

**SOPHIE HAHN**

Berkeley City Council, District 5
 2180 Milvia Street, 5th Floor
 Berkeley, CA 94704
 (510) 981-7150
 shahn@cityofberkeley.info

CONSENT CALENDAR
 December 1, 2020

To: Honorable Members of the City Council
 From: Vice Mayor Sophie Hahn (Author)
 Subject: Resolution calling on the BUSD Board and Superintendent to Consider
 Renaming Thousand Oaks Elementary to Kamala Harris Elementary School

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution calling on the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) Board and Superintendent to consider initiating a process, pursuant to [BUSD Board Policy and Administrative Regulation 7310](#), to rename Thousand Oaks Elementary School to Kamala Harris Elementary School in honor of Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris.

BACKGROUND

On Tuesday, November 3, 2020, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris were elected as the next President and Vice President of the United States, having received the largest number of votes in U.S. history. Vice President-Elect Harris is the first African American and Indian American woman to be elected to the Office of Vice President or President.

Kamala Harris was born in 1964 to two graduate students at the University of California, Berkeley -- her mother, Shyamala Gopalan Harris, from India and father, Donald Harris, from Jamaica. As Senator Harris said in the speech accepting the Democratic Party's nomination for Vice President, she "got a stroller's-eye view" of the civil rights movement of the 1960s as her parents marched for justice in the streets of Berkeley.

Kamala Harris grew up in West Berkeley and [attended](#) Thousand Oaks Elementary School in District 5. She was in the second class to be part of the [Berkeley school integration program](#) -- an innovative two-way busing plan designed to fully integrate Berkeley's public schools. As Vice President-Elect Harris wrote in her 2019 memoir *The Truths We Hold*, "I only learned later that we were part of a national experiment in desegregation, with working-class black children from the flatlands being bused in one direction and wealthier white children from the Berkeley hills bused in the other."

In a statement to [Berkeleyside](#), Vice President-Elect Harris credited her first grade teacher at Thousand Oaks, Mrs. Frances Wilson, with having a profound effect on her and being deeply committed to the diverse group of students in her class. She has written about her fond childhood memories of visiting the Rainbow Sign in Berkeley, where she met artists and activists, and spending afternoons cleaning test tubes at Berkeley Labs.

After moving away from Berkeley at the age of 12, Kamala Harris went to High School in Montreal, Canada and then graduated from Howard University in Washington DC and earned a

law degree from the University of California, Hastings in San Francisco. She has dedicated her career to public service, serving as a prosecutor in Alameda County, as the first African American and Indian American woman to be elected as San Francisco District Attorney, and as the first African American and Indian American woman to be elected California Attorney General.

In 2016, Kamala Harris was the first African American and Indian American woman to be elected to the U.S. Senate. Since taking office as one of California's two women Senators, Vice President-Elect Harris has served with distinction and has been a powerful voice for justice and accountability.

On November 7, 2020, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris were declared the winners of the 2020 Presidential election, winning more than the 270 electoral votes necessary to be elected as the 46th President and Vice President of the United States.

This resolution celebrates Kamala Harris, an African American and Indian American woman, daughter of immigrants, student of Berkeley Unified School District public schools, and accomplished public servant, and offers congratulations on her election as Vice President of the United States.

It further calls on the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) Board and Superintendent to initiate a process, pursuant to [BUSD Board Policy and Administrative Regulation 7310](#), to rename Thousand Oaks Elementary School to Kamala Harris Elementary School in honor of Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Vice Mayor Sophie Hahn, Council District 5, 510-682-5905 (Cell)

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

CONGRATULATING KAMALA HARRIS ON HER ELECTION

AS VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES AND CALLING ON THE BERKELEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT TO CONSIDER RENAMING THOUSAND OAKS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TO KAMALA HARRIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

WHEREAS, on Tuesday, November 3, 2020, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris were elected President and Vice President of the United States, having received the largest number of votes in U.S. History, over 75 Million, and winning more than the 270 electoral votes necessary to be elected;

WHEREAS, Kamala Harris is the Vice President-Elect of the United States, becoming the first Woman, the first African American, and the first South Asian-American to be elected to the office of Vice President, and the first Woman ever to be elected to the Presidential ticket;

WHEREAS, the election of Kamala Harris as Vice President is a momentous event with unprecedented historic significance, providing hope and inspiration to millions of people, and in particular to girls and young people of color, across the United States and around the world;

WHEREAS, Kamala Harris grew up in Berkeley and attended Thousand Oaks Elementary School as part of the second class to go K-12 under Berkeley Unified School District's voluntary integration program;

WHEREAS, Kamala Harris credits her first grade teacher, Mrs. Frances Wilson at Thousand Oaks Elementary School, with having a profound effect on her and being deeply committed to her diverse group of students;

WHEREAS, Kamala Harris lived in Berkeley until age 12, spending her childhood learning about activism, and spending time at The Rainbow Sign, a Black cultural center that served as a bridge across all borders—ethnic, national and political, on what is now Martin Luther King Jr Way;

WHEREAS, Thousand Oaks School has already honored Kamala Harris and other outstanding women and girls with a mural and a dedication ceremony including speeches, plays, and other commemorations for "Women and Girls Who Make an Impact";

WHEREAS, Berkeley Unified School District, in Administrative Regulation 7310, has an established process for naming schools in honor of "[i]ndividuals, living or deceased, who have made contributions of state, national or worldwide significance" and lays out a process for naming schools, "under extraordinary circumstances, after thorough review," that can be initiated by the School Board or Superintendent, among others;

WHEREAS, the BUSD process for reviewing existing names of schools includes examination of "whether the individual, on the whole, has made outstanding contributions to the community or

made contributions of state, national or worldwide significance in light of the Berkeley community's values and contemporary view on history”;

WHEREAS, Kamala Harris referenced the historic nature of her election as Vice President in her victory speech on November 7, 2020, in Wilmington Delaware, when she honored the “generations of women — Black women. Asian, White, Latina, and Native American women throughout our nation’s history who have paved the way for this moment”;

WHEREAS, Kamala Harris also spoke powerfully and directly to the children of the United States, stating that “regardless of your gender, our country has sent you a clear message: Dream with ambition, lead with conviction, and see yourself in a way that others might not see you, simply because they’ve never seen it before”;

WHEREAS, Kamala Harris referenced the need to acknowledge the contributions of all women “who fought and sacrificed so much for equality, liberty, and justice for all, including the Black women, who are too often overlooked, but so often prove that they are the backbone of our democracy”;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The Berkeley City Council honors and celebrates the election of Kamala Harris to the Office of Vice President of the United States of America, and congratulates both President-Elect Biden and Vice President-Elect Harris for winning the 2020 Presidential Election with more votes than any ticket in the history of the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT: The Berkeley City Council calls upon the BUSD Board and Superintendent, pursuant to BUSD Board Policy and Administrative Regulation 7310, to initiate a review of the name of Thousand Oaks Elementary School and consider renaming the school to Kamala Harris Elementary School, in honor of former student and Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT: The City Clerk is hereby directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Office of Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris, President-elect Joe Biden, Senator Dianne Feinstein, and Representative Barbara Lee.