

Fossil Ridge High

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School name, version 2.0 represents a compromise

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After months of playing the name game, the Poudre Board of Education in its Monday night meeting named Fossil Ridge as the new high school.

The board chose Fossil Ridge over Redstone and Fossilcreek in a 6-to-0 vote.

The decision came after a recall petition by students, who were unhappy by the board's initial decision in April to name the school Harmony High School.

The students gathered 1,785 signatures for the petition in nine hours.

Chad Piper, 13, was part of the group that spearheaded the efforts to change the name.

Piper said he felt "awesome" about the board's decision.

"It's fun to try and do something we really wanted to do, and it happened," Piper said. "It's fun to make history."

Students felt the name Harmony would not reflect student pride, and they said other students would heckle them.

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What's in a name?

Poudre School District traditionally names high schools based on geographic or historically significant locations. Here's a breakdown of the naming controversy:

■ A naming committee, made up of 18 PSD students and staff and community members, brought three recommendations — Fossil Creek, Harmony and High Plains — to the PSD Board of Education for consideration. Fossil Creek was considered the most-favored choice for the new facility.

■ In late April, Fort Collins High School students and school officials complained that the name Fossil Creek High School would carry the same initials as their school, prompting the school board to take a fresh look at the recommendations.

■ On April 29, the school board voted 5-2 to name the school Harmony, a historic farming community in southeast Fort Collins.

■ On June 9, the board decided to reject the Harmony name and try again after it was presented a petition carrying 1,785 signatures. But the board placed two stipulations on the next round. Harmony would not be allowed to be considered again, and the new school could not have FCHS initials.

Fossil

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The name Fossil Ridge will reflect the Poudre School District's tradition of naming high schools after historical and geographical significant locations.

The word fossil, which dominates landmarks in the community, is also recognized in Colorado by the Fossil Ridge Wilderness Area located in the Gunnison National Forest. The area is known for its granite and limestone ridges, as well as alpine lakes and valleys.

There is only one other high school that bears the name; it is near the Fort Worth/Dallas Texas area.

"I think the students who will be attending the new high school are going to be really glad it's going to be named Fossil Ridge," said Brett Anderson, 13, who will be a student at the new school.

Board Vice President Jana Ley told the students their energy and dedication to following the democratic process impressed her.

"It's a hard thing to do, but you did it well," Ley said.

Fossil Ridge High School is planned to open at 5400 Ziegler Road in the fall of 2004.