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PROPOSED CHARTER SCHOOL TO CHANGE ITS NAME
IN TIME FOR PROJECTED SEPTEMBER, 2010 OPENING

The planning committee of the first kindergarten-through-eighth-grade charter school proposed for Staten Island has announced that the school will change its name. Effective immediately, the former Barack Obama Community Charter School will be known as Staten Island Community Charter School.

The committee informed the White House last February of its desire to name the new charter school in honor of the new president. In its reply, received only very recently, the Obama Administration informed the group of a long-standing White House policy disallowing use of the president's name or likeness while he remains in office. During this period, the group also learned of a New York State law that prohibits naming institutions and facilities for a living person without that person's permission.

"We're disappointed, of course, that our new school won't have the president's name attached to it," said Lorna Harris of Silver Lake, one of the proposed school's planning committee members and the former interim director of the Council on the Arts and Humanities for Staten Island.

Harris explained that the president's name was originally chosen because it was such a good fit. "We chose the name," she said, "because the president's values and the foundational values of our school are so closely aligned. We also chose the name because of the inspiration of the president's life story. Those values and that inspiration will now be part of our school culture as Staten Island Community Charter School."

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