

Kids Get School Named for Obama



Some students at Ludlum Elementary School in Hempstead, New York, were so happy when Barack Obama was elected president that they wanted to honor him in a special way. So the students, with help from some teachers, convinced the local school board to rename their school after Obama. Most of the school's 466 students are African-American or Hispanic and were very excited that Obama won the election. Obama is the first African-American to be elected U.S. president.

As part of their “campaign,” students wrote essays explaining why the school should be renamed and read them to the school board. Samantha Albrez, age, 10, told the board that “Barack Obama represents our diverse nation and so does our school.”

All five school board members agreed with the students, and voted to change the school’s name to Barack Obama Elementary School. The school was renamed right away, but it still needs a new sign. Some think the elementary school is the first in the U.S. to be named after Obama.

NEWS WORD BOX

campaign	essay
represent	mock
diverse	unveil

Students at the school followed the presidential election very closely. Fifth graders took part in a debate in which students played the parts of Obama, the Democratic candidate, and John McCain, the Republican candidate. Third, fourth, and fifth graders also cast votes in a mock presidential election.

MORE FACTS ABOUT OBAMA ELEMENTARY

- A ceremony will be held in February 2009 to make the renaming official.
- A new sign with the school’s new name will be unveiled at that time.
- Students hope New York’s governor, David Paterson, will attend the ceremony. Paterson is New York’s first African-American governor, and he graduated from Hempstead High School.
- Hempstead is on Long Island, about 25 miles east of New York City.

THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

Imagine your community is considering a new name for a school.
Write the essay that you might present to the school board.