

John Walton Spencer School No. 16 Renamed in Honor of Dr. David and Ruth Anderson



The Rochester City School District is pleased to announce the Board of Education has voted to rename John Walton Spencer School No. 16 in honor of Dr. David and Mrs. Ruth Anderson. Dr. David Anderson, a renowned Frederick Douglass historian, has an incredible legacy of making long-term contributions to the public understanding and appreciation of African-American history, culture, and heritage. A former visiting scholar at Nazareth University's School of Education and the College of Arts and Sciences, Anderson has received the Liberty Medal, which is New York's highest civilian honor given to recipients for lifetime achievement and exceptional community acts. He has built strong relationships in Rochester through his work with the Urban League of Rochester and Action for a Better Community.

Ruth Anderson, an elementary teacher in the Rochester City School District for 23 years, earned her teaching certification from the University of Rochester and a Master of Science Degree in Education from Nazareth University. During her teaching career in Rochester, she produced educational materials, including "Our Stories/Our Selves 19th Century Afro-Rochester," a multi-media interactive curriculum. She has served as Executive Director of AKWAABA: the Heritage Associates, Inc., a non-profit educational

organization founded in 1999 to perpetuate the history of the Underground Railroad in the Rochester area.

Superintendent Dr. Carmine Peluso said, "We are deeply honored to rename this school in tribute to Dr. David and Ruth Anderson. They are two remarkable individuals with a lifelong commitment to education and African-American history. Generations of students will know and understand their impact on our city's history and culture."

"I am honored to have been contacted by our community leaders and answer their call to honor Dr. David and Mrs. Ruth Anderson," said Camille Simmons, Board of Education Commissioner. "Our students must know and understand the legacy of these two phenomenal leaders and, in turn, demonstrate the expectations of excellence."

For John Walton Spencer School No. 16 to be renamed Dr. David and Ruth Anderson School No. 16, a petition with more than 100 signatures was presented to the Board of Education asking for a name change to be considered. As a result, a community forum was held on August 24, 2023, where six speakers participated.

Source: Rochester City School District, September 28, 2023