



Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

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## Submission to Change the Name

1 message

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 [mccarthy.mich@yaho.com](mailto:mccarthy.mich@yaho.com)   
To: "commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org" <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 2:33 PM

To whom it may concern,

Attached is a letter to change the name of the school district.

Thanks.



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 **Ltr to School Bd, McCarthy.pdf**  
37K

February 1, 2019

Board of Trustees  
Dixie School District  
380 Nova Albion Way  
San Rafael, CA 94903

Dear Board Members,

This letter is to request that you vote to change the District's name.

First of all, I am both a resident of the District and a parent of two children currently attending schools in the District. Additionally, I have examined the available evidence and am convinced that the District is in fact named after the Southern States, and more disturbingly, the Confederate States of America.

I believe the District's name should be changed for two reasons. First, it is absurd for a school district in Marin County, California to have a name burdened with the negative historical connotations of "Dixie." Although born and raised in California, for more than 20 years I lived in states that once belonged to the Confederacy. During those years I learned what people often meant when they talked about "the good old days" and "Dixie." To me, and may others, "Dixie" stands for slavery, the Civil War, the Lost Cause Movement, and the unequal treatment of African-Americans. Why do we want the name of our school district to be a constant reminder of this unfortunate past?

Finally, this contentious issue will simply not go away until the name is changed. If you do not vote to change the name, this controversy will continue to occupy an excessive amount of your time for years to come.

Sincerely,

  
San Rafael, CA 94903



Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

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## DON'T change the name of our school district

1 message

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 1:57 PM

To: "commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org" <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

As a parent of a child in the Dixie School District, I'm appalled by the allegations that some out-of-district Change the Name activists are making about our school district and community. They are groundless, and attempts to re-name the district should be rejected by the board. Politics is at work here, and divisive politics should not be allowed to poison our schools and community.

I'm told that only the board, and not the public, will be voting on the petitions to re-name the district – the public can only offer comments. I recently found out about this matter, and coming to the board meeting next week in the hopes of getting a two-minute slot is difficult not only me, but many others who have inflexible work schedules, are single parents who find it hard to free-up the time, and those who just don't want to experience the ugly spectacle that the Change the Name people have created. The public deserves the right to weigh in on this matter that is critical to our community. It should be included on the ballot in the Fall election.

Please accept my comments.

  
resident of Terra Linda

Sent from Outlook

I have to say to change the name of Dixie School, a historical school district in San Rafael on the believe that it is a confederate name is absolutely over kill and ridiculous.

California was not a confederate state for one. The word Dixie comes from the Creole/French word dix, ten on one side issued ten dollar notes.

I went to this school district for my entire youth, The thing is we never had any sort of racism which was rare from what I learned later. The Dixie school district in the 60s were hiring African American staff. Clearly not racist.

I remember Mrs. Brockenburgh a black school nurse, RN and how she smelled so good. She was there during my time at Benard Hoffman in the 1960s-the 70s We never used racist terms, understood it or heard of it.

Are we having to have to change every name that people have to find offensive? Do these people have nothing else better to do? Should we change the name of the Dixie cup? Call the band The Dixie Chicks and tell them their name is offensive? How about Jackson Street in San Francisco named after a murderous president who massacred the American Indians and burned the women and children alive in their huts?

I am for keeping the name Dixie School District. We should be proud of how this school never endorsed racism especially at a time when this nation was still showing racial intolerance.

Sincerely

A thick black horizontal bar redacting the signature of the author.



Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

letter regarding keeping the name.

1 message

[Redacted] <[Redacted]> Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 1:46 PM  
To: "Commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org" <Commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

----- Forwarded Message -----  
[Redacted]  
To: We Are Dixie <werdixie@gmail.com>  
Sent: Friday, February 1, 2019, 11:53:52 AM PST  
Subject: Re: Friendly reminder: 🙏 PLEASE get those letters out

Here it is:)

On Friday, February 1, 2019, 10:58:57 AM PST, We Are Dixie <werdixie@gmail.com> wrote:

Yes I believe that is ok to do.

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 1, 2019, at 10:36 AM, Rozanna Ogneva <ogneva@yahoo.com> wrote:

Hi  
I did send my response. Can I just make a attachment and send it?

Best  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted] zanna.com

On Thursday, January 31, 2019, 1:26:14 PM PST, We Are Dixie <werdixie@gmail.com> wrote:



Just wanted to send a quick but **IMPORTANT REMINDER** that letters to the school board regarding the Dixie name change issue are **now due** and every letter counts. **PLEASE** submit your letter (and encourage other family

*members and friends to) within the next day or two. If you've already submitted your letter, thank you!*

*Finally, we've included our original correspondence regarding the letter (where to send it, suggested topics) below. If you would like a pre-written template letter to work from, simply reply directly to this email and we'll get one over to you right away.*

*THANK YOU --- We Are Dixie*

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Thank you so for your support! We are now asking all our supporters, especially all Dixie District Residents, to **write a letter to the superintendent and board.**

While we apologize in advance for the length of this email regarding this issue, we would ask you to please read thru it in full since it's very important everyone abides by the letter writing "rules" that have been established by the district. Before we outline the rules, we wanted to let you know that **any previous letters sent to the board will NOT be counted in this process for the board to consider in their decision regarding the district name change.**

THEREFORE, it is advised that you resend previous letters you may have written to the board on this topic. Another idea would be to send the board your speech that you have made at a previous board meeting in the form of a letter since it is already written and should be considered again. If you write a letter and e-mail it then please **adhere to these specific rules:**

- 1. Deadline:** You MUST submit the letter between **January 24<sup>th</sup> - February 4<sup>th</sup>**. Any submissions either after or before that date will not be considered.
- 2. Email Address for Letters:** All letters MUST be sent to only one email address which is [commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org](mailto:commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org) . Do NOT send to other email addresses or your letter will not be read or considered.
- 3. Please put both your NAME and ADDRESS on the letter. If you are resident of the Dixie School District please also indicate HOW LONG you've lived in the District.** If you live out of the area but are a Dixie SD alumni please note it in the letter even if you don't live here anymore.  
Locals matter!

*With those ground rules out of the way, let's get to the task at hand!*

## WHAT SHOULD I WRITE ABOUT?

We are encouraging our supporters to stick to a very focused message. Your letter should focus on one of the 5 below topics. Stay focused on one topic so it is easy for the board to understand and read and to make a very targeted point. Here are the topics and points we are hoping to focus on:

**1. IT IS IRRESPONSIBLE TO ASK NEW BOARD MEMBERS TO MAKE SUCH A BIG DECISION. THEY ARE NOT YET QUALIFIED.** In

November 2018, a very seasoned board voted 4-1 to take this issue to a democratic advisory vote within the Dixie School District community as it was too big for them to decide on their own. This was not a decision they took lightly. You can see the highlights from the board meeting here <https://wearedixie.org/dixie-board-meeting-videos/> . But one month later, two brand new board members, along with the sitting members, were presented with 13 petitions to change the name of the district (only 15 signatures were required to submit a petition). We feel sorry for the board to be faced with such a divisive topic and that our two newest members were bombarded with this only two weeks into their term. It is clear the petitions were strategically served to take advantage of the novice members, and that is unacceptable. Typically, the first six months of a new trustee's tenure is spent learning about process, budgets and teamwork. Instead they are being forced to make such a monumental decision that will have a long-term effect on our district and our community without having the experience. Asking them to make a decision on changing the name of a 150 year old district without truly hearing from their 14,200 constituents is irresponsible. We feel the two new board members need more time in their positions and time to hear from the entire community before they can be prepared to make such a decision.

**2. THIS COMMUNITY NEEDS TO BE HEARD AND A VOTE WILL PROVIDE THE BOARD WITH A COMPREHENSIVE AND ACCURATE STANDPOINT.** Unfortunately, from the start, our amazing community has

been left out of the process. Additionally, some community members are now in fear of speaking out publicly. You have a rogue board member who has not taken a position of 'kids first' in their approach. At every turn their reflexive direction has been towards media grabs and punches that hurt our community, and away from the priorities that have historically

supported and funded the classroom. This activity robs children of the promise adults in our community have made to educate students

3. **#NotLikeThis** Our peaceful community has been dragged through the mud. Our kind and generous community has turned toxic. All of this has been driven by a very small group of people, including one school board member, who want to change the name of our district. The pattern of their behaviors is reprehensible and should not be tolerated or rewarded. The Change the Name (CTN) group has contacted every media outlet they can and have attempted to make our small-town national news. They are trying to frighten this community into silence by threatening lawsuits against the school district and local community members and calling them names that are not true in order to get their agenda pushed through. The We Are Dixie group has not reached out to one news source and has tried to keep this issue local. The tactics to change the name have been dirty and extremely toxic to our community. Changing the name at this point would benefit no one and would continue to divide our community. We need time to heal and approach this with education as the top priority. Then our community will know this comes from a place of both heart and mind. We will not be labeled as anything that is not focused first on the welfare and high standards for educating children.

4. **LET'S FOCUS ON TOPICS THAT CAN BE A TANGIBLE HELP TO OUR KIDS.** A considerable amount of time, money and energy has been wasted on this cause. Social Justice is incredibly important in ours and all communities, but this name change does not provide a tangible help to any child. Imagine if this energy was put into things to help our students and schools? We have a 15% poverty rate in our district. Poverty is real in our district and there should be more of a focus on assisting others that are not as fortunate in our community. Think of all of the positive things the CTN group could be doing with the time spent and money raised on this "issue" that will not help one single student. Share your thoughts on this topic with the board!

5. **WHAT DOES DIXIE MEAN TO YOU?** This is a good time to say what your Dixie is, what it means to you, the countless hours you have volunteered in the schools to build it into what it is, your positive memories of the district, and mentioning our name with pride when you have spoken to others. Tell the board **WHY YOU WANT TO KEEP THE DIXIE NAME** or at least let it go to a community vote, so it is an inclusive process.

Dixie School District Mail - letter regarding keeping the name.

We greatly appreciate your support and willingness to send a letter directly to [commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org](mailto:commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org). The clock is ticking and immediate action is required so THANK YOU.

Last but not least, if you are willing to send a letter but don't want to write it from scratch, just let us know. We have DRAFT emails we would be happy to share which you can quickly review, edit as you see fit, and send off. Please just reply back and let us know ASAP if you'd prefer a draft/template email and we'll send it right over!

THANK YOU SO MUCH,

**WE ARE DIXIE**

[WERDIXIE@GMAIL.COM](mailto:WERDIXIE@GMAIL.COM)

[www.WeAreDixie.org](http://www.WeAreDixie.org)

We ARE Community - We ARE Inclusive - We ARE Progressive  
We ARE Equals - We ARE Proud - We ARE Families - We ARE Together  
**We ARE Dixie**

**WE ARE ALL DIXIE and we thank you for your continued support!**





Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

## No to Miwok and Miwok Hills

1 message

[Redacted]  
To: commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 1:26 PM

Dear Dixie Board,

As a leader of the group that collected 12 of the submitted petitions, I witnessed the entire process. We invited all. We accepted all names nominated. All of those with 15 or more registered voter signatures were submitted. There was no exclusionary review of the names.

However I did investigate the two names of Miwok and Miwok Hills. I communicated with local representatives of the Miwok people. They informed me that neither name would be a name they would recommend as representative of their culture, heritage or historic geography. They would not support naming a school district Miwok or Miwok Hills.

I ask that you change the name of the school district but not choose either Miwok or Miwok Hills out of respect for the misgivings of the tribe.

Both of these names received a high number of signatures indicating a desire for a native american connection for our new name. The tribe did indicate that if approached they would research and suggest an appropriate name. However, they also did not want to compete with 20 or so other names.

[Redacted]



Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

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## Save the Name!

1 message

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 12:45 PM

[REDACTED]@gmail.com  
To: commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org  
[REDACTED]

### Save the Name!

Dear Superintendent Yamashiro and other Members of the Dixie School District Board:

Please do not allow a small-but-vocal group of agitating outsiders to force us into an unwanted, unnecessary and highly expensive name change.

Such monumental change should be decided only by vote of the people who live within the Dixie School District and who send their children to its excellent schools.

I am NOT talking about voting on what name we should choose as our new one, but voting first on whether or not to make such a change to begin with.

I see nothing offensive in the name of DIXIE as regards our little Northern California school district.

My father moved my family to Upper Lucas Valley in 1964. I attended Lucas Valley, Vallecito, Dixie and Miller Creek Schools. I am proud to have been a member of the first graduating 6th grade class of the "new" Dixie Elementary School.

Now, in the 21st Century, I love driving by the historic one-room Dixie School House every Monday night on my way to band practice at Miller Creek School (Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District Non-Marching Band, founded by one of Dixie School District's finest: Joseph Curatilo).

I currently live on the other side of HWY 101, but still within the Dixie district. My property taxes help pay for the schools.

I associate the name "Dixie" with local pride and memories of an excellent education. Our Dixie has nothing to do with the "violence, racism and slavery of the Civil-War era Confederate South." Don't change the name! Don't let outside rabble-rousers make this decision for us! At

the very least, do not yield to outside pressure to change the name of our 150-year-old school district without first listening to and truly hearing the voices of all your 14,200 local constituents!

Fifteen years after I graduated from The College of Idaho, their board of regents decided to change the name of that venerable, 100-year-old institution to "Albertson's" College of Idaho (honoring their biggest benefactor). What a mistake! Old Alumni no longer identified with the place. Financial contributions, community pride and participation dried up. Less than twenty years later they had to change the name back again!

Don't make the same mistake with Dixie!

This is so silly. We should be focusing our time and energy (and local taxpayer's money) on educating our kids, not on politics!

Thank you for listening,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

San Rafael, CA 94903

Dixie Elementary School Class of 1966



Virus-free. [www.avg.com](http://www.avg.com)



Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

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## I asked that the board be leaders on Aug 17, 2018

1 message

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 12:26 PM

To: commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org

Dear Dixie School Board,

With minor edits, I resubmit a letter I authored from Aug 17 of 2018. My letter asked the then board to tell the truth about the origin of the Dixie name. I believed at the time that once the community actually learned more about the name a process would be developed to change the name. I asked the then board to lead this process. Imagine mine and others disappointment when the board choose to "kick the can down the road" with a meaningless advisory election 18 months in the future.

An election on an issue of racial sensitivity is inherently a terrible idea for reasons I won't get into here.

There are voices claiming that this current process is not the way to change the name and therefore don't change the name. I say that the current process is the legal way to change the name and now is the time to change it. The current process has been open. All were invited to participate in generating the names. Those other voices choose not to participate. Ignore their pleas of "not this way". They could have participated from the beginning of this cycle of change request, August 17, 2018. It has been almost 30 years since I delivered my son with trepidation to a school in a district both with this strange name of Dixie. Change the name.

Dr. Jason Yamashiro, Dixie School District Superintendent  
Dixie Governing Board of Directors  
Dixie School District Principals

August 17, 2018

Dear Dr. Yamashiro, et al:

I have lived in the Dixie School District since 1986. My son was a student from 1988 to 1996. I currently am the guardian of my grandson who has been a student in the district since 2011.

I believe that the name of the district does not reflect well on my community and in no way is representative of who we are as a community. In the past I have not been shy about sharing this feeling with others. If you have met me, I have brought up the name with you. Now I am seeking action and I believe the community will also.

**It starts with telling the truth about the name.**

The district website hides the truth of the name. It does reference a website that has the story of the naming by James Miller in 1864 in homage to the confederacy. Why not include the story on the district website directly? Why not teach it to all students? Why not make it part of the new student package? If we

are embarrassed to tell the truth about its origination and its connection to the antebellum south then perhaps the name should change.

Our students are very aware of social justice and gaining more awareness each day.

On their own they walked out of Miller Creek last school year to draw attention to school shootings. Once they learn about the meanings behind the name Dixie they will ask why it still stands. Schools and others across America are dropping the name and the song. Consider

**Alabama high school quits playing 'Dixie' at football games** — Associated Press August 14, 2018

**Dolly Parton dumps "Dixie"** - PIGEON FORGE, TN (CBS46) - Dolly Parton is taking the "Dixie" out of her Dolly Parton's Dixie Stampede dinner show. - Jan 9, 2018

**Ole Miss band drops 'Dixie' from football games** — USA Today August 19, 2016

Are our teachers prepared to answer the question -"what does the name Dixie mean? and why is our school district named Dixie?" They should be prepared to answer truthfully and fully. The district should take an active role in educating its staff and teachers about the name as soon as possible.

**Then what?**

I believe that educating the community will lead to a process to change the name. As leaders in our school district I hope you lead the coming process. Some in the community have already reached the conclusion that the name should change. More are deciding each day as they learn of the significance of the name. You can find out who supports a name change and more at [changethename.net](http://changethename.net)

I am available to serve on any committee formed to enable the name change.

[Redacted signature block]

Cc: Will Anderson, Principal. Dixie Elementary School; Bjorn Remmers, Principal Mary Silveira Elementary School; Elizabeth Foehr, Principal Vallecito Elementary School; Kristy Treewater Principal Miller Creek Middle School

Dixie Governing Board: Alissa Chacko; Marnie Glickman; Brad Honsberger; Mark Schott; Jennifer Taekman

[Redacted signature block]

Sent from my iPhone



Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

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## Thank you Re: Fwd: Please change the name ASAP

2 messages

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Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 11:40 AM

To: [REDACTED]

Your submission has been received. Thank you!

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[REDACTED]

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 12:14 PM

To: Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

Thank you!

I just submitted about 6-8 emails and hopefully they all came through.

Hope the board has scheduled a couple days out to catch up on all that reading!

I do feel bad burdening them with all that clutter... but this is the process that's been defined so I feel compelled to get all my comments in before the deadline.

Hopefully they'll change the name in Feb and we won't have to do this all over again in March!

Thank you,  
[REDACTED]

On Feb 1, 2019, at 11:40 AM, Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org> wrote:

Your submission has been received. Thank you!

Please consider the environment before printing this email.

The information contained in this correspondence is intended only for the individual or entity named above, and may contain information that is privileged and confidential. Dissemination, distribution or copying without the prior approval of the sender is strictly prohibited. If you think that you have received this message in error, please delete it and notify the sender.



### "Big Five" weigh in

1 message

To: Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

From the IJ and emails/letters in mid-December:  
When have you ever seen so many politicians agree?  
It's because if you've studied the facts and understand racial injustice, this issue is a no-brainer.  
Please get it done and let our community heal and move on.  
Thanks

Begin forwarded message:

In consideration of talking points in an interview with the IJ, the suggestion that we build upon the positions taken by the electeds. It reinforces their position, strengthens ours and the recently elected school board trustees to get on board.

Mary Jane Burke's position

- "These kinds of symbols [across the nation] are being changed to acknowledge more positive, enlightened society
- "I urge the board to exercise its duty as bestowed upon you by the electorate, and take action without incurring additional expense of a election."
- "An election would only serve to prolong the contentious debate that has driven a wedge in this community far too long."
- "It is time for the community to move forward."

Tom Peters

- "What lies before your board is a golden opportunity to exercise principled community leadership."
- "By recognizing that the time has come for a new name, the board can declare that the enduring hallmark of the District is its dual commitment to quality education and open for all youngsters and all families."
- "No poll or plebiscite can replace the courage of conviction that elected leaders can and...must exercise."

Mike McGuire

- "[T]here is no question the name Dixie is synonymous not just with the Confederacy, but also with racism and deep psychic pain."
- "Until your board advances a name change this conflict will not go away."
- "The name Dixie can't stand in modern America."
- "I urge you and your board to proactively initiate a name change.."

Jared Huffman

- "I write to urge you to do something which frankly should have been done years ago:change the district name."
- "[T]he name Dixie connotes-- intentionally or not--a dark and hateful part of our nation's history that offends our community and beyond. For that reason it is more than ju
- "We cannot separate this issue from the broader context of our country's struggles with racism, including the ugly resurgence of neo-Confederates and white nationalists take us backwards..."
- "Our nation's dark history compels us to be honest about the hateful origins of these symbols and to acknowledge that whatever revisionist nostalgia may come to attach rooted in racism and deeply offensive to many people."
- "[T]he process of bringing people together in a respectful, forward-looking manner is important to ending the painful controversy."
- "The suggestion of a non-binding advisory election.... is not a solution."
- "The vote that embraced the name Dixie would create an even bigger and darker cloud over the district."
- "It's time to move on."
- "You have the burden and responsibility of making what may temporarily be a hard decision."
- "But this is a unique opportunity to usher in a positive, unifying new chapter for the children, families and educators...."

This represents a condensed synthesis of what each elected's written position. My suggestion is to divide it up between the interviewees so it does not appear group talking point reinforce the points held by the electeds.

## Huffman: Dixie must take 'long, overdue step' to change name

Huffman, 4 other leaders send letters to school board asking for new name



By KERI BRENNER | kbrenner@marinij.com | Marin Independent Journal  
PUBLISHED: December 17, 2018 at 4:13 pm | UPDATED: December 18, 2018 at 2:21 pm



With a nod to the national "ugly resurgence of neo-Confederates and white nationalists," U.S. Rep. Jared Huffman has sent a strong and urgent letter to members of the Dixie School District board of trustees suggesting they change the district's name to something that does not connote "a dark and hateful part of our nation's history."



Congressman Jared Huffman (Frankie Frost/Marin Independent Journal)

"We cannot separate this issue from the broader context of our country's struggles with racism," Huffman, D-San Rafael, said in the letter, sent last week to board president Brad Honsberger and copied to the four other board members. "Our nation's dark history and current struggles with racism compels us to be honest about the hateful origins of these symbols, and to acknowledge that whatever revisionist nostalgia some may attach to them, they are rooted in racism and deeply offensive to some people."

Opponents of the name change, however, said the issue should be decided locally.

"As we've always stated from the beginning, this issue was manufactured by aspiring politicians and outside special interest activists," reads a statement emailed Monday from "We Are Dixie," a group that wants to keep the Dixie name.

"The school board and district should not be threatened with the fear of a 'dark cloud' hanging over us if we vote to keep the name," the statement says. "The community should be heard and not be told how to feel by outside special interest groups and politicians."

Those in favor of changing the name, who gathered Saturday to brainstorm new name ideas and collect petition signatures at a party in San Rafael, applauded the letter. At the party, at least 30 names were suggested, of which about eight received the minimum 15 signatures to present to the school board on Jan. 15. Additional suggestions may be added at [ChangetheName.net](http://ChangetheName.net).

"Support for the name change has reached historic levels," said proponent Alex Stadtner. "I'm proud that in the 21st century, our community is finally ready to shed this divisive, Civil-War-era name that harms some members and tarnishes our image."

Huffman, a former civil rights attorney, was joined in the letter-writing effort by state Sen. Mike McGuire, San Rafael Mayor Gary Phillips, Marin Community Foundation CEO Thomas Peters and Marin County Superintendent of Schools Mary Jane Burke. They each sent their own letters — in their own words but with the same sentiments — to the board.

"The name Dixie can't stand in modern America," said McGuire, D-Healdsburg, who, like Huffman, said he rarely gets involved in local school board issues out of respect for their authority, but "I believe this issue is different.

"Whatever the true origins of the name of the school district," McGuire said, "there is no question that 'Dixie' is synonymous not just with the Southern Confederacy, but also with racism and deep psychic pain."

Burke said the district should embrace the process and use it as a teachable moment.

"This is an opportunity to teach our children about the history of the Dixie name, the meaning and its cultural significance," Burke said in her letter. "This is an opportunity for our students to participate in a cultural shift, one they can be proud of."

Opponents, however, were not impressed.

"We believe the district was named for the Miwok woman Mary Dixie and others believe it is named after a geographic area of the US in the 1800s," said the statement from We Are Dixie. "We have more ties locally to the Miwoks than the Confederacy.

"To date, none of the politicians that signed the letter have reached out to us to listen to our concerns or research regarding the history of the Dixie name," the statement says. "Our new school board should not give in to bully tactics of a small group or to be sidetracked by political aspirations or outside influence. This is a local community issue and should stay that way. Let our community vote."

Huffman and the other leaders, in their letters, said they believed the name should be changed by board action, and not after a non-binding advisory ballot measure in 2020. Such a measure was approved by board vote last month, in an effort to let the public weigh in on the issue. We Are Dixie supporters have said they believe the advisory ballot measure — restricted to whether the name should be changed or not — is the most equitable way to go. They said earlier this month that gathering names for petitions was jumping the gun, and that community members needed to say first whether they wanted the name changed.

The petition drive, however, is a separate path as approved by the California Education Code. Under the code, a new name petition must have 15 valid district resident signatures to be accepted by the school board. Once accepted, the board must conduct a public hearing and then vote on the name within 40 days.

Stadtner said the current plan is to submit all petitions with 15 or more signatures to Dixie School District Superintendent Jason Yamashiro at 10 a.m. Jan. 15, which is Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. People who want to sign petitions prior to the submission may do so between 9:30 and 10 a.m. The petitions will then be presented to the public at the board meeting the same day at 7 p.m.

Honsberger, who was re-elected on Nov. 6 and again chosen to be board president at the reorganization meeting on Dec. 11, said he thinks it would be a good idea to schedule a special meeting of the board before Jan. 15 to "get an understanding of the options" for addressing the petitions as per the state education code. He said the special meeting could be scheduled over the next few weeks as the new board gets settled. As to the letters from Huffman and the other four leaders, Honsberger said he "hasn't had a chance yet to address them.

"I have to talk to the superintendent and our legal (counsel) first," he said, adding he was busy with bringing the newly reconstituted board — including newly elected board members Megan Hutchinson and Brooks Nguyen — up to speed on basic board duties. "We're just working on communications and responsibilities and protocols — we haven't yet discussed this issue."

Dixie School District is not the only Bay Area educational institution under fire over its name's alleged racism. According to the Los Angeles Times, UC Berkeley's law school building, Boalt Hall, is the scene of controversy after the recent revelation that John Henry Boalt, a 19th-century San Francisco attorney, was viciously anti-Chinese. Boalt was part of the push to enact the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the nation's first immigration ban on a distinct group of people, the newspaper reported.



Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

## Fwd: Current list of nominated names

1 message

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 12:02 PM

To: Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

Cc: [REDACTED]

Happy Black History Month!

Here is an email from Christmas Eve.

Wow. Looking back it's impressive how much time and energy has been invested in this social justice campaign.

Can't wait till it's over!

Of note below is concern over the name Miller Creek, and it's honoring of a local land owner who has become increasingly seen as a confederate sympathizer.

"Miller" has a creek, a middle school (built over Native American site), and I believe a rode named after him already. Also of note, of the 150-200 people that attended the cookie party to brainstorm and start name petitions, names with "Miwok" received the #1 and #3 most signatures. And nobody submitted "James Miller"

I believe this shows a desire to honor the native peoples. However, the native peoples have expressed both names with Miwok would not be acceptable to them. So - in order to not offend another underrepresented minority group in our community - I suggest you DO NOT accept any names with "Miller" or "Miwok" in them. In fact, naming a public school after any individual or specific group of people will undoubtedly offend others, so it's just safer to stick with places, plants, geography, etc.

Thank you,

Begin forwarded message:

From: [REDACTED]

**Subject: Re: Current list of nominated names**

**Date:** December 24, 2018 at 2:33:15 PM PST

**To:** Gary Phillips <Gary.Phillips@cityofsanrafael.org>

**Cc:** Bruce Anderson <bruce@home2150.com>, "asonghill@gmail.com" <asonghill@gmail.com>, "pmcginca@yahoo.com" <pmcginca@yahoo.com>, Judy Hartman Tipple <jtipple@pacbell.net>, brad honsberger <brad.honsberger@gmail.com>, Jared Huffman <jaredhuffman64@gmail.com>, Jason Yamashiro <jyamashiro@dixieschooldistrict.org>, Damon Connolly <DConnolly@marincounty.org>

Dear Gary,

Thank you for your note and continued engagement on this important issue for our community.

I'm sorry you are disappointed in the current list of names and feel there is a threat to history taking place. Here are a few thoughts that will hopefully bring you more comfort.

Firstly, anyone can start a new petition with any new name. We missed you at the cookie party. That would have been an ideal place to start and lobby for your favorite picks. But it's never too late to submit a new petition. One only needs 15 registered voters from within the district to sign a petition. So if there's enough public support for your preferred choices I'm sure it's not too late. In just a few days Bruce will have a way for folks to start new petitions online. Please keep an eye out for the forms and instructions. In my opinion we want as many choices as possible before the board so they can make their own decision on how to proceed. Ultimately it's the board's decision.

We already have "Miller Creek" and "Miller Creek Middle School," and the Old Dixie Schoolhouse Foundation and accompanying Dixie Schoolhouse museum in North San Rafael. Personally I don't feel the name Miller or Dixie are endangered of being forgotten or brushed aside. However, I'm not aware of much recognition for those that came before the European settlers and Missionaries. That is why I chose to sign the two petitions that would honor the Miwok peoples. Miller Creek Middle School is built upon an old village or cemetery, so if any historical people have a claim to a namesake I would personally look even further back in time.

Historically there seem to be more concerns over names of individuals, compared to generic landforms, geographic areas, animals, etc. Peoples' opinions of historical figures can change dramatically over time. I believe this is another reason to perhaps consider one "Miller" among our district enough. In my opinion we need a name that isn't divisive, and some fear that the civil-war era, pro-democrat family name of "Miller" may result in replacing one controversial name with another. I think names like "Big Rock, Live Oak, Live Oak Valley, Skywalker, North San Rafael, Miller Creek, etc." are less likely to illicit future discord among the community.

For 30+ years community members have been asking for a change from Dixie. For all that time we've been rallying *against* something, and not *for* anything in particular. I believe you are the first to be so strongly tied to a particular name and I applaud your commitment. The rest of us will be happy with just about anything other than Dixie, so please get your petition started and lobby the school board like the rest of us. There are kids and parents and teachers behind all these names. A brighter future is around the corner.

Thank you again for your engagement and email.

Sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

On Dec 23, 2018, at 11:55 AM, [Redacted] > wrote:

[Redacted]

I am disappointed that none of the nine names about to be submitted to the Dixie Elementary School Board of Education preserves the local history of the district, which was one of my principle criteria for a name change. I believe a majority of the DSD community will support a name change if this history is not completely brushed aside, and for you to think otherwise will prove to be a mistake.

Again, my point in supporting a change to the district's name is that it must preserve the community's unique history with regard to the school district's formation, and at the same time have a name that will be less offensive to some. The district is proud of its association with quality of education, and I feel most do not want loose this important characteristic. So, while I am supportive of a positive name change, I think this criterion is critical for our community as a whole to accept, and therefore I will not support any of the nine proposed substitutes.

I do think a much more appropriate and supported alternative is Miller School District (or James Miller SD), which is further down on your list. After all, James Miller built the first school in the district and was instrumental in the formation of the District. While perhaps not perfect, this name accomplishes the objective of preserving the district's local history, while at the same time it is less offensive to some than its current name. Therefore, as previously stated, I would support this change which I believe will make our district even better.

Call me if you wish to discuss.

[Redacted signature]

On Dec 23, 2018, at 10:05 AM, [Redacted] <[Redacted]@home2150.com> wrote:

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

2/4/2019

Dixie School District Mail - Fwd: Current list of nominated names

Here is a list of the current 30 names nominated for consideration:

Miwok  
Big Rock  
Miwok Hills  
Oak Valley  
Live Oak Valley  
John Muir  
Live Oak  
Terra Linda  
Skywalker  
Miller Creek  
Di Benedetto  
Loma Alta  
The Ridge  
North Marin United  
Tule  
North Marin  
Vallecito  
Mary Dixie  
Lucas Valley  
Miller  
Lucas

Currently the top nine have qualified to be submitted to the school board on Jan 15.

We are also accepting new names and additional signatures that will probably qualify more names.



Sent from my iPhone



Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

## Change the Dixie Name

1 message

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 11:57 AM

To: commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org  
Cc: Superintendent Jason Yamashiro <jyamashiro@dixieschooldistrict>

[Redacted]

February 1, 2019

Dixie School District  
380 Nova Albion Way  
San Rafael, CA 94903

Dear Board Members of the Dixie School Board,

We are writing to you to respectfully request that you change the Dixie School District name in the best interest of our children, schools and community.

Our family has lived in Marinwood since 1973. Our son was a student of the Dixie District and played on the Dixie Rebels soccer team.

You are the leaders and role models of our District. You have heard how historically painful, toxic, hurtful and offensive the word Dixie is to people of color, who are directly affected, as well as many others in our community.

Changing the name creates an outstanding teaching opportunity for our children to learn more about diversity, equity and inclusion, as well as the historical and racist connotations of the word Dixie. The Dixie name is not loving, fair or kind, which are values we want our students to have.

What we name our district sends a message to the world about who we are. The word Dixie does not represent a caring and inclusive community. You, the Dixie School Board, have an opportunity to make a positive change. We all now know better. It was started at the December board meeting, "not to change the name is to choose the name Dixie again". Hopefully, you do not want that as part of your legacy.

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]



Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

## Fwd: Urgent Call To Action & Historical Review - For The Record

1 message

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 11:56 AM

[REDACTED]  
 To: Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

Email and attachments from December.  
 Very sorry to have to bombard you with all these emails and documents again...  
 But it's the process we've been given.  
 Hang in there - by submitting petitions we have created a light at the end of the tunnel,  
 [REDACTED]

Begin forwarded message:

[REDACTED]  
 [REDACTED]  
 [REDACTED]  
**Subject: Urgent Call To Action & Historical Review - For The Record**

**Date:** December 19, 2018 at 9:01:08 PM PST

**To:** brad honsberger <brad.honsberger@gmail.com>, Brooks Nguyen <bnguyen@dixieschooldistrict.org>, Marnie Glickman <marnie.glickman@gmail.com>, meganhutchinson24@gmail.com, achacko@dixieschooldistrict.org

**Cc:** Jason Yamashiro <jyamashiro@dixieschooldistrict.org>, Kate Colin <Kate.Colin@cityofsanrafael.org>, ljackson@srcs.org, Will Anderson <>wanderson@dixieschooldistrict.org>, Gary Phillips <Gary.Phillips@cityofsanrafael.org>

2018-12-19

Dear Board of Trustees,

I request the attached letter and historical summary from a UC Berkeley historian be included in your board packets and made part of public record.

Thank you for your service and leadership during these trying times. There is a future beyond "Dixie," and it's a brighter one. We all need your help getting there.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

District Voter and Parent

### 2 attachments

 **2018-12-19\_Stadtner\_Board Letter.pdf**  
167K

 **2018-09-23\_Celliott-DixieSchoolDistNameHistEval.pdf**  
145K

2018-12-19

Dear Board of Trustees,

I request this letter and the attached historical summary from a UC Berkeley historian be included in your board packets and made part of public record.

Our community needs leadership and action. Our Civil War era name was wrong 150 years ago, and it's wrong today. African Americans have asked for a change numerous times over the past 30 years, and I hope this time is different. In the face of growing white nationalism across our country, increased incidents of racism on our campuses, and minority families fleeing for more accepting schools, our community is in crisis and looking to you for a way forward. It is under this increasingly concerning backdrop that I again write to you and request you change the name(s).

A process to change the District name, however flawed, is provided in the CA Education Code. Proponents of the name change have shown great restraint, but frustration is growing and petitions will soon come. Proponents have asked for budget implications, facilitated discussions, and open forums where community members can learn about the impacts of a racist name on a community, so that we may be prepared for the required public hearing before you vote on petitions. We have asked for rapid action and warned of the uselessness and perils of a 2020 community-wide vote. Now that message has been echoed from both halls of Congress.

The notion of a 2020 vote is an inappropriate, long-term response to a serious and urgent problem. Fortunately the resolution passed by a divided, lame-duck board was non-binding, and your hands are not tied so that you can act quickly. The District name change process is defined and it only takes three of you to make it happen. I encourage you to form a subcommittee and study what other Districts have done in terms of their own name change, but also to agree to a process for changing the Elementary School name. We recognize the racist history and connotations of the word, and it should not stand at the District or School level.

We look to you, our leaders, in this time of moral crisis. We look to you, the board, to take action during this critical moment in our community's history. A large and growing swath of our community has asked for the name change (see below). And, as predicted months ago, pressure from both within the community and from political supporters will continue to ratchet up until the name is changed.

Do not delay any longer. Host facilitated meetings to educate the community about racism and why we must change the name. Petitions are coming on MLKs birthday, or sooner, and further delay would be irresponsible. Proponents have shown great restraint in holding back petitions and discouraging civil disobedience to give the board time to prepare. So far you have wasted that opportunity and now time is growing short. Civil disobedience remains seen as a last resort, but should the board not act quickly I do fear there is increased risk of more brazen action from the community demanding change. The

pressure cooker is getting hot and we cannot afford another incident to go unaddressed or another minority family to feel chased out of our community.

As leaders you may not sit idly by while racism is on the rise in our District. You need a Racial Discrimination Policy by which to act when racism rears its ugly head.

While policies and webpages promote inclusivity and condemn hate speech, you must remove the most obvious symbol of hate from your letterhead and elementary school.

This is Marin County in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The thought of our children learning racist slurs in a predominantly-white district named after the confederate south is deplorable. Please do something quickly.

Thank you for your service and leadership during these trying times. There is a future beyond "Dixie," and it's a brighter one. We all need your help getting there.

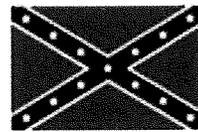
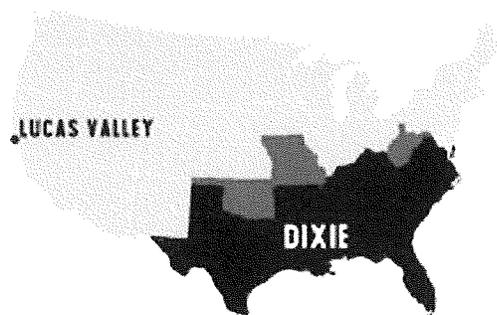
Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Father in the District

CC: Will Anderson, Linda Jackson, Gary Phillips, Kate Colin, Jason Yamashiro, Kristy Treewater

# IT'S TIME TO LET GO OF DIXIE



**1861**

**CIVIL WAR  
BEGINS**

**1863**

**OUR DIXIE SCHOOL  
DISTRICT FOUNDED**

**1865**

**CIVIL WAR  
ENDS**

Below is a partial list of influential supporters calling for a name change:

*Current as of December 15, 2018*

#### CURRENT AND FORMER ELECTED OFFICIALS

Congressman Jared Huffman

State Senator Mike McGuire

Mary Jane Burke, Marin County Superintendent of Schools

Kate Sears, Marin County Supervisor, District 3

Gary Phillips, Mayor of San Rafael, CA and former Dixie School District Board Trustee

Kate Colin, San Rafael City Council Member

Marnie Glickman, Dixie School District Board Trustee

Karen Crockett, former Dixie School District Board Trustee

Phyllis McGuire, former Dixie School District Board Trustee

Annie Song-Hill, former Dixie School District Board Trustee

Judy Tipple, former Dixie School District Board Trustee

Dr. Susan L. Adams, former Marin County Supervisor

Bruce Anderson, former Marinwood Community Services District Board Member

Willie Brown, former Speaker of the California State Assembly and Mayor of San Francisco, CA

Larry Bragman, Marin Municipal Water District Board Member

Niccolo Caldararo, former Fairfax Town Council Member

Diane Conti, College of Marin Board Trustee

Scott Donahue, Emeryville City Council Member

Renee Goddard, Fairfax Town Council Member

Ida Green, Sausalito Marin City District Board Trustee

Ford Greene, San Anselmo Town Council Member

Quentin L. Kopp, Vice Chair of City and County of San Francisco Ethics Commission, retired California Superior Court Judge, former member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and former California State Senator

Peter Lacques, Mayor of Fairfax, CA

Jose Lara, El Rancho Unified School District Board of Trustees Vice President

Amy Martensen, Napa Valley College Trustee

Gayle McLaughlin, former Mayor of Richmond, CA

John Reed, Fairfax Town Council Member

Dana Silvernale, Northern Humboldt Union High School District Board Trustee

## ORGANIZATIONS AND CIVIC LEADERS

Bad Ass Teachers Association

Educate 78, Oakland, CA

Marin Promise Partnership

Marin County Human Rights Commission

Marin County Youth Commission

Marin Green Party

Marin Interfaith Council

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, San Francisco Executive Committee

National Association for Multicultural Education

Dr. Thomas Peters, President and CEO of Marin Community Foundation  
Johnathan Logan Jr., Vice President of Community Engagement, Marin Community Foundation

Marilee Eckert, Buck Family Fund Board Member, Novato, CA

Elsia Galawish, Buck Family Fund Board Member,

Miguel Gavaldon, Buck Family Fund Board Member, San Rafael, CA

Andrew G. Giacomini, Buck Family Fund Board Member

Noah Griffin, Buck Family Fund Board Member, Tiburon, CA

Peter Hamilton, Buck Family Fund Board Member, Novato, CA

Cleveland Justis, Buck Family Fund Board Member, San Rafael, CA

Steven Schroeder, MD, Buck Family Fund Board Member

Melba Beals, Marin County: Melba Beals was a member of the Little Rock Nine, a group of African-American students who were the first to integrate Central High in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957.

Jerome Braun, Attorney, San Francisco, CA

Ken Burns, Emmy Award Winning Filmmaker

Melissa Cadet, PhD, Executive Director, Marin City Community Development Corporation

Don Carney, YMCA Restorative Services Director, San Rafael, CA

Omar Carrera, CEO, Canal Alliance, San Rafael, CA

Dale Carrigan, former director of The Dixie Children's Found (now known as Can Do!), San Rafael, CA

John Carroll, Superintendent of Schools, Bolinas-Stinson & Lagunitas School Districts

Ruth Maletksy Carter, Dixie School District Bond Oversight Committee Member, San Rafael, CA

Ericka Omena Erickson, San Rafael, CA

David Escobar, Director of Programs and Operations, Multicultural Center of Marin  
Meredith Griffin, Tiburon, CA  
Mark Headley, Philanthropist  
Richard Kalish, Attorney, Professor of Ethics at Dominican University, former public member of Marin Independent Journal Editorial Board, San Rafael, CA  
Nancy Kirshner-Rodriguez, San Francisco, CA  
Michelle Leopold, Owner of Marin Ace Hardware, Greenbrae, CA  
Jon Marker, CEO, Youth Leadership Institute, San Rafael, CA  
Carole Mills, Aide to State Senator Mike McGuire, San Rafael, CA  
Jennifer Nassiri, Kiddo! Foundation Board Member, Mill Valley, CA  
Eva Paterson, President of Equal Justice Society, Oakland, CA  
Caroline Peattie, Executive Director, Fair Housing Advocates of Northern California, San Rafael, CA  
Kerry Peirson, former chair of Marin Human Rights Commission, Mill Valley, CA  
Carmen Policy, attorney and former San Francisco 49ers Team President  
Michael Pritchard, speaker and youth motivator, San Rafael, CA  
Norman Solomon, author, Point Reyes Station, CA  
Bob Stafford, businessman, Marin County  
Mrs. Kevin Starr, widow of California's State Librarian and author  
Gregory Stepanicich, attorney, San Rafael, CA  
Frances L. White, PhD, former Superintendent and President of of the Marin Community College District  
Harley White, Marin County  
John Young, Board Director, Glide Housing

#### FAITH LEADERS

Rev. Scott Clark, Dean of Students and Chaplain at San Francisco Theological Seminary, Terra Linda resident  
Rev. Marcus Hartlief, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Marin, San Rafael, CA  
Rev. Alison Hendley, San Rafael First United Methodist Church, San Rafael, CA  
Rev. Kurt Kuhwald, Oakland, CA  
Rabbi Susan Leider, Congregation Kol Shofar, Tiburon, CA  
Rev. Pamela Griffith Pond, Novato, CA  
Rev. Scott Quinn, Executive Director, Marin Interfaith Council  
The Rev. Dr. Nancy Wiens, San Rafael, CA



African American Studies Department  
 660 Barrows Hall  
 Berkeley, CA 94720-2570  
 Tel: 510-642-7089  
 Fax: 510-642-0138

September 23, 2018

Assessment of Name History: Dixie School District, San Rafael, California

After reviewing the historical documents compiled by Change The Name ([www.changethename.net](http://www.changethename.net)) advocates, as well as a number of supplementary sources, it is my conclusion that the organization's account and characterization of the historical origins of the Dixie School District's name are accurate. Following are my brief descriptions and assessment of key documents, as well as two interpretative elaborations about political party membership and local perceptions of partisan speech in the 1860s.

On November 28, 1863, during the height of the Civil War, alongside local real estate transactions, the *Marin County Tocsin* formally recorded the school district's establishment, location, and name "Dixie"—decisions made under the aegis of T. J. Ables (Superintendent of Schools), and JAS Dixon, D. Olds, and J. W. Buffington (Board of Supervisors).<sup>1</sup> The claim that the name "Dixie" was understood by local community members to signal support for the Confederacy in the early 1860s is corroborated by several reliable period sources. When the *Marin County Tocsin* (a paper also published under the name *Marin County Journal*) reprinted the anthem "Dixie" on its front page on April 27, 1861, the editors made overt reference to the fact that the song was the Confederacy's equivalent to "Yankee Doodle." This is strong evidence that the song "Dixie" was understood by Marin County residents to endorse the Confederacy and its secession plan. When, two years later, the staff of the *Red Bluff Independent* learned of the Marin School District's choice to name itself Dixie, their editors' disgust was palpable:

It is supposed, by the ominous name, that the young ideals are here to be "trained how to shoot" you. The most surprising thing about this name is, that the inhabitants of such a district should ever desire the establishment of such a radical thing as a school. Probably the effect of association with civilized people in this State.<sup>2</sup>

The first elaboration I want to offer to Change The Name's historical account concerns party affiliation and school district naming; simply offering local Democratic versus Republican party membership in the 1860s does not adequately capture the ideological diversity of the community. That diversity is relevant in assessing the meaning and reception of the school district's name. Many Democrats in both the American South and the North opposed secession, as the following January 4, 1861 letter from G. Mason Graham to William Tecumseh Sherman illustrates:

I feel as confident as I possibly can of any event not yet transpired, that an ordinance of secession will be rushed through the convention with breathless haste. The tone of the Louisiana *Democrat* ever since the presidential election has satisfied me of that—its last issue confirms it. Less than four weeks ago I proclaimed from the steps of the post-office, to an unusually large crowd awaiting the opening of the mail, that 'I stood by the Union, that secession was treason,' and no man in the crowd opened his mouth affirmatively or

negatively, although I saw men there—lifelong Democrats, too—who, I knew, felt and thought as I did about it.<sup>3</sup>

Graham's letter suggests that people were carefully reading the tone of newspapers, as well as their explicit content; tone was important because many people were remaining publicly silent about their views on the secession issue. Graham understood explicitly partisan political speech to be a bold (even perilous) choice in many localities; the period content of California newspapers (particularly in and around Marin County) suggest that many editors agreed with this assessment.

Using the term "Dixie" in the name of a public institution in early 1860s America was not a simple statement of support for the Democratic party; it was reasonably and broadly construed to be an endorsement of secession. In his memoirs, Sherman was more generous than the Red Bluff editors in characterizing the partisan political speech of cadets (sometimes termed "seminarians") at the Louisiana military academy where he taught after leaving California, in November of 1860:

The election of Mr. Lincoln fell upon us all like a clap of thunder. People saw and felt that the South had threatened so long that, if she quietly submitted, the question of slavery in the Territories was at an end forever....At our seminary the order of exercises went along with the regularity of the seasons. Once a week, I had the older cadets to practice reading, reciting, and elocution, and noticed that their selections were from Calhoun, Yancey, and other Southern speakers, all treating the defense of their slaves and their home institutions as the very highest duty of the patriot. Among boys this was to be expected; and among the members of our board, though most of them declaimed against politicians generally, and especially abolitionists, as pests, yet there was a growing feeling that danger was in the wind.<sup>4</sup>

In Sherman's view, such vocal demonstrations of Confederate loyalty were understandable in 1860 only because of the proximate "shock" of the election, and the fact the speakers were immature "boys." He clearly would have considered the same kind of speech from seasoned politicians, or other community leaders, as both uncouth and treasonous—as did the editors of the Red Bluff newspaper, who thought the Marin School District's choice of name was outrageous enough to merit comment and condemnation.<sup>5</sup>

The second elaboration I would like to offer concerns more local public perceptions of politically partisan speech. In the same issue of the *Marin County Tocsin* that covered the aftermath of the 1861 political duel fought in San Rafael between politicians Charles W. Piercy and Daniel Showalter—a fatal conflict resulting what they deemed irreconcilable differences related to the secession question—was a re-printed editorial attributed to another publication (the *Tribune*):

An earnest secessionist, whether of the North or of the South, may be very blind, but he is not necessarily a bad man. And, wrong-headed as we may deem him, we insist on his perfect right to his own opinion, and to pursue a peaceable course of action in open consistency therewith....He must refrain from shooting if he has any decided objection to being shot, and restrict himself to *speaking* daggers if he prefer that the friends of the Union should not use them.<sup>6</sup>

In an era, and locality, in which political differences could (and did) cause at least one fight to the death, I believe that the Marin County community accepted the "speaking dagger" of the Dixie School District name because, in context, rhetorical violence seemed preferable to physical

confrontation. The newspaper made its position condemning physical violence clear, pointing out (ironically) the dubious distinction such incidents conferred on the community: “another ‘affair of honor’ is on the tapis—arising out of the Shoawalter-Piercy duel. Of course Marin will have the honor of being the place where they will settle their difficulties.”<sup>7</sup> On the front page of that same issue of the paper (which included war news about troop movements, accounts of government seizure of Confederate ships, and news about the real and perceived loyalties of African Americans in New Orleans and Native American tribes), the editors printed a long, patriotic poem about the American flag, attributed to a fourteen year old author, Mary Jane Cunningham.

Both the Democratic and Republican parties continued to hold local meetings (as indicated by 1860s announcements in the *Marin County Tocsin*), and members of both parties continued to participate actively in California civic life. The extant historical sources suggest that, in 1860 and 1861, leaders in Marin County took and maintained the position that a wide range of political speech—even virulent speech—was the best option for the community, because it could help preserve the peace.<sup>8</sup> The 1863 choice of the highly politicized (and, for the majority of Californians, likely offensive) name “Dixie” for the newly- formed school district suggests that the community maintained that position throughout the Civil War years.<sup>9</sup>

Sincerely,



Assistant Professor, African American Studies

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<sup>1</sup> *Marin County Tocsin*, November 28, 1863. The names of the local officials with supervisory authority for the newly created school district were regularly listed on the newspaper’s front page masthead.

<sup>2</sup> *Red Bluff Independent*, December 11, 1863, Vol. 4, No. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Walter L. Fleming, ed. *General W. T. Sherman as College President: A Collection of Letters* (Cleveland: Walter H. Clark Company, 1912), 326.

<sup>4</sup> William T. Sherman, *Memoirs of General W. T. Sherman, Written By Himself*, Vol. 1 (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1891), 152.

<sup>5</sup> The *Red Bluff Independent*, July 21, 1864, Vol. 4, No. 100, reported the following incident about public performance of the song “Dixie” under the heading “A FRANK TRAITOR”: “At Grass Valley, on Wednesday last, says the Gazette, during a wrestling match, the band played John Brown[.] As the music ceased, Col. Wm. Watt, formerly a Senator in the State Legislature from this county, asked in a loud voice whether there were any representatives of John Brown present[.] Receiving no reply, he asked the band to play Dixie, with which request they complied. Col. Watt then arose and said, ‘Boys, let’s give three cheers for Dixie!’ and immediately commensed shouting and

---

swinging his hat. A few others joined him in his cheers for Dixie, but the call was feebly responded to, many Copperheads refusing to follow the Colonel's example."

<sup>6</sup> *Marin County Tocsin*, June 1, 1861, Vol. 1, No. 11. Page 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Marin County Tocsin*, June 1, 1861, Vol. 1, No. 11. Page 2.

<sup>8</sup> During this era, an occasional California citizen voiced written support for the continued use of terminology associated with the Confederacy. An anonymous editorial in the September 10, 1864 *Sonoma Democrat* (Vol. 7, No. 48) signed by "ONE OF THE OLD SCHOOL" mocked a church whose leadership no longer wanted to use the word "South" in its name: "Diqui instead of Dixie or South; or some word may be coined for the purpose, anything to avoid using the objectionable word South or Southern.— The Southerners arc not only to be *exterminated*, but every *word* that would remind us that ever such beings existed, is to be dropped out of our language."

<sup>9</sup> The negative associations with "Dixie" were significant and enduring enough that a June 4, 1891 writer for *The Marin Journal* felt it necessary to offer an account of how such a School District name came to be: "During war-times the district was called Dixie by the Republicans in derision, and the name clung to it ever since."



Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

## Fwd: D\_\_\_\_\_ School Board Meeting

1 message

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 11:54 AM

To: Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

Here was an email from November.

Begin forwarded message:

**Subject: D\_\_\_\_\_ School Board Meeting**

**Date:** November 12, 2018 at 11:45:35 AM PST

**To:** brad honsberger <brad.honsberger@gmail.com>

**Cc:** achacko@dixieschooldistrict.org, Jennifer Takeman <jtaekman@dixieschooldistrict.org>, Marnie Glickman <marnie.glickman@gmail.com>, Mark Schott <schott.m@gmail.com>, Jason Yamashiro <jyamashiro@dixieschooldistrict.org>, tsmith@dixieschooldistrict.org, mrhutchinson@usfca.edu, brookscnguyen@gmail.com

Dear Brad and Board (past and present),

As another contentious board meeting approaches I ask you seriously step back and consider the enormity of your responsibility in protecting all within this district.

Some in this community are marginalized and directly harmed by having a symbol of racism and slavery as a masthead on our school. It's more than embarrassing, it's wrong.

It is time to show leadership and signal an acceptable of a process to move forward with a name change.

A 2020 vote would drag this issue out, and shine a spotlight on Marin's historic, institutional and current racism. Perhaps most concerning, dragging it out and having our local issue become national news would create the conditions similar to those which preceded the infamous riots in Charlottesville. Do not recreate that story.

Show leadership and allow the process of removing the symbol of hate from our schools and district. Show a willingness to lead and not deflect. Without real leadership for the less fortunate and marginalized in our community, a vote to "Keep Dixie Dixie" would be a horrendous slap in the face of fairness and racial justice in our community. Don't set us up for that.

Please welcome new name petitions that are sure to follow. In the absence of leadership from the current board, the community is already creatively addressing the need to have a brainstorming session of new possible names. It's exciting to hear some of the ideas, ranging from Lucas Valley, Big Rock, Miller Creek, Miwok and even Joseph Eichler! You have an opportunity to show leadership and engage in the name change process, or you can drag your feet and drag this community through years of painful division.

Mr Miller dropped a bomb on this community 150 years ago during the civil war. Let's stop wasting time and emotional energy battling over how to clean it up. The only way to move on is a new, less harmful name. A 2020 vote will not alleviate the pain of many in our community - nor, if the majority saw no harm in the name, end our cause to change the name. This debate will continue until a new name is selected.

Help us clean up and move on - don't hinder our efforts.

MLK Day is coming. Black History Month is coming. Show leadership and embrace a new name reflective of 21st century values.

Sincerely,

District Parent and Voter

P.S. RE: Brown Act. I give everyone the benefit of the doubt that moving to discuss the name change in closed session was done as an innocent mistake. I am grateful for member Glickman for bringing this issue to fore. As Mark clearly said during the last meeting, open session is when you can discuss this together. At the last meeting you had people crying and clearly stating how harmful the name is to them. Yet... given the opportunity... three on this board sat extraordinarily quietly. Not even a "wow, I didn't realize this name was so harmful." No self reflection? Really? Tomorrow you have another chance to discuss this issue and show leadership (IN OPEN SESSION). Infighting does not demonstrate leadership. Speak your minds. Respect all in your community and do what is right.

P.P.S. Thank you for your service! I know it aint easy.



Comment on petitions <[commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org](mailto:commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org)>

## Fwd: Tuesday's Board Meeting

1 message

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 11:53 AM

To: Comment on petitions <[commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org](mailto:commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org)>

Here was an open email from another white male resident, sent back in November. We've all been offering our help and support through this difficult time and it's encouraging the new board appears more receptive to our input.

Be well,

Begin forwarded message:

**Subject: Tuesday's Board Meeting**

**Date:** November 11, 2018 at 10:21:24 PM PST

**To:** brad.honsberger@gmail.com, achacko@dixieschooldistrict.org, jtaekman@dixieschooldistrict.org, Marnie Glickman <marnie.glickman@gmail.com>, schott.m@gmail.com

**Cc:** jyamashiro@dixieschooldistrict.org, tsmith@dixieschooldistrict.org, mrhutchinson@usfca.edu, brookscnguyen@gmail.com

Dear Members of the Board:

As you know, I have attended each of the last several board meetings. Unfortunately, I am unable to do so on Tuesday so I am sharing my concerns as a parent of a student in the district here. I trust you will read them and give them some thought, as I remain committed to the success of the district and all its students, and I am quite concerned, not only about the name change issue, but also about the issue of leadership.

It appears that the board is poised to vote on a resolution authorizing an advisory ballot measure regarding the changing of the name of the district. If this resolution passes, it is, quite frankly, an abdication of the leadership you were entrusted with when you took office.

I say this because the issue at hand is one that is symbolic of the racial stratification found throughout our country--and yes, in our community as well. If you put to a popular vote an issue that has a real impact on non-White residents of the district, you will further marginalize and exclude them. Having a vote at all accomplishes that. Having a vote of this nature in a district that is well over 70% White--where many of these well-meaning folks do not feel the sting of the name Dixie and its hateful history--will likely result in the majority of them thinking the name isn't a big deal. And that will in turn result in slightly over 50% of the voters giving you an advisory vote of 'it's not that important to me' on the name change. And while that gives you cover to maintain the status quo, it sends a strong message to residents of color who feel the sting of being on the wrong end of advantage on a daily basis, and for whom Dixie is a symbol of that dynamic. Namely, that they don't matter, at least not as much as others. In that regard, an advisory vote does real damage to real people. It also, as I said, abdicates your leadership responsibility.

I have attached a document from the Aspen Institute titled 'Ten Lessons for Taking Leadership on Racial Equity.' I implore you to read it--and pay particular attention to the lesson that begins, 'Racial equity work needs the legitimacy, protection, and sense of urgency that the highest level of leadership in an organization or community can provide.'

I have not seen any evidence that racial equity work is important to this board. I--and others--have shared witnessed instances of racial micro-aggressions and other forms of inequity in the schools our children attend. Yet at no point has anyone on the board or from the district reached out to ask for more information, let alone to share any concern. This in itself is strong evidence that racial equity work is needed in this district and indeed needs to be given legitimacy, protection, and urgency by the board. Leadership means taking what you yourselves have seen (including an African American resident/parent having a 'Keep Dixie Dixie' sign shoved in his face in front of you after sharing how such a sign makes him feel particularly

marginalized), realizing it lies just under the surface in our community all the time, and saying strongly and with conviction that it must be addressed--not by putting that man's and others' feelings to a vote by those either removed from such behavior or perpetrators of it--but by saying loudly and convincingly that those of us in the majority have a responsibility to those on the receiving end of disparate treatment and outcomes.

It is to this point that I have attached two other documents. One is a definition/model of equity-mindedness. It is short, clearly stated, and largely absent from this district in my experience and involvement. I hope you find it helpful in summoning the courage to do better than an advisory vote and to start acknowledging the real, persistent, systemic issues that exist here just as they do elsewhere.

The second is a reading about creating inclusive and equitable processes. Regarding the advisory vote I ask you consider this excerpt:

Sometimes those individuals who are marginalized or most impacted by a particular issue may not be represented in the same numbers as those who are typically privileged and impacted to a lesser degree by the issue. Consider giving more weight to the recommendations of those who are typically marginalized and/or most impacted by the particular issue.

As you can see, an advisory vote falls into the trap outlined above. Please do not fall into that trap, as it has real consequences--and sends a loud message--to those who are marginalized in this community.

Finally, I give you this excerpt from the empirical study, "Black Elephant in the Room': Black Students Contextualizing Campus Racial Climate Within US Racial Climate" (George Mwangi, et al, 2018): "Systemic racism is reflected in US education institutions, and these institutions can act as agents in the social reproduction of inequality as well as act as agents for positive social change."

I ask you to reflect, to consider, and to do whatever further research might be necessary to summon the courage as a board to be an agent for positive social change. The alternative is not only unbecoming, it betrays the wise words of Dr. Cornel West, who said, 'America needs citizens who love it enough to re-imagine and re-make it.' This community, whether we realize it or not, needs you to help us re-imagine this district, and that can begin convincingly with the removal of the symbolic racism that is Dixie.

I stand at the ready to assist in any way I can, personally, professionally, as a parent, as a resident, as a taxpayer, as a contributor to Can Do!, as an educator, as a member of the privileged majority recognizing that privilege must be put to good.

Thank you.

[REDACTED]

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### 3 attachments

 **TenLessonsforTakingonLeadershipRacialEquityUnit9.pdf**  
292K

 **How\_Can\_We\_Create\_An\_Inclusive\_And\_Equitable\_Planning\_ProcessMPAssociatesCenterforAssessmentPolicyDevelopmentUnit82013.pdf**  
254K

 **Equity-Mindedness CUE.pdf**  
81K



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# TEN LESSONS FOR TAKING LEADERSHIP ON RACIAL EQUITY

Many Americans think of race as the third rail of social and political interactions—that anyone who touches it will be burned. In our ten years of promoting leadership and action on racial equity, however, we have found that it *is* possible to engage racially mixed groups in both productive dialogue and collective work on race. After all, most Americans are at least generally aware that people of color don't do as well as the white majority on any measure of well-being. Many people of goodwill believe that our failure to address racial inequity undermines our democracy, our economy, and our standing in the world. They want to contribute to solutions around race but don't have the experience or the tools to take it on. Most people tend to avoid the issue altogether rather than venture into risky territory.

*Ten Lessons* summarizes what we've learned about how to navigate that terrain and take leadership around race. They are especially for those who want to play more of a role in promoting racial equity but aren't sure about where or exactly how to begin. While there are, of course, many more than ten lessons that might inform the daily work of building racial equity, we hope that these ten will encourage new actors, and that they will be a useful tool for those already playing active roles.

**RACIAL EQUITY:** When people in a society have equal chances to reach their full potential and are no more likely to encounter life's burdens or benefits just because of the color of their skin.

The lessons described here have grown out of our Racial Equity Leadership Development Program, which engages leaders from across sectors to develop and implement strategies for eliminating racial divisions and disparities. More than 1,000 leaders have participated since 2003. Many of them have gone on to introduce and influence public policies, change institutional practices, engage top decision-makers, improve media coverage, and launch new racial equity-promoting organizations. For more information, visit [www.aspeninstitute.org/policy-work/community-change/racial-equity](http://www.aspeninstitute.org/policy-work/community-change/racial-equity).

# 1

## Start with Facts and Put Them in Context

Basic facts about racial disparities in access to opportunity or in life outcomes are not common knowledge. People have varying degrees of information and understanding about the magnitude of racial disparities and the myriad of factors that contribute to them. Starting with data shows how racial disparities occur regularly, systematically, and cumulatively across all sectors, and across the country. Data alone, however, cannot speak for themselves, and so it is crucial to look at them in context—both contemporary and historical.

One of the most positive aspects of American culture is that we focus both on what is possible in the present and on what people are able to rise to regardless of how humble their beginnings. When it comes to understanding how to overcome racial disparity and division, our wish to leave the past behind does not serve us well. It does not allow us to appreciate how the legacy of history endures today in housing segregation, educational inequity, wealth differences, and social standing. For example, beginning with the founding of our nation, whites were allowed to take advantage of a number of wealth creating and social mobility opportunities such as free land, access to capital, and home ownership subsidies from which people of color were legally excluded. Starting racial equity work with data in context accomplishes four important things:

- Ensures that everyone starts with a common frame of reference and an objective knowledge base
- Grounds dialogue in facts rather than in opinions or misconceptions
- Shows a way forward through an often volatile and painful topic
- Helps people understand that the past still has bearing on the present when it comes to race

The more people understand the facts behind our current picture of racial inequity the more likely they are to take action.

# 2.

## Create Safe Spaces for People to Talk about Race and Develop Strategies for Achieving Equity

Talking about race is the first step to devising effective strategies for undoing racism, but it can be a minefield that many do not want to traverse. People of color can be reluctant to engage in dialogue that may cause them to feel pain and anger or that asks them to speak for their entire race. Whites can be reluctant to engage in dialogue in which they might be called racist or blamed for the circumstances of people of color.

Creating an environment that facilitates productive dialogue about race and lays a foundation for action is challenging. Leaders of racial equity efforts must be prepared to deal with emotional and unpredictable reactions. In addition to using traditional strategies for facilitating effective dialogue about volatile social problems, we have found the following to be especially helpful in creating a safe space for addressing race:

- Engage a respected convening entity and high-quality facilitators
- Talk with participants in advance to understand their concerns and goals
- Provide background materials, especially films and videos, that create a common knowledge base and bring the issues to life
- Have the group develop ground rules for interaction that establish respect, reduce anxiety, and address concerns
- Keep the focus of the dialogue on the level of societal problems not personal stories
- When personal reactions arise, validate the feelings they bring up and link the discussion back to the underlying structural context as soon as possible

Remember that trust is a long-running casualty of racism and can be an issue, especially in mixed-race groups. While trust cannot be built overnight, it can develop over time as people spend time, work, and develop their understanding together.

### **3. Emphasize That Today's Racial Inequities Don't Depend on Intentional Racism**

Most racial inequity today is not sustained by overtly racist talk or action, although those certainly exist and should continue to alarm us. Instead, racial inequities have come to be sustained by their own momentum because they are baked into our belief systems and into the places, policies, and practices that shape our daily lives. This has the overall effect of allowing racial disparities to seem fair or 'natural.' These dynamics continue to segregate people of color, relegate them to low-paying jobs, and label them as threats to public safety. Change requires conscious interruption of the status quo. This means unpacking and analyzing the effects of seemingly neutral public policies, institutional practices, and beliefs, and reshaping them if they are contributing to inequity.

### **4. Counter Stereotypes and Bias**

Racial stereotypes and coded messages are pervasive in American culture and media. They influence how we frame and interpret the world around us. We are surrounded by images of black men as criminals, Latinos as illegal immigrants and unskilled workers, Muslims as terrorists, and Asians as model minorities. Given increasing residential and educational segregation, such negative stereotypes might be the only images many have of other racial groups. Making progress means confronting these popular representations directly. As a start, any person who takes leadership on racial issues must develop a language, a comfort level, and a set of clear examples to counter the standard stereotypes and so-called common sense about race. Stereotypes can also be countered on a larger scale through deliberate outreach, messaging, and media-related strategies.

### **5. Start by Preaching to the Choir**

Even those already addressing racial inequities in concrete ways often need help communicating about why inequality persists in contemporary America and what to do about it. The racial story of the 21st century is more complicated and harder to see than the overt racist attitudes and actions of the pre-civil rights era. Since there is no single overarching reason for what's happening today—but instead a complex interaction of policies, practices, and belief systems—it's impossible to put forth simple, cause-and-effect explanations for persistent racial disparities. Motivating a core group of allies—the choir—to take action requires a persuasive framework and language, as well as tools to help identify the most effective routes to progress on this longstanding societal challenge. Starting with the choir builds a critical mass of those who are willing and able to make progress on racial equity and to bring others into the fold along the way.

# 6.

## Explore Contradictions

Explore the contradictions between our racial reality and the idea of the United States as an equal opportunity society. Our national values of equal opportunity, meritocracy, and individualism often lead us to believe that people are solely responsible for their own well-being, and that if they work hard enough, they will be successful regardless of race or ethnicity. Yet an array of laws, public policies, and institutional practices has influenced who does and does not have access to the opportunities—good schools and well-paying jobs, to name just two—that contribute to success and well-being. While it is true that the laws and policies excluding people of color from avenues of social mobility are no longer on the books, opportunity is still not evenly distributed across the races. Researchers have shown, for example, that a white man with a felony conviction for cocaine possession is more likely to be hired than a black man with no criminal record whatsoever—even with otherwise identical résumés. Findings like these exist in education, health, and the justice system, causing us to rethink what meritocracy and equal opportunity really mean in 21st-century America.

Surfacing such contradictions between our national values and our realities helps us to compare what we would *like* to have with what we *actually* have. It sheds light on what we need to do to achieve our values, and it broadens the perspective on the kinds of changes needed to advance racial equity. For instance, if a decision-maker thinks that high black and Latino jobless rates are due to lack of effort on the part of people of color, then he or she will probably be unlikely to support jobs programs or income supports. But if that same decision-maker compares the ideals to what opportunity paths are actually available, then his or her focus is likely to shift from blame or resignation to support for programs that improve employment pathways and increase opportunity access.

# 7.

## Engage Leaders with the Greatest Level of Influence

Racial equity work needs the legitimacy, protection, and sense of urgency that the highest level of leadership in an organization or community can provide. Having leadership's support makes it far more likely that racial equity work will be taken seriously and not dismissed as irrelevant or a concern of the past. Such authorizers have many avenues for taking action and for influencing others, and given the complex dynamics of modern forms of racial inequity, it is difficult to make progress without their support and involvement.

# 8.

## Help People Find Their Roles as Agents of Change

People often need help seeing how they can be effective agents of change in the context of the complex, mutually reinforcing system of beliefs, policies, and practices that produce racial inequities. The big picture, or structural, view of how race operates in 21st-century America may be intellectually illuminating, but it can also feel overwhelming and may not always indicate where to begin. There are at least three ways to take action:

- Identify a long-term racial equity goal. Use the Racial Equity Theory of Change,<sup>1</sup> or a similar method, to unpack the goal and map backwards to action steps. This process is best undertaken by teams from the same organization or community.
- Identify each person's unique sphere of influence and potential actions. These may be small steps such as reaching out to a peer to share a new analysis or insight about race, or big steps like a foundation president convening government, civic, community, philanthropic, nonprofit, and business leaders with the goal of changing inequitable policies and practices to advance racial equity.
- Identify opportunities for supporting or creating partnerships and networks with existing racial equity leadership groups. Partnerships among nontraditional allies are especially powerful, such as corporate leaders and civil rights leaders, the mayor and grassroots activists, or media leaders and the nonprofit community.

1. See [www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/images/Roundtable%20on%20Community%20Change%20RETOC.pdf](http://www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/images/Roundtable%20on%20Community%20Change%20RETOC.pdf)

# 9.

## **Make Sure It's Someone's Job to Focus on the Work of Building Racial Equity**

Progress toward a better, fairer, and more equitable society will not happen on its own. Changing the policies, practices, and belief systems that contribute to racial disparities requires ongoing attention over a long period of time. Too often, advances are made in one area but are eroded in others. At the same time, many potential leaders feel overwhelmed managing their existing work portfolio. As much as they may want to incorporate a racial equity focus in their work, they often are uncertain about how to add that to an already overwhelming list of responsibilities. So it's important to identify a person, team, or organization that can help leaders develop and implement their racial equity plans, connect them to others, and keep the work focused.

# 10.

## **Support One Another and Continuously Cultivate New Leadership**

Those dedicated to achieving racial equity all agree that it's hard work. It can be tiring, and evidence of progress might not come along often enough. Long-term strategies need to be balanced with early wins. Early wins build constituencies, keep people on board, energize the process, and prove that it's possible to make progress. New energy, perspective, and talents keep efforts relevant and fresh, so always be on the lookout for new allies and young leaders. The path is a long one, so it's essential to fortify oneself and one's allies, and to celebrate successes, both large and small.





THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

Roundtable on Community Change

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New York, NY 10022  
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**OUR MISSION:** The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change distills lessons about how to revitalize distressed communities and helps policymakers, practitioners, and funders develop and implement effective strategies for promoting vibrant, racially equitable communities in the United States and internationally.

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Washington, DC 20036

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## HOW CAN WE CREATE AN INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE PLANNING PROCESS?

Groups working toward racial equity or social justice goals often form diverse coalitions. They pay attention to making sure that multiple perspectives and life experiences are represented in their groups, in part by including people from a variety of racial/ethnic identities, genders, class, sexual orientation and other characteristics and identities. This is a first step toward an inclusive process, but it does not always result in an equitable process. Creating equity requires attention also to the norms and culture of a group, how resources are distributed, who makes decisions and on what basis, to whom the group holds itself accountable, and other issues of power and privilege.<sup>1</sup>

The following Tip Sheet focuses on four issues: process issues, practices, decision-making, and accountability. These tips apply to a wide variety of group formations and processes, including coalitions, collaborations, system interaction, dialogue processes, etc.

### **Process Issues**

Racism, white privilege and internalized racism influence group processes in obvious and subtle ways. One of the basic lessons learned in groups working toward racial equity is the importance of taking time to create a common language and analysis regarding these concepts. It is also critical to discuss some of the process issues upfront. After the group creates a common language and analysis and begins the process of building relationships between individuals and groups, it will be vital to make some process decisions and set group expectations:

- How are decisions made concerning who gets invited? How do people decide if an organization has a legitimate place in the process?
- How will the group address power differentials among organizations (size, staffing, funding, etc.) sharing the process? How will the group determine each member's contribution based on differences in size, staffing and funding?
- Does the group want to create a set of principles to which everyone must agree?
- How will groups that use different approaches (advocacy, training, service delivery, organizing, etc.) work interdependently to address an issue?
- How will information be shared? Who decides the level of information to be shared?
- How is the distribution of resources to particular community organizations determined? How can the process avoid creating a hierarchy of organizations based on their relative wealth in terms of dollars, other resources, access to funders, and/or time?
- How will group members be allies for each other (e.g., agreeing to disagree, to not attack, to give feedback, to implement different approaches to community change, etc.)?

See "White Supremacy Culture," article by Tema Okun, changeworkDR, for more information about how white culture influences group processes and assumptions.

### **Practices**

Some practices to consider adopting for your group:

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<sup>1</sup> This tipsheet is based on material from, Chapter 10, Multiracial Partnerships and Coalitions by Maggie Potapchuk, from Potapchuk, Leiderman, Bivens, and Major, *Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building*, 2005.

## HOW CAN WE CREATE AN INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE PLANNING PROCESS?

- *Set an expectation to name issues as they come up.* There are sure to be power dynamics, competition, and turf issues; the sooner the group can name these issues and discuss them, the sooner they can be addressed instead of fermenting. Consider having a multi-racial team of facilitators manage meetings until group norms and expectations can be established.
- *Ensure agenda setting is an inclusive and equitable process.* A leadership team may have a responsibility to create meeting agendas. Consider including different opportunities for all participants to help shape what gets covered in a meeting, for example, by leaving time at the end of meetings to do a quick brainstorm, or having a small, diverse (race, gender, class, education, etc.) group meet before the next full meeting to help create the agenda. Also, it is important to encourage people not to lobby for agreements outside the meeting process before things are even brought to the larger group, or if that is the process, it needs to be acknowledged and managed equitably.
- *Be attentive to cultural differences about discussing conflicts and making decisions.* It is obviously important to build trust and relationships so people feel comfortable letting others know if they are not being listened to or if a decision is being pushed too hard or how white privilege has manifested itself in the dynamics of the meeting. Take time to learn about different cultural practices, and consider incorporating them into the meeting. It is important to note that it is often a mistake for someone outside of a particular cultural group to decide whether or not a particular cultural practice from that group should be used— some cultural practices are intended to be shared and others are not – so allow each group to choose its own level of sharing as well as its own level of participation in other groups' cultural practices.
- *Make sure there are supports for people who are not fluent in the primary language used by the rest of the group.* Make sure all materials are available in the languages needed. Rotate the dominant language. If there is translation at a meeting, make sure those using it are given full opportunity to participate and contribute.
- *Create time for some race/ethnicity caucus meetings within the context of the group.* For whites, this provides an opportunity to check in on assumptions and behavior, or to ask for support in understanding an issue from a white privilege/anti-racism lens, to encourage action, and/or to deal with resistance from colleagues within organizations. Some whites may be concerned about this method, as they may see the goal of the coalition as meeting across racial lines and it may feel awkward to self-segregate. In reality in many meetings, self-segregation is the norm—though it is usually not labeled that way publicly. For people of color, meeting in caucus is an opportunity to create a space to discuss issues and to support leadership.
- *Consider including process observers at meetings to assess how racism and privilege issues are manifested in the group process.* Process observers can share observations before the end of the meeting. As awareness grows among the group, everyone can play a role in observing the meeting process. Some things to observe include:
  - What is the pattern of responses when an individual or group raises an issue regarding power, privilege, etc.? How do members respond?
  - How is information controlled within the group? What are the race/ethnic identities of individuals who control information?
  - What are the assumptions that people are making about what is “normal” or what is “best” – to what extent do these have white privilege embedded – e.g. to what extent are they white, dominant culture norms? (See [White Culture worksheet](#))

## HOW CAN WE CREATE AN INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE PLANNING PROCESS?

- What role does privilege play in the formal decision-making process within the organization?
- How are ideas and/or concerns legitimized within the group? What are the racial/ethnic identities of the individuals who legitimize an idea or concern?
- Who speaks in the group? Who doesn't? How does the group ensure space is made for all voices, including dissenting ones?<sup>2</sup>

### **Decision-Making**

It is helpful for a group to set its decision-making norms up front. Another important discussion is how conflicts will be addressed and resolved and/or diverse perspectives will be incorporated. Some items to think about:

- Decide how to make the decision-making process transparent.
- Consistently check to see whose voices are dominating decision-making processes, and make sure that the people most accustomed to controlling these processes (white people with respect to people of color; men with respect to women; wealthier people with respect to poorer people; advocates and system workers with respect to neighborhood residents)<sup>3</sup> are not dominating the processes.
- Create group norms that everyone agrees to follow. Some things to consider include creating an equitable voice (ensuring diverse voices and diverse points of view are heard and understood) and giving more weight to those directly affected by an issue. Ensure that everyone is held accountable to following these group norms since people used to dominating these processes often work outside the rules. Sometimes those individuals who are marginalized or most impacted by a particular issue may not be represented in the same numbers as those who are typically privileged and impacted to a lesser degree by the issue. Consider giving more weight to the recommendations of those who are typically marginalized and/or most impacted by the particular issue.
- Balance time spent on process with actions that move the work forward, because group members will have different levels of tolerance and need for process and action.<sup>4</sup>
- Be vigilant in identifying and discussing outside and internal forces that may be pushing an agenda, a timeline or deliverables.

### **Accountability**

Create an accountability process – that is, a way of reporting to and taking direction from people for whom your issue is most urgent – who feel its negative effects daily or stand to lose or gain the most

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<sup>2</sup> Questions are modified from, "Concentric Circles: Unpacking Privilege and Power Diagnostic Tipsheet." 7/07, Maggie Potapchuk, MP Associates.

<sup>3</sup> It is also important to ensure that youth are provided an opportunity to share their experiences, opinions and perspectives. Older people can dominate conversations and negate youth voices. Sometimes the reason stated is "because they lack real world experiences." Though it is important to understand that in several cultures the message is that youth should listen to their elders and not speak, the group needs to be aware of both ethnic cultural practices and dominant culture practices.

<sup>4</sup> From [www.evaluationtoolsforracialequity.org](http://www.evaluationtoolsforracialequity.org) (accessed June, 2005).

## HOW CAN WE CREATE AN INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE PLANNING PROCESS?

from your actions. Your group should have this kind of accountability *as a group*. Doing so establishes your top priority, push comes to shove. It also grounds your work, provides political cover for difficult decisions and connects your work to a power base.

Accountability processes need not be formal, though they can be. Some of the principles adopted in these processes include:

- Organizations and residents work and communicate together effectively and transparently.
- Organizations and individuals will create and uphold the principles of racial equity and address white privilege.
- Organizations will internally adopt these principles and address white culture and privilege.
- If a few organizations within the coalition choose a radical intervention, create an agreement that even if another organization cannot support the intervention, it will not challenge or dismiss the intervention publicly.
- Group members will regularly communicate with and listen to the individuals most impacted by the racial justice issue(s) being addressed and support their leadership.

See section on *Accountability*

Finally, create an ongoing learning process within the group. Project Change, a foundation/community partnership to eliminate racism, was funded by the Levi Strauss Foundation. One step of their five-step process was to focus on education about the institutional policies and practices that perpetuate racial disparities. Having a common analysis and language to discuss structural racism and white privilege within a multi-racial group, and one working on racial justice or equity, is important for determining interventions, strategies and outcomes, and in addressing intergroup and process issues. Training is one way to create this common analysis, but an ongoing learning process is critical in creating and implementing a plan to make progress in addressing racial inequities.



Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

## Fwd: Please change the name ASAP

2 messages

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 11:40 AM

To: Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

This was my first message to the BOD on this subject back in September.

Sincerely,

Begin forwarded message:

**Subject: Please change the name ASAP**

**Date:** September 25, 2018 at 8:38:24 AM PDT

**To:** brad.honsberger@gmail.com, alissachacko@yahoo.com, schott.m@gmail.com, jentaek@sbcglobal.net, Marnie Glickman <marnie.glickman@gmail.com>

**Cc:** info@changethename.net

Dear School Board,

The word "Dixie" is too loaded and darkened by our country's terrible past. And we must remember it was not the distant past when the southern states upheld slavery and condoned lynchings. And we must realize that even in the present the fight for equality and justice is not played on a level battlefield.

After further consideration I am now embarrassed to say my son goes to "Dixie School." A predominantly white school in wealthy Marin with an emblem of racism on its door.

Please take this ugly reminder away from my day-to-day lexicon.

Please allow the kids to vote for a new name!

And if we must leave a piece of "Dixie" behind for the record books, let it be in a positive light with a sign talking about racism and the stand the community took in 2018.

No more.

Thank you,

Father of kiddo in elementary school

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 11:49 AM

To: Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

Additional comments from Sept.

I think this is the one that Brad found threatening and thought "I crossed a line?"

In retrospect, it was a pretty accurate prediction of what would follow if the BOD ignored our pleas for change.

I'm not sure if any of the current board or administrators at the table are of African or Latino descent, but the optics of you overseeing this racially-charged debate remains the same.

I encourage the board, especially the white-male chair, to exercise caution when trying to silence minorities (or any activists) about how the word Dixie impacts them.

You might be prepared for a little more energy since there will be so many people at the upcoming hearing. I suggest you have a plan A, B, and C, and know when to exercise your hammer and only use it judiciously.

If folks start singing or chanting you might consider allowing it to go on so folks can release that pressure valve. Or take a short recess. I'm just worried of the optics and "crowd control" methods, but I'm sure you're thinking this through in advance.

The optics have gone from 30 in a small district office, to being broadcast on national TV, and they're not pretty. The sooner you change the name the sooner we can get back to other important district matters and remove our historic and institutional racism from the media.

Do not let this go to 2020!

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: Please change the name ASAP  
**Date:** September 30, 2018 at 8:29:22 PM PDT  
**To:** brad honsberger <brad.honsberger@gmail.com>  
**Cc:** Marnie Glickman <marnie.glickman@gmail.com>

Hi Brad and Marnie,

Oh boy. Y'all better fasten your seat belts. Please accept this note as a friendly suggestion and curtesy warning.

This campaign is about to step into another gear and this issues is getting hot. I wouldn't call it "overdrive" quite yet, but that's what's coming if this short-term uptick in the campaign doesn't result in a name change. The sooner it's on your agenda and behind us the better.

Folks are going to be coming to every meeting and voicing their opinions until this over. As emotions rise and stories of personal pains are poured out during public comment periods... this is going to get sticky, emotional and loud. You've gotten a small taste of local publicity in the IJ, but your board is going to get some significant attention in the coming months if this campaign isn't taken seriously.

To me, in the age of MeToo and BlackLivesMatter, ignoring a grass-roots campaign to eliminate a clear symbol of (\_\_\_\_)ism from a public school is tantamount to political suicide. From an optics standpoint, an all-white board ignoring this campaign will not win the hearts of minds of readers and viewers. Trust me on that.

History, timing, and public sentiment are not on the side of those resisting 21st-century change.

I'm just giving you a friendly heads up that if this name doesn't change soon it's going to get quite personal and many more eyes will be on this district. Extending this will not be good the community or the BOD. I strongly suggest you convince any stragglers and move-on quickly.

In the public (and historic) eye, your terms will likely be remembered for how you handle this single sensitive issue. I believe that the coming backlash to no-change would be *that* significant. I assure you the change-advocates are not going to slink away or be quiet until this matter is resolved.

Praying you're able to get this over quickly instead of dragging it out for months to come.

Best of luck, and please let me know if there's anything I can do to help you better serve this community.

Please share this email with your colleagues if you believe it will help our cause to change the name. I'm here if you'd ever like to discuss this further or brainstorm on strategy.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]  
Father of kindergartener in your district.

P.S. Brad - it would be fantastic if you could put this near the front of the agenda or let us working-parents speak early in the meeting and not have to sit through the rest of your agenda. Thank you for that curtesy if timing allows.

2/5/2019

Dixie School District Mail - Fwd: Please change the name ASAP

On Sep 27, 2018, at 11:33 AM, [REDACTED]

Brad,

You are most welcome. The name must change, and the sooner the better. For what it's worth, all in my community including those on the SR School Board say you're an excellent person and president for the BOD. I attended the most recent BOD meeting to speak for the name change, but had to leave around 8:30. Hopefully when the name change is on the agenda it will be early in the evening and I'll be able to share my verbal comments during the public comment period.

Marnie,

I've met you a few times at greenie events. I used to be on the BOD of Sustainable San Rafael and their members independently supported your campaign. You also came to my front door during your campaign. My home happens to be right across from D\_\_\_\_ School Elementary. Based on the character of those who supported you in your initial run, I can only imagine that you also support a name change. The time is now. Put this ugly symbol in the rearview mirror. Get this divisive issue over with. Call a vote and let's move on.

Thank you both for your volunteer service and consideration of this terrible issue. And thank you for seeing this issue through to the end - hopefully in the short-term!

Sincerely,  
[REDACTED]

On Sep 26, 2018, at 10:34 AM, brad honsberger  
<brad.honsberger@gmail.com> wrote:

H [REDACTED]

On behalf of the Board, thank you for taking the time to share your views.

Brad Honsberger

On Tue, Sep 25, 2018 at 8:38 AM [REDACTED]  
wrote:

Dear School Board,

The word "Dixie" is too loaded and darkened by our country's terrible past. And we must remember it was not the distant past when the southern states upheld slavery and condoned lynchings. And we must realize that even in the present the fight for equality and justice is not played on a level battlefield.

After further consideration I am now embarrassed to say my son goes to "Dixie School." A predominantly white school in wealthy Marin with an emblem of racism on its door.

Please take this ugly reminder away from my day-to-day lexicon.

Please allow the kids to vote for a new name!

And if we must leave a piece of "Dixie" behind for the record books, let it be in a positive light with a sign talking about racism and the stand the community took in 2018.

No more.

Thank you,  
[REDACTED]

Father of kiddo in elementary school



Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

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## No on Dixie Name Change

1 message

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 11:27 AM

To: "commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org" <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

February 1, 2019

Dixie School Board,

I am writing this note to you today to tell you why I think you should not be forced to change the name of the school district on February 12<sup>th</sup>. In my opinion it is irresponsible for the Change The Name group to make board members that have no experience under their belt make such a big decision for our community. In November 2018, a very seasoned board voted 4-1 to take this issue to a democratic advisory vote within the Dixie School District community, as it was too big for them to decide on their own. This was not a decision they took lightly. But one month later, two brand new board members, along with the sitting members, were presented with 13 petitions to change the name of the district. We feel sorry for the board to be faced with such a divisive topic and that our two newest members were bombarded with this only two weeks into their term. It is clear the petitions were strategically served to take advantage of the novice members, and that is unacceptable. Typically, the first six months of a new trustee's tenure is spent learning about process, budgets and teamwork. Instead they are being forced to make such a monumental decision that will have a long-term effect on our district and our community without having the experience. Asking the new board members to make a decision on changing the name of a 150 year old district without truly hearing from their 14,200 constituents is irresponsible. We feel the two new board members should take more time in their positions and time to hear from the entire community before they can be prepared to make such a decision. I lived in Marinwood from 1982 to 1989 and moved back 13 years ago to present.

Thank you,

  
San Rafael, CA 94903



Comment on petitions <[commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org](mailto:commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org)>

---

## Dixie Name Change

1 message

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 11:22 AM

[REDACTED]  
To: [commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org](mailto:commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org)

The community will support you in going forward with this name change. It's long overdue. No matter what the name is changed to it will be better than Dixie. We want to an inclusive and welcoming community to all people of color as well . As a mother of two girls who attended the Dixie School District ,and received excellent educations at Vallectio and Miller Creek , I know that they too want the name to be changed as well. Their loyalty and sentiment is toward the area and schools and not the name Dixie. Former students and their families will understand that the you the school board did the right thing by changing the name.

I like Terra Linda Elementary School District or Miller Creek Elementary the best from the list but my first choice would have been Obama Elementary School District . It would definitely attract positive attention in the long run and be a great political statement along the lines of : People of colour : we are now opened for business in 2019 and welcome you to our community.

Thank you ,  
[REDACTED]



Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

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## Dixie Name Change, NO!

1 message

[REDACTED] Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 11:22 AM

To: "commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org" <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

January 31, 2019

Dixie School Board,

I am writing this note to you today to tell you why I think you should not be forced to change the name of the school district on February 12<sup>th</sup>.

Our peaceful community has been dragged through the mud. Our kind and generous community has suddenly turned toxic. All of this has been driven by a very small group of people, including one school board member, who want to change the name of our district. The pattern of their behaviors is reprehensible and should not be tolerated or rewarded. The Change the Name group has contacted every media outlet they can and have been attempting to make our small-town national news. They are trying to frighten this community into silence by threatening lawsuits against the school district and local community members and calling them names that are not true in order to get their agenda pushed through.

In my opinion the tactics to change the name have been dirty and extremely toxic to our community. Changing the name at this point would benefit no one and would continue to divide our community. We need time to heal and approach this with education as the top priority. Then our community will know this comes from a place of both heart and mind. We will not be labeled as anything that is not focused first on the welfare and high standards for educating children.

If the name changes it should not happen like this. It has all been handled so poorly and the board should not give into the bully tactics of a small group who do not represent the community as a whole. I have lived in Marinwood for seven years now. Because I live on Blackstone Drive, is that name in jeopardy of being insensitive? Should it be changed to Neutralstone? Where is this going and where does it end?

Thank you,

[REDACTED]  
San Rafael, CA 94903



Comment on petitions <[commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org](mailto:commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org)>

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## NO on Dixie Name Change

1 message

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 11:20 AM

To: [commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org](mailto:commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org)

February 1, 2019

Dixie School Board,

I am writing this to you today to tell you why I think that the community should vote for the name change and why you should not be forced to change the name of the school district on February 12<sup>th</sup>.

How does this help the kids? How does it help the families in our district that fall below the poverty line? A considerable amount of time, money and energy has been wasted on this cause. In my opinion this name change does not provide a tangible help to any child. Imagine if this energy was put into things to help our students and schools? We have a 15% poverty rate in our district. Poverty is real in our district and there should be more of a focus on assisting others that are not as fortunate in our community. Think of all of the positive things the Change the Name group could be doing with the time spent and money raised on this "issue" that will not help one single student.

Let's get back to the kids and focus on what will really make a difference both financially and emotionally for our children. I lived in Marinwood in the early 1980s and have been back now for seven years with a niece and nephew who have attended Mary Silveira Elementary School and my own child plus niece and nephew who have attended Miller Creek Middle School. Thank you for your consideration and dedication to make a difference in our school district.

Thank you,

  
San Rafael, CA 94903



Comment on petitions <[commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org](mailto:commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org)>

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## Dixie Name Change

1 message

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 11:18 AM

[REDACTED]  
To: [commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org](mailto:commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org)

This is not the first time that the subject of "change the name", has occurred. Let's end this once and for all. These last few years have made me more aware of the racial divide in our country. In the past, I never gave the name "Dixie" a thought. (I've lived here 49 years). But now that I'm more aware, I'd rather have our district's name reflect our surroundings. Our children are watching and I'd be proud if we were to choose a name that is inclusive rather than keep a name that divides. I believe that this is one of those teachable moments.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone



Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

## Comments and recommendation regarding name change

2 messages

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 9:47 AM

To: "commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org" <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

[Redacted]

I support the vote to change the name from Dixie, and I recommend keeping it short and sweet. Let's avoid a name with a mouthful of several words strung together (so as not to exclude anyone's sensitivities).

**Live Oak Elementary School District** represents the beautiful trees that thrive throughout our entire school district and county, and have been here longer than any of us before or during the times of Dixie. Just my 2 cents.

In appreciation of your consideration,

[Redacted signature]

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 11:03 AM

Cc: "commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org" <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

[Redacted]

Thanks for forwarding. I didn't realize there was a place to send in your support of name change and state a preference for the name. I will do the same!

[Redacted]

Sent from my iPhone

[Quoted text hidden]



Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

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## The Pain our community has endured.....

1 message

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**We Are Dixie** <werdixie@gmail.com>  
To: commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 10:21 AM

Please see the attached for what has been done and said to our community in order to "win" #NotLikeThis

We Are Dixie



**HOW THE CHANGE THE NAME MOVEMENT HAS HURT OUR COMMUNITY STRATEGICALLY.pdf**  
5620K

## HOW THE CHANGE THE NAME GROUP HAS FUNDAMENTALLY AND PERHAPS PERMANENTLY HURT OUR COMMUNITY

Our community deserves better than this and they deserve to be heard through a public vote. Please be aware that instead of promoting tolerance and diversity, the CTN group's leaders have unapologetically divided and harmed our community through aggressive media centric and abusive tactics. They believe that winning is the only thing. No matter if the community loses as a whole. It surely will. And that's just fine with them.

If the name ends up changing it should not be like this!  
#NOTLIKETHIS

They are Hurting our community by making harmful labels



**Change The Name of Dixie District** @NewNameForDixie · Jan 27

ACTION ALERT: Email Dixie School Board by 2/3. Tell them to change the name of the school district. >> [commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org](mailto:commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org)



Noah stating that he is saving Marin from itself (EXERPT FROM email he sent to the CTN petition signers)

There goes another few hours of the Board's valuable time, wasted listening to the same old arguments and misinformation from activists.

And just in case anyone missed one of their recent updates ... this is not about the kids or the district. It is about political ambition and the aim is to get national coverage and make a documentary

Can you please let them get on with their job of managing the school district for our children?

### It Ain't Over Till It's Over

By Noah Griffin

As an interim report, we in the Change The Name coalition have much to be heartened by. What began as a lone quest by Kerry Peirson 21 years ago has been supplemented by the courage and leadership skills of District Trustee Marnie Glickman. Add to that the scores of parents, organizers, social media experts, community leaders, historians and social justice warriors. Thank you.

Our wave of support continues to grow and momentum shifts our way. This story has national implications as a feature piece and is ripe for a documentary. In many ways, we are trying to save Marin County from itself.

4 ⌵ ⌵ Edit · Reply · Share



**David Curtis** → Outrage is Trendy · 4 days ago

Once the name is changed they can go back to the financial reports no one cares about

⌵ ⌵ Reply · Share

Noah Griffin bragging about the press he has gotten and what cowards the local parents in the community are for not wanting to go on camera. He has called every media outlet that he could in order to get press and drag our community down into the mud. He also shows that they went to the native American tribes and did "careful negotiation" (EXERPT FROM email he sent to the CTN petition signers)

One by one the walls are being breached. The careful collection of the names, the proper vetting of the residences, the non-partial presentation with careful negotiation particularly with the native tribes all contributed to the professional manner with which everyone has comported themselves.

What most impressed me was the press reception, both print and electronic. The petition presentation press release which captured the attention of all the local outlets, resulting in coverage by channels 2, 4, 5, 7 and CBS radio as well as KQED's Forum.

All the interviews were as fair as could be expected, especially insofar as the "Keep Dixie Dixie" people refuse to present a spokesperson, put their names on their website or identify any leadership. How courageous.

Kerry Pierson attacking local Realtors and lying to spin a false narrative because one specific realtor has been especially vocal against the name change so he said it is because she is trying to segregate communities.

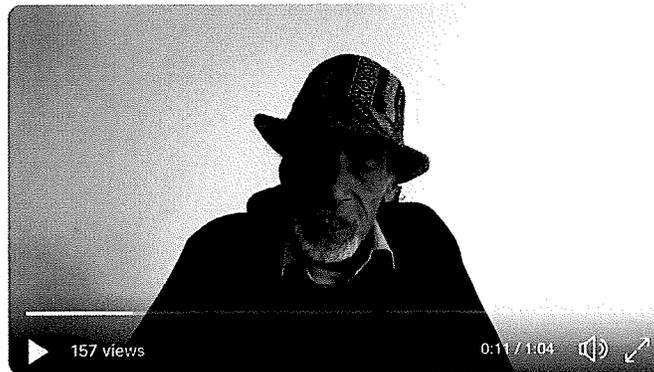
<https://twitter.com/NewNameForDixie/status/1069023069484642305>



**Change The Name of Dixie District**  
@NewNameForDixie

Follow

Who is pro #Dixie? #realtors #sanrafael  
#marin



4:18 PM - 1 Dec 2018

CTN group Inviting people from outside of our community to the board meetings

## Tuesday Night Details

Please join me and people across the Bay area who support equity, inclusion and the name change for Dixie School District. The meeting begins at 6pm, **not 7pm**. The board meeting is located at the Dixie District Office at 380 Nova Albion Way, San Rafael, CA. [Read the board agenda](#). The name change will be addressed in agenda items 5.2 and 5.3.

Upon arrival, you will see white cards stacked by the entry. Put your name on a card and write down the general topic you wish to discuss: "Dixie Name, agenda items 5.2 and/or 5.3." Hand your card to the board secretary who sits next to Dixie Superintendent Dr. Yamashiro. Speakers have no more than 2 minutes. We encourage you to attend even if you do not want to give public comment.

"David Duke" signing up on the behalf of the KKK on the We Are Dixie.Org website



Thursday, October 25, 2018 at 2:43 PM

[Show Details](#)

→ You forwarded this message on 10/25/18, 3:51 PM.

Name: David Duke

Email: [DrDukeinfo3@gmail.com](mailto:DrDukeinfo3@gmail.com)

Comment: On behalf of the KKK and white people everywhere, I want to say thank you for totally not being racist idiots.

Are you a Dixie School District Resident?: No

Street You Live On: 10 Mt Hood (like the KKK)

---

Time: at

IP Address: 73.202.166.244

Contact Form URL: <https://wearedixie.org/joinus/>

Sent by an unverified visitor to your site.

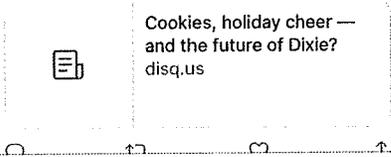
Husband of board member Marnie Glickman terrorizing and saying horrible things about people that want to keep the name of the school district. He seems to target women in his posts and his "house visits". He also has said bad things about his wife's co-board members and sent in nasty letters in an attempt to hurt their credibility and she has done nothing to stop this or apologize to her constituents and co-board members. He also has threatened multiple lawsuits.

Search Twitter Log in Sign up

dc @dc\_us · 2h Alissa Chacko should resign from the Dixie School District board before she causes them more legal bills. DC

dc @dc\_us · 3h The leadership of the Dixie School Board must change. Honsberger should allow the leadership seats to rotate and Chacko should resign. Multiple Brown Act violations and harassment of fellow trustees under their "leadership". DC

dc @dc\_us · 3h "David - you are so passionate and driven. One has to wonder when the (dim) light bulb started to..." — saltydog05



WeAreDixie is a hate group [Image of a teepee] WeAreDixie is a hate group Post by @dc\_us. nci-des.org

Reply Retweet Like Message

dc @dc\_us · 7h The fact that humans spend so much time celebrating martyrs is disturbing and regressive AF.

Reply Retweet Like Message

dc @dc\_us · 7h Congratulations to Kamala Harris on her decision to pursue the presidency.

Reply Retweet Like Message

dc @dc\_us · 7h Members of the WeAreDixie group are white supremacists.

Reply Retweet Like Message

dc @dc\_us · 7h Twitter just contacted me requesting support information for my complaint against WeAreDixie.





David Curtis  
@dc\_us

Follow

I'm signing on behalf of all the real estate bitches. Because their commissions are more important than well ANYTHING really. I try to send as much business to those bitches as possible.

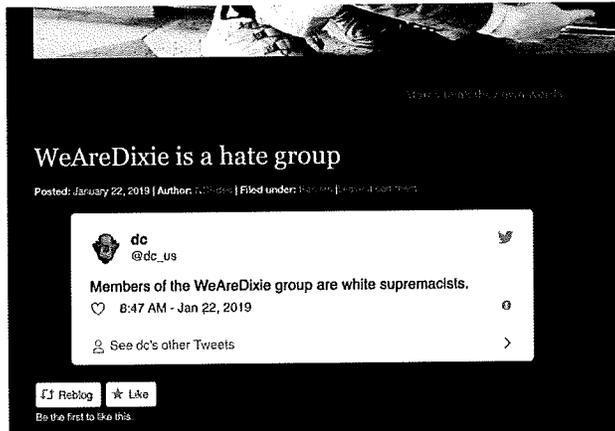


Dixie School District Name - Sign Our Petition

Dixie School District petition to protect our name and the good kids and people within our community.

[wearedixie.org](http://wearedixie.org)

9:38 AM - 3 Dec 2018



There are many more social media posts he has made but the above gives you the idea of what Marnie's husband David Curtis has been doing to this community including calling neighborhood women, showing up their doorsteps, sitting outside of their homes, sending threatening texts telling a local woman that he will be ridding the community of racists (very ominous sounding) and harassing local residences online.

Below is a letter he wrote trying to harm the reputation of one of his wife's co-board members.

12/23/2018

Mary Jane Burke

Marin County Superintendent of Schools

superintendentsoffice@marinschools.org | 415.499-5801

Superintendent Burke,

I am writing to you as a parent of a Dixie School District student.

Alisa Chacko should resign from the Dixie School District board of trustees.

She has violated her oath of office on multiple occasions.

1. She participated in both closed session and open session violations of the Brown act as documented in the recent letters from two attorneys by two different district members/Trustee.

She conspired with former Trustee Schott and Trustee Honsberger to delay potential efforts to legally change the name through petition, and brought forward a forced vote of a non-agendized item to require a public vote on the issue in two years. This action does nothing to prevent petitions. She is literally wasting everyone's time.

2. She has blocked for no legitimate reason, Trustee Glickman from having multiple agenda items during her service as a VP.

3. She has held committee meetings in violation of the Brown Act to block the effort to change the name of the district. This is documented in two attorney letters to the district that have been posted to the district website.

4. She has publicly stated (In open session) she intends to block attempts to bring forward petitions to change the district name. Petitioning is constitutionally protected.

5. She is incompetent. She directed staff to send an email doodle poll to invite trustees to what would have been a meeting to discuss subject matter that also would have been a Brown Act violation.

6. Her performance at meetings: she is often barely awake, frequently yawns, and barely maintains focus.

7. She routinely ignores other trustee's requests in open session. She literally acts as if she did

not hear multiple requests, in open sessions.

8. She should resign immediately and let a more competent person be identified for the position.

Respectfully

A large, dark, irregularly shaped redaction covers the signature area, obscuring the name and any handwritten notes or dates.

San Rafael, CA 94903

Marnie posted a photo of herself laughing at our community and the turmoil because of this change the name issue that she is leading

 marniemix  
Lucas Valley, California



24 likes

marniemix Big guns join fray in #Dixie turmoil #Marin #SanRafael  
vickigotham The news is great! And, I love this picture.

1 DAY AGO



More information on the calculated and aggressive tactics that have been done can be seen on these 2 pages of the [www.WeAreDixie.org](http://www.WeAreDixie.org) website:

<https://wearedixie.org/they-did-what/>

<https://wearedixie.org/marnie-glickman-should-resign-or-recall/>

**Our community deserves better than this and they deserve to be heard through a public vote. Please do not let these bullies who are hurting our community members change the name this way. If the name ends up changing it should not be like this!**

**#NOTLIKETHIS**



Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

**My Vote**

1 message

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 9:27 AM

[Redacted]  
From: commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org

Terra Wood Valley

[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]



Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

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## Change the name

1 message

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Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 9:25 AM

To: "[REDACTED]" <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

Greetings,

I live in the Dixie district and I find the name offensive. It's time to change. It is an investment against microaggressions and a stand against racism.

Please change the name.

[REDACTED]



Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

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## Dixie name change

1 message

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 7:56 AM

[REDACTED]  
To: commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org

Dear Sirs & Ms.,

I oppose changing the name Dixie, it is the quality of education we should be concerned with, not what it has been named or decades and decades.

This issue is of so little relevance I m surprised that I am actually taking the time to write to you.

The name has been here for so long it has historic significance that outweighs any attempt to be politically correct and try to erase vestiges of racism in the south.

If it ant broke don't fix it,

[REDACTED]  
San Rafael, C 94901



[Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>](mailto:commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org)

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## Name change

1 message

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Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 7:46 AM

[REDACTED]  
To: [commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org](mailto:commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org)

Dear Board,

Please choose to change the name of the school district to something more inclusive. While it is hard for some people to understand why this even matters, it is so crystal clear to others why the current name is hurtful to others.

Why not opt to have an inclusive name? It not only is a pro active step towards inclusion, but makes sense to economically for residents in this districts. I was put off by the name of the school district when we purchased our home.

Inaction seems to support a conscious choice: less diversity.

Thank you  
[REDACTED]



Comment on petitions <[commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org](mailto:commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org)>

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## Dixie Name Change

1 message

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 7:29 AM

  
To: [commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org](mailto:commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org)

To The Dixie School Board:

In November 2018 you voted to take the name change issue before the voters of the district in 2020. We feel this was prudent as it is a big issue, but especially because the board would have two new board members.

One would assume the first six months is spent learning about process, budgets, basically what is expected of them. For them to have to undertake such a monumental decision on top of that is completely unfair.

The Dixie name has worked fine for 150 years; waiting a bit longer to thoroughly investigate the necessity of a change, get input from the community and ultimately have the community vote on this is certainly reasonable.

Thank you for your consideration.

  
  
San Rafael, CA 94903  




Comment on petitions <[commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org](mailto:commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org)>

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## Keep Dixie Name

1 message

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 6:56 AM

[REDACTED]  
To: [commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org](mailto:commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org)  
[REDACTED]

Dear Dixie Board,

We are 100% against the Dixie name change. All three of our sons have gone through the Dixie School District. My wife growing up went to school in the Dixie School District. The Dixie School District and School has been around for a very long time and has a reputation as one of the strongest school districts in the county. When people mention Dixie in this area, the first thought that comes to their mind is a very strong school district. That has been the case for the longest time. That is the reason we moved to Lucas Valley.

Unfortunately now when you mention Dixie in this area, the first response is an eye roll and mention of one political activist on the school board and her crazed husband who has name called and tried to divide this community with bullying and scare tactics.

There is no need to change the name Dixie because there is nothing wrong with the name. This has been a complete waste of time for all parties involved.

I am all for social justice and equality of rights. The people who want a name change should put there energy toward something that makes a difference in an actual school district and the children in that school district. Changing the Dixie name does neither.

Based on recent articles in the Marin IJ, I would suggest the people who want to change the school name at Dixie use their energy to stop segregation issues in school or schools in southern Marin. When I recently read an article in the Marin IJ about segregation issues at schools in Southern Marin, I could not believe in this day and age and especially in this county, that we still have segregation issues. Disgusting. That needs to be stopped immediately. For all those politicians, school leaders and social activists in Marin County who have publicly supported a Dixie name change, each and everyone of you should refocus your energy on segregation issues in Southern Marin and stop wasting our time and tax dollars on a stupid name change.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]  
San Rafael, CA 94903

Sent from my iPhone

2/5/2019

Dixie School District Mail - Name change



Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

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## Name change

1 message

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 4:12 AM

[REDACTED]  
To: commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org

Please change the name of the school.  
Thank you,

[REDACTED]  
Grandmother of [REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone



Comment on petitions <[commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org](mailto:commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org)>

## Dixie School District - petitions to change name

1 message

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 1:55 AM

To: [commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org](mailto:commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org)

Dear Trustees,

I do not live in the Dixie School District. I did live in the district for several years when I was a teenager, but by that time I was going to TLHS. I subbed for the district for 2-3 years about 10 years ago. I now live in Kentfield.

I suppose you all became trustees wanting to spend one night a month talking about budgets and facilities and staffing. Well, you can forget that. You're in a culture war now.

### WHAT DOESN'T MATTER:

The expense doesn't matter. If it is wrong to keep the old name, then to complain about the expense is only a tacit admission that you're not really sure about what is right. And if the expense doesn't matter, then the offer of money to the district by some rich charity, on condition that you vote a certain way, is just about as crooked as it sounds.

How it looks doesn't matter, because that would mean you're more concerned with looking as if you're doing right, than doing right.

The possibility that some future board may change the name anyway doesn't matter, because they're not you. You're in charge right now.

### WHAT DOES MATTER:

First, ask: What is this like? Has this happened before, to someone else?

Yes. The genesis for the current controversy was the 1994 campaign by the NAACP to remove the South Carolina state flag from the capitol building.

In that case, the Confederate battle flag had been used for forty years as the banner of the Ku Klux Klan, various white citizens' councils, segregationist mobs, and others opposed to civil rights. The flag stood for one thing: defiance of the moral decision rendered by the Civil War. According to those who flew it, slavery was a social blessing, white people were superior to black people, and segregation and the subjugation of black people was an appropriate model for society.

The modern civil rights movement arose in America after World War II, and of course this provoked an immediate reaction in the South. Between 1956 and 1962, Georgia, Alabama, and South Carolina all modified the designs of their state flags to feature the Confederate battle flag. The timing of these acts could mean only one thing: the endorsement of the malignant, hateful sentiments recited above by the respective state governments.

This is essentially what you're being accused of here. But none of the elements of that controversy exist in this case. The name "Dixie" has never conveyed the same virulent meaning as the battle flag; it was and still is innocuous in the great majority of its uses.

There has never been any evidence offered that any person, in the whole history of the Dixie School District, ever used the name or promoted the name, or admitted in public or in private, any understanding that the name was meant to endorse the idea that slavery was a social blessing, white people were superior to black people, or that segregation and the subjugation of black people was an appropriate model for society. This is truly a crime without a perpetrator.

But, in order to create one, the name change advocates say that James Miller was a racist, offering as proof only that there were many Democrats living in the area at that time; and that he was a slave-owner, offering no proof whatsoever. This demonstrates nothing but their willingness to stoop to any accusation, no matter how unsupported and scurrilous, to have their way.

The district's name is also a crime without a victim. There has never been a showing that any student, or any employee, or any other person either within or without the district, in the whole history of the Dixie School District, ever suffered any identifiable injury as a result of the name. In the pursuit of victims, the name change advocates have cited quasi-experts, professors with degrees in Literature who presume to lecture on the subject of Social Psychology, using terms like "micro-aggression" and "belongingness" to trick you into believing that you're not qualified to understand the supposed harm you're inflicting upon unnamed students.

You are told, endlessly, that various people have had their feelings hurt. All of these accusations are entirely subjective, reflecting only the fact that our society has evolved to the point where we no longer distinguish between being injured, and being merely offended. It also has the effect of dividing society into classes; certain people among us now have the right to demand of everyone else that they be humored. The rest have to tip-toe around these people so as not to inadvertently cause offense. The inevitable result of this is a steadily growing population of Mary Todd Lincolns: they shriek, they point, they stamp their feet, they turn blue in the face, and everyone else scrambles to correct whatever condition upsets them.

So, if you're not guilty of using the name "Dixie", then what are you actually guilty of? Listen carefully to the name change advocates and you will hear: you are white, you are wealthy, and your community is not sufficiently diverse. Now ask yourselves: would you be any less guilty of these things were the school district to have a different name?

But before you answer, remember that you are not being accused of having done something, but rather having been something. And isn't this campaign on behalf of victims of similar accusations? Black people were enslaved not for what they had done, but for what they were. Since it is impossible for you to stop being white and wealthy, the least you should do right now is whatever your tormentors say. It is understandable that you would want to avoid trouble, and the easiest, most obvious way to avoid trouble is to surrender to whomever makes trouble. But don't be afraid. Abraham Lincoln once said that right makes might. Do not underestimate him. If, in your heart of hearts, you truly believe it is wrong to call your organization the Dixie School District, then of course you should vote to change the name. But if, believing it right, you acquiesce in calling it wrong, in a craven attempt to placate the yapping, silly, vicious,

2/5/2019

Dixie School District Mail - Dixie School District - petitions to change name

self-important hyenas who plague you...

Then shame on you.





Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

## Dixie Petitions

1 message

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 1:21 AM

To: commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org

Members of the Board of Trustees  
Dixie School District

My wife and I have lived in Terra Linda for 19-years. As a resident and taxpayer of the Dixie School District, I want to first thank you for your service to our children.

I have seen some of the back and forth on this subject and in my opinion, it is out of control and complete waste of our board's resources and taxpayer funds.

After my wife came home from the November meeting, she told me the board voted 4-1 for this issue to be put to an Advisory Vote on the ballot in our upcoming 2020 election. How is it that their vote to allow our Dixie School residents to voice their opinions through a democratic process is now hijacked by outsiders with this petition process??

Who is Noah Griffin to say, "Well if you can't make them see the light, you can make them feel the heat," said activist Noah Griffin. Outrageous!!!

It may come to a surprise to some, but, not everyone in our community connotates the word "Dixie" with confederacy. Your own words to ABC, "Names mean something. History means something different to different people," Yamashiro said.

Exactly!!!! So, with that being said, either keep Dixie Dixie or let our community vote on what We Are Dixie means to us! When my wife and I moved here (2000), we did not associate Dixie with the south. The name itself didn't even cross our minds. Friends told us if we were going to move back to Marin, then, San Rafael and the Dixie School District was the place to be. And, according to the high demand to live here, **it still is the place to be!!** Afterall, even you were "Keeping your eye on openings."

Your quote on July 10, 2017 in the Marin IJ, "**Dixie** has a fantastic reputation in the Bay Area community," he said. "I always try to keep my eye out on openings there." Isn't it ironic that on one hand, you have always kept an eye out to come to our district (of which you told ABC has a connotation to confederacy) and now it's being torn apart?? What a shame to start a new job and have to deal with these activists, rather than focus on our kids education.

I absolutely reject every single name below. Not one of those names "Includes" our middle school/Jr. High, Miller Creek Middle School. Each one of those names insinuate K-5. We are a K-8 district. Evidently, the people that suggested those names have no clue about the schools that actually make up our district. I guess that makes sense considering all of the outside influencers that are driving this train wreck. Imagine the branding nightmare with trying to educate newcomers that there is a middle school within the "Elementary" district. Not good.

I also find it ironic that our board member, Marnie Glickman dotes #democracy on her twitter feed, yet, she voted "no" to try to stop her constituents from voting on this matter. She even states on her blog, "an advisory election is dangerous". Ah, no, more like Marnie's "Agenda" is dangerous to our community. Let me remind Ms. Glickman of what Democracy means,

### Definition of *democracy*

1a : **government by the people especially : rule of the majority**

b : **a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections**

2 : a political unit that has a democratic government

3 capitalized : the principles and policies of the Democratic party in the U.S. from emancipation Republicanism to New Deal *Democracy*— C. M. Roberts

4 : the common people especially when constituting the source of political authority  
5 : the absence of hereditary or arbitrary class distinctions or privileges

- Big Rock Elementary School District - NO
- John Muir Elementary School District - NO
- Live Oak Elementary School District - NO
- Live Oak Valley Elementary School District - NO
- Lucas Valley Elementary School District - NO
- Mary Dixie Elementary School District - NO
- Miller Creek Elementary School District - NO
- Miwok Elementary School District - NO
- Miwok Hills Elementary School District - NO
- Oak Valley Elementary School District - NO
- Skywalker Elementary School District - NO
- Terra Linda Elementary School District - NO
- Terrawood Valley Elementary School District - NO

Thank you for your time. I prefer you to vote NO on all of the above petitions and also advise the community that this stops now and there will not be a change to our Dixie name. Should it go to a vote and our community votes for the change, then and only then, will I accept it.

Best Regards,

  
San Rafael, CA 94903  
#NOTLIKETHIS



Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

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## Comment on Petitions to Change the Dixie name

1 message

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 12:19 AM

To: commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org

Dear Dixie School Board Members,

I am a Dixie School alumni (1968 to 1975) and was lucky enough to watch both of my children graduate from Dixie as well. We were all under the impression that our school was named for a Miwok Indian. Our Dixie was never associated with the confederacy. All students attending Dixie had an equal opportunity education. It is shocking and sad to hear that the Dixie School District has now been accused of racism because of a misunderstood name.

I believe it is the responsibility of the current board to focus on what is best for our students and how to enrich their educations rather than be sidetracked by a group of activists that intend to bring harm to the community by disparaging the Dixie School District name.

I do not believe that anyone in the community wants to offend anyone else by keeping the name as is. There are very practical reasons to keep the name Dixie with the first and foremost being the cost of a name change. There has already been a terrible waste of valuable resources spent on this matter not the least of which is time. Secondly, it is a slippery slope to start changing names that someone may find offensive. Also, the homeowners of this community are contributing a significant amount of funding to Dixie School via measure B on their property taxes. It is only fair to consider their wishes regarding a name change.

The culture of this community has been progressive and open-minded for over 50 years. If the Board insists that the name change is a valid request then it should be put to a vote of the community. **However, if there is a vote, the costs of that vote should be paid for but the group seeking to make a name change and NOT by Dixie School funds or the local taxpayers.**

Respectfully,

[Redacted Signature]  
San Rafael, CA 94903