably know lost her battle with COVID-19. Our families are very dear friends and we grew up in each others homes. Fran was one of my Moms closest friends, and we are clearly devastated by her loss. My childhood consisted of her driving many, many carpools, feeding all of us, keeping us all safe but yet gave us the freedom to roam on our bikes and make priceless memories, She was the Mama Bear to all.

This doesn't even begin to describe what she did for all of the children in her community at Horne Street School. She clothed many that had nothing to wear, she fed those that came to school hungry, helped needy families with whatever they needed....and SO MUCH MORE.

How can we appropriately memorialize her to the depth to which she gave all to so many? There aren't enough words, statues, plaques... that could encompass her greatness. But instead put her name on the place she poured her heart into for so many years. She was an incredible example to every child and adult, we should live by her example and give back to her. Keeping her in our hearts forever and reminding all that we should always do more for our community outside of our homes.

Kind regards,

Natalie Koellmer

From Cora and Walter King

We strongly and respectfully urge each and every one in the Dover School Board to adopt Resolution Number R – 2020.07.13 which would designate the second Monday in October as Indigenous People's Day.

Passing the resolution would acknowledge that our City of Dover has been built upon the N'dakina (our land), the term the indigenous people of this region used to refer to their ancestral homelands.

This would also reaffirm the Dover School District's commitment to promote a deeper understanding of and appreciation for indigenous people, towards which much injustice has been done in this country. Indeed, it is more than pass the time that Columbus be removed from his pedestal in our national story.

Thank you to Zachary Koehler for bringing this resolution forward. Thank you for what we hope will be a unanimously passed resolution.

From Kevin and Dee McEneaney

Due to the current Covid 19 concerns, please read my email into the record as part of Citizens Forum.

What a wonderful idea to rename Horne St school after one who put every ounce of her being into loving and caring for every student for many years! Perfectly fitting to honor the beautiful Fran Hopkins, a true Dover patriot and true friend to so many here in our community! If we had to name one who embodied the mission of serving her city and friends, Fran would be at the top of our list. Such a wonderful model of kindness and love she has always shown her kids at Horne St!

It is our wish that this motion will be passed as a loving tribute to a beautiful soul!

Thank you,
Kevin and Dee McEneaney

From Kristine and Bill Baber

Dear School Board Members and Superintendent,

We are writing to urge you to support Zak Koehler's resolution proposing that the second Monday in October be designated as Indigenous People's Day. By taking this action, the School Board would be demonstrating commitment to the values of justice, compassion, and respect for the dignity of all people. Hopefully, the City of Dover and the state will follow your lead and join the other cities and states, including our neighbors of Maine and Vermont and the city of Durham, in addition to some 100 others.

Choosing to observe Indigenous People's Day, rather than Columbus Day, acknowledges that our understanding of history has been flawed and distorted and has obscured the truth about how indigenous people were, and continue to be, treated. Although Columbus may have been an intrepid explorer discovering new lands for colonization by European powers, we are coming to understand the extent of the abuse, genocide, and enslavement of Native Americans that took place during this process. And this is in addition to their ancestral lands being taken from them. Saying we will not continue to celebrate a person who's arrival in the Americas signaled the beginning of such atrocities seems the least we can do.

North America has been home to indigenous people for 20,000 years, yet most of us know little of their history. Dedicating one day to celebrate indigenous people, their contribution, and their culture is a good first step for the School Board to take--again it seems the least we can do. This is a positive action that will provide an ongoing reminder of the need to educate ourselves and our children about not only the true history of how indigenous people have been treated, but also the injustices that continue to exist.

We thank Zak Koehler for taking leadership in proposing this resolution and encourage you to support it. We also hope that the School Board, as a group, will ask the City Council to pass a similar resolution.

Thank you,
Kristine & Bill Baber

From Linnea Nemeth

Good Morning School Board Members,

I would like for my message to be read during the Citizen's Forum in support of the measure to change the Holiday on the second Monday in October from Columbus Day.

As we navigate these difficult times of social unrest and racial inequality, it is important to evaluate the narrative and actions of our own community. As leaders and citizens of the community, we must review the narrative we put out and how we address social inequalities and honor our minority populations. Even more importantly, as the Leaders with the charge of shaping the leaders of tomorrow, we must ensure we set a positive example and stand on the right side of history. That is why I am in support of ending Columbus Day in Dover. I had previously sent this request to City Council, which is detailed below:

The History of Columbus Day in America goes back to the 18th Century. The first celebration occurred in 1792, to celebrate the 300 Year Anniversary of what was then believed to be the first European explorer in the Americas, or when America was “discovered”. This was organized by New York’s Columbian Order, or what would later be known as the Tammany Hall political group. It is important to note that during this period of history, colonization was at it’s peak and slavery was still legal.

In 1937, after extensive lobbying from the Knights of Columbus, President Franklin D. Roosevelt made Columbus Day a federal holiday. In the years since, we have seen progress in equality in the Civil Rights Act, the Indian Child Welfare Act, and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, and many others. Yet, Columbus Day remains a federal holiday that honors a man that not only committed human rights offenses but also put into action centuries of mistreatment of the native people of the Americas and African slaves.

Columbus arrived in the Bahamas in 1492, on a voyage to discover a new passage to India and the Middle East for the Spanish Crown. Despite the rhymes we learn in school that imply he “discovered” America, Columbus never set foot on the Continental United States, or any territory that has come into statehood. In 1494, Columbus set up a colony on the island of Hispaniola, or what is now modern day Haiti and the Dominican Republic. That same year he sent enslaved Tainos from the island back to Spain to be sold into slavery. Within a year, thousands of Tainos were put into slavery.

A new global trade route across the Atlantic would come to be known as the Columbian Exchange. It would open doors between the Eastern Hemisphere and the Western Hemisphere for trading. One of the most lucrative enterprises to come out of this would be the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. The first enslaved Africans were brought to the Americas in 1503, soon after Columbus helped to establish a colony for the Spanish. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, or Middle Passage, would continue until the 19th Century. Over the course of those 400 years, 11 million people would be taken into slavery across the Atlantic. To this day, we continue to feel the repercussions of this injustice.

In 1977, participants in the UN International Conference on Discrimination recommended ending Columbus Day. Over the next few decades, cities and states would start to follow this guidance. Instead of honoring Columbus, many would choose to use the day to honor and recognize that the Native Americans were the first inhabitants of the Americas. In 1990, the state of South Dakota decided to stop honoring Columbus Day, and moved to Indigenous People’s Day. Two years later, Berkeley, CA would be the first city to do so as well. Since then,

multiple states and cities have voted to do the same. Currently, the states of Vermont, Maine, New Mexico, Alaska, South Dakota, Oregon, Hawaii, Louisiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, North Carolina and Washington D.C have voted to change Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day. Additionally, 61 cities have also followed suit, including Durham and Hopkinton, NH.

Moving from Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day is not about changing the past because it makes us uncomfortable. This is about ensuring that the America and Dover of the future honors figures that have positive impacts on our society, while embracing diversity and acknowledging those who lived in America before it was titled "America ". In Dover, the Abenaki lived in the region before it was settled by European Colonists in the 17th Century. As a city, we discuss and celebrate our European heritage and history extensively, but not many people know much about the Abenaki.

By voting to change the second Monday in October in Dover to Indigenous People's Day, we take a step forward towards honoring our native communities and discouraging the memorials of figures that have contributed to social inequalities. I encourage you to take this recommendation to heart, as we look for ways to bring our community together and take action on eliminating racism and bias.

Thank you for the time in reading my comments.

Sincerely,
Linnea Nemeth
21 Taylor Road
Dover, NH 03820

From David McLean

It is an honor to be able to write as to the impact Fran Hopkins had in helping the children and families of Horne Street School community over the past thirty years. First, let me introduce myself. I retired as a Captain with the Dover Fire & Rescue in 2007, after serving twenty seven years providing fire and emergency medical services to the citizens of Dover. For several decades I also spearheaded Dover Fire Department's Toys for Tots program, which became known as the Dover Fire Toy Bank. This is how I came to know Fran.

In 1975, Former Dover Fire Lieutenant Mone founded the Dover Toys for Tots program. It was soon thereafter that Fran became an integral part of the program. She also collaborated with the Toy program to ensure that kids not only had toys at Christmas, but that they had the appropriate clothing during the winter, books for school, food in their stomachs and, to the best of her ability, the health and wellness that is required for young people to learn.

She cared deeply for the kids with whom she worked, but also their families. There are several examples that illustrate this point. During the 1990's, Fran called me to see how we might be able to help a family who was struggling with a lice infestation in their home. The family was indigent and struggled to get the health and cleaning supplies they needed. So, when she called, she wanted to figure out how to help the family. She worked with us to get the medication the family needed, but also the cleaning supplies they needed in order to clean their home. The family—and the kids—were eternally grateful. It did not matter what issue a child or family came to her with. She had unbounded compassion for people. If someone was in need of help, she was there.

As a school nurse, her foremost concern was making sure that kids had the essentials they needed to learn: enough food for the stomachs and seasonally appropriate clothing. Families were constantly in need, and she was always there to help. Every year, we could always count on a phone call from Fran to seek help in getting these dozens of families in our community the clothes they needed to get through the winter. She cared deeply for each and every one of them. She not only wanted to make sure they had the basic necessities, but wanted to make sure they had the love and care that was also needed to help the kids grow and learn.

Fran did not want accolades for her work. She did it because it was the right thing to do, and because she wanted the best for the kids in her community. She was an example of how every school nurse—and every human—should act: with love and compassion for those around her.

I cannot think of anyone who would be deserving of this renaming more than Fran. This posthumous honor would let the generations of students to come know who she was and the values of kindness, decency and care for others that are so important at this school and throughout the community. I strongly urge the Dover School Committee to rename Horne Street School in honor of Fran Hopkins.

With deep respect,

David McLean

From Linda Merullo

Zach is bringing forth a resolution to rename Columbus Day to Indy day. So how is this a school issue? Seems like he is bringing his personal beliefs and political views before the Council. Zach, do you plan on renaming every street that doesn't agree with you in Dover? Are you renaming Columbus Ave, Washington Street and others based on historical hearsay, whether facts or rumors? Just because other cities or towns have destroyed history, doesn't mean we have to go along with it. You should be VERY concerned about school openings, budgeting and

EVERYTHING related to school issues. I'm surprised that you would do this as a school board member because it has nothing to do with running the school system.

Please 'abolish' this resolution and do not go along with the status quo before you decide how much history of Dover you want to erase. Are we renaming the paper? Taking down historical figures? Removing grave stones? Everything is a political rant nowadays and I'm fed up with it. When the school and city start politicizing their beliefs and forcing the citizens by resolutions to do this or that for what they believe in personally, it's a sad time indeed.

Do not destroy history. Otherwise, we can never learn from all the lessons - whether good or bad.

From: Jack Buckley

Please add my name in support of renaming Horne Street School (HSS) in honor of Fran Hopkins, a long time nurse at HSS who recently passed away as a result of COVID-19. Having lived in Dover my entire life, I cannot think of any individual who has had a more positive impact on the lives of those students educated at HSS than Fran Hopkins.

Some may argue that schools should not be named after people but I would strongly disagree. Schools should in fact be named after those who have inspired our students to fulfill their dreams, become better adults and give back to their communities.

As a result of the pandemic that is currently affecting millions of Americans, 2020 is a year that none of us will ever forget. Renaming HSS after Fran Hopkins will be a reminder to us all of the strength and endurance of our nation and our ability to persevere and overcome whatever obstacles may come our way.

Thank you for your consideration! Jack Buckley