



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

## Change The name

1 message

Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 1:37 PM

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

Dear School Board Members and Superintendent,

I am writing to support the name change for the Dixie School District.

My preference is Terra Linda School District, but I would be happy with any name that is not after a person.

I can't think my reasons for supporting the name change are new to you, but to summarize:

1. The name Dixie is inextricably associated with the South during the Civil War under the Confederacy.
2. The Confederacy rebelled against the United States of America for the right to own human beings as slaves.
3. The argument for preserving the name is similar to arguments used to defend Confederate memorials: heritage. To assign the lofty idea of "heritage" to a small elementary school district in a small county in California is absurd.
4. We are living in a time when hate crimes are on the rise and racists are emboldened. It would be a good time to send a message that we do not stand for hate.
5. The school district is a wonderful and diverse community. It's time the "heritage" name is abandoned for one that reflects the community.
6. An advisory vote would be expensive and only extend the vitriol that has been created by people on both sides of the argument. It is unnecessary.

Respectfully submitted,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
San Rafael, CA 94903  
[REDACTED]



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

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## Please change the school district name

1 message

Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 1:23 PM

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

Dear Board Members,

I'm writing to ask that you change the name of my child's school district from something with clearly racist connotations, Dixie, to a name more affirmative of the values of the schools and the best members of our community. From the names I have seen put forward, Big Rock is a nice name. Miller Creek could also work well.

I am a Communication professor and regularly lecture on the process of signification. That we are even entertaining a discussion that suggests the name "Dixie" is not a signifier loaded with racist meaning from the days of the Confederate, slave-holding south is mind-boggling and disconcerting to me. Yes, the term may have other significations, and some people may not have an issue with the term. Language is varied and complex. But to deny the interpretation of the term rooted in historical fact, as some in our community have done, is not simply an egregious moral oversight, borne or privilege and power, it is enough of a critically-deficient interpretation that having these same people influence decisions about our schools would seem problematic on intellectual merit alone.

There are far greater problems facing us, even around racist language. I understand this and am sympathetic to those who may not think this an urgent issue. But, the initiative has started and to not change the name when faced with the opportunity would be a real mark against this community.

Further, it is difficult to see how our children can fully accept the excellent lessons on inclusivity, diversity, and emotional intelligence they regularly receive if these important state standards are taught under a contradictory banner. Put differently, the name compromises the integrity of the curriculum forwarded by the Superintendent, the principals, and the teachers, and thus also compromises the integrity of those educators.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,



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

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## Please change the name

1 message

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**Kitty Kelly Epstein** <[kkepstein@gmail.com](mailto:kkepstein@gmail.com)>  
To: [commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org](mailto:commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org)

Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 1:04 PM

  
An Education Professor

Sent from my iPhone



Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

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## Name Change for Dixie

1 message

Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 12:51 PM

[REDACTED]  
To: commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org

Good afternoon-

I'm a Marin County taxpayer, and in my opinion it is time to change the name of Dixie. Almost anything else would be an improvement.

Thank you-

--

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]



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

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## change the name of "Dixie"

1 message


Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 12:50 PM

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

Regardless of the semantics of the history and intentions of this name, we are living in a racist country that is oppressing people of color, and specifically black folk. In the desire to create a world that is equitable and creates change by acknowledging past hurt, changing the name from dixie to another title is the right thing to do.

Thank you,

--

  
she, her, hers



Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

## Please Change the Name!

1 message

To: commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org

Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 12:39 PM

Dear Board Members,

As a resident of Lucas Valley I am writing you to communicate my strong urging to take **immediate** action to change the name of Dixie School District and school. The title of "dixie" has an undeniable association with the southern states that once constituted the Confederacy and continued deplorable racist laws and practices long after the Civil War. "Dixie" is a totally inappropriate name for a **public school**.

I urge you to choose one of the local geographic or descriptive names that were submitted as part of the name petition process such as Live Oak, Live Oak Valley, Lucas Valley, Miller Creek, Oak Valley, Terra Linda or Terra Wood Valley Elementary School District.

I am also copying my prior messages to the board on this subject to be included in the official comments.

Thanks you,

12/17/18

Dear School Board Members,

Congratulations to the newly elected board members and my thanks to all of you for your work on behalf of the schools and community. My purpose in writing today is to express my support to change the name of the Dixie School and the Dixie School District. I sent an earlier message to the Board dated September 25, 2018 (below for your reference):

*I am a resident of Upper Lucas Valley and mother of two teenage daughters of color and am writing to lend my strong support for the movement to change the name of Dixie School and District. The name change is long overdue. If this school name existed in any community that included a larger and more varied population it would have been changed years ago.*

*I urge you to do the right thing and change the name! It would do a great deal to signal to our current and prospective neighbors and community members that the district is truly inclusive and sensitive to racial and ethnic issues.*

Since writing this message to the Board in September, I have been reading the name change debate on NextDoor. The online discussion has clarified my thinking, and I would like to respectfully submit several points I hope you will take under consideration.

Regarding the origin of the school's name, I don't believe it is possible to muster evidence to conclusively support either camp on this point: "Dixie" was based on a woman's name or "Dixie" emerged from a bet referring to the Confederacy. **Perhaps it was both**, as it is not uncommon for multiple factors to influence decisions. What can be said is that in 1863, when the District was named, the Civil War was at the two year mark and "Dixie" was closely and clearly associated with the Confederacy. This small, but significant, piece of word etymology cannot be dismissed even if these particular five letters also form a woman's name.

For those who argue that the word "Dixie" is not racist because it is in use as a woman's name and is the name of various private businesses (most notably "Dixie Cups"), I am required to put on my teacher's hat, and sternly admonish them to catch up on the course materials. The term "Dixie" has a long cultural history of being associated with segregational and racist aspects of the south and is not appropriate for a **public institution**. It's not a coincidence that a political party formed in 1948 based on the founders' opposition to racial integration and desire to retain Jim Crow laws and white supremacy took the name **"Dixiecrat."**

On a personal note, I grew up in a transplanted white southern family living among white southern neighbors (most from Arkansas, Texas and Missouri) here in Bay Area during the Civil Rights Era of the 1960's. As a child I often overheard

adult conversations referring to "Dixie" and the Old South. These conversations involved nostalgic memories of the life they left behind, including the natural beauty and delicious food, but also of a place that was racially segregated. And sadly, on many occasions, I heard adults combine their love of "Dixie" with declarations of "the South shall rise again!" clearly implying a nostalgia for the pre-Civil Rights Era. There is no doubt in my mind that the name "Dixie" is associated with the segregated South. I wholeheartedly empathize with the deep and painful feelings the name "Dixie" evokes among individuals who themselves or families were subjected to discrimination and segregation.

Regarding the cost of changing the name, I have faith that the district and the board can and will use creativity, common sense and financial acumen in attending to this. It's unconscionable to fathom, and impossible to defend, that one of the wealthiest and least racially diverse counties in our state and country cannot afford to **step up and do the right thing to address racial insensitivities in a public school to promote inclusiveness and diversity**. This is an important teaching moment for current and future students - there is still much to be done in this country if we are to have a truly integrated and inclusive society.

Finally, I urge you to take decisive and firm leadership and proceed with changing the name of our district and school immediately. Changing the name of a school, street, library or other public facilities by government officials is certainly not an unusual occurrence. There is a long history of such changes in our state and country throughout the years to honor various leaders (John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr., etc.), to reflect geographic or other changes, and most recently to address injustices. Subjecting this community to a vote is not only financially wasteful, but will undoubtedly deepen the personal attacks and vitriol that is evident on social media regarding this issue. Regardless of the outcome of a potential vote, it will not change the fact that the word "Dixie" has a racist connotation. Continued insensitivity to this does not and will not reflect well on our community.

We are living in a culture where *institutional racism* has existed for several centuries and is a prime reason why we still have highly segregated neighborhoods and communities in spite of evolving awareness and anti-discrimination laws. The recent letter of violation of this very law sent to the Sausalito Marin City School District is but one current example. Let us then take whatever steps we can to address inequality and advance awareness. In the scheme of our all too short lives, changing the name of a school and a district is a small, but meaningful step towards inclusiveness. Again, let us all do what we can to "bend the arc of the moral universe" towards what is right and just.

Sincerely,

  
San Rafael



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

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## change the name of "Dixie"

1 message

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

Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 12:50 PM

Regardless of the semantics of the history and intentions of this name, we are living in a racist country that is oppressing people of color, and specifically black folk. In the desire to create a world that is equitable and creates change by acknowledging past hurt, changing the name from dixie to another title is the right thing to do.

Thank you,

--  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]





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

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## Thank you for your service!

1 message

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

Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 12:30 PM

February 3, 2019

Dear Members of the Dixie School District Board,

I would like to thank each of you for your dedication and service to the district, our community, and most importantly our children.

In regard to the name change, this topic has divided our community, generated unnecessary tension, and brought out the worst in a small group of people within our neighborhoods. Too many individuals have spent countless hours debating and arguing the origin of the name Dixie and its connotation. I am empathetic to those within the district that find the name Dixie offensive, racist, etc...I can only speak for myself but I never related the word Dixie to the South, racism, exclusion, period.

Our family moved to this community four years ago for two main reasons. First, the quality and reputation of the Dixie School District and secondly, the sense of community that existed here. This topic and the way it has been handled has me rethinking both.....

I am asking each of you to uphold the last board's decision and put this topic out for community vote especially since the public is aware that there are 2 board members biased towards the name change. Please allow the democratic process to work! Everyone in the Dixie School District community should have a voice. Additionally, the petitioning system as it stands today MUST be overhauled. It is ridiculous that such decisive topics can be introduced to the board with just 15 signatures and distract you all from the most important topics that affect our children.

Once again, please allow our community the opportunity to decide this topic via an election.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

San Rafael, CA 94903

2/4/2019

Dixie School District Mail - Dixie School name change



Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

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## Dixie School name change

1 message

Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 12:25 PM

To: commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org

Dear School Board,

I strongly agree that the name Dixie is offensive and reflects the slave-owning South in deep historic ways.

The name should be changed to reflect the values of Marin County.

Regards,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted address]



DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comment on petitions <[commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org](mailto:commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org)>**Re: Deadline is Tomorrow 3pm**

1 message

[REDACTED] m>  
To: "ChangeTheName.net" <[info@changethename.net](mailto:info@changethename.net)>, [commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org](mailto:commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org)

Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 12:01 PM

Hello,  
Please find attached, my letter in support of changing the name.  
Yours truly,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

On Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 11:38 AM ChangeTheName.net <[info@changethename.net](mailto:info@changethename.net)> wrote:

# Tomorrow is the deadline for written comments!

Speak out for the name change for Dixie School District.  
Stand up for racial justice. Advocate for equity and inclusion.

## Send your written comments today!

Email Dixie School Board at [commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org](mailto:commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org). Ask them to change the district's name. Deadline is Monday February 4th at 3pm. You can also send your comments via web form.

## Attend the public hearing and vote on Tuesday, February 12th.

Doors open at 4:30pm. The public hearing and board vote begin at 5:30pm. The location is Miller Creek Middle School gymnasium, 2255 Las Gallinas Ave, San Rafael, CA. Public comment is limited to two minutes per person. Street parking is plentiful. We will provide snacks.

*The proposed names are listed below. If you have a favorite, feel free to mention it in your correspondence and public testimony.*

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
San Rafael, CA 94903

February 3, 2019

Dixie School District Board of Directors

San Rafael, CA 94903

I am writing to urge you to change the name of the Dixie School District.

I attended Bernard Hoffman, Oakview and Miller Creek schools and my son attended Miller Creek, so I am a Dixie School District alumnus, who is still living in the area, in a home that I own.

I was, what was called then, a gifted student at Oakview School. I remember questioning the fact that our district was called a name symbolic of the Confederacy. I started looking around and realized that there was only one black family in the neighborhood. Even at a young age, I was questioning why my hometown of Terra Linda was so white. Ironically, when I was at Miller Creek, archeologists discovered a Miwok village under the school site. This also got me wondering about where they went? And how were they killed off?

As I grew up and went to college (UC Berkeley), I noticed that there were other cultures out there and I started doing research as to why Marin County was so white, save for Marin City and the Canal district in San Rafael. I found out that builders and bankers were subsidizing home purchases for white people, and prohibiting black people from buying homes. Realtors even redlined the area and encouraged people of color to live elsewhere.

What we as predominately white residents need to do is make reparations to the original inhabitants of the area, Native Americans, and also to those banned from living in the area. Black residents are saying that changing the name of the district is one step closer to repairing the damage. Let's just do it? I'd like to see the district named after the original inhabitants: Miwok School District.

A community wide vote would only reinforce the segregation and not be fair to those shut out of living in the district. Now is the time to make amends. No need to wait any longer!

Yours truly,

[REDACTED]



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

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## Change the Name

1 message

Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 11:48 AM

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

Hi there!

I attended Dixie school district myself and hearing the history of the name makes me wonder why, in 2019 we are sending our kids to a school named after a derogatory term. Be on the right side of history.

Change the name.

Thank you

2/4/2019

Dixie School District Mail - Change the name!



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

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## Change the name!

1 message

Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 11:47 AM

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

Please remove the racist annointed and Confederate name of Dixie from the School District! May I suggest "Maya Angelou!"

Thank you,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]



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

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## Favoring "Big Rock" or "Oak Valley"

1 message

Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 11:46 AM

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

It is time!

No matter if "Dixie" was not originally used as a hark back to the Civil War: it retains those overtones.

This is our Northern CA equivalent of Southern states removing Confederate statues (placed largely in the regressive 1950s).

I am writing as my grandkids went here briefly; the name was for wincing.

Thanks!

[REDACTED]

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

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## Letter to the school board on the Dixie name change

1 message

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

Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 11:25 AM

February 3, 2018

Dear Dixie School Board,

I am writing today to express my utter disgust and heartache with what has happened to this community due to the media campaign to change the name of the Dixie School District. Another person in the community slandered my family yesterday, accusing us as being a racist family. This person has been reading social media posts and hateful rhetoric, and feels very free to label community members based on these posts. The racially charged hateful rhetoric tolerated at board meetings, in social media, in print, and on television must stop. This issue has literally infected the community and schools at this point, where families have been accused of being white supremacists if they do not agree with a name change. Many people like myself are considering pulling their children, and financial support, from the district if this insanity is allowed to continue. As a former Dixie school volunteer, loyal contributor to Can Do!, and someone who works professionally to help minorities, the abused, and the vulnerable in society (I am a public health nurse), I am absolutely sickened by the continued assault on the community. Please do not allow a political agenda to hijack the school year any longer. I urge you to do the right thing by this community and put this matter to a community vote. It is time for the division and hateful rhetoric to end. Thank you.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

San Rafael, CA 94903





Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

## Fwd: Dixie School District name change

1 message

Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 10:12 AM

To: commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org

See below - I didn't realize I need to send to this email address.  
thank you.

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Dixie School District name change  
**Date:** February 3, 2019 at 10:08:56 AM PST  
**To:** mhutchinson@dixieschooldistrict.org, bnguyen@dixieschooldistrict.org, Marnie Glickman <marnie.glickman@gmail.com>, achacko@dixieschooldistrict.org, brad.honsberger@gmail.com  
**Cc:** "tsmith@dixieschooldistrict.org" <tsmith@dixieschooldistrict.org>, Dixie School District <superintendent@dixieschooldistrict.org>

hello Board Members,

Thank you for serving in this role and hearing from the community about changing the name of the Dixie School District. I have lived here for 16 years and have 2 sons in the District who have attended the local schools since Kindergarten and are now in High School and Middle School. I have been active in the Equity, Inclusion and Diversity team at Vallecito since it began and have done pro-bono work for SaveYourVI.org - a campaign that lets school and students know about Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and how it applies to the school environment. I went to a couple of the board meetings and listened to the other speakers on this issue and spoke briefly myself at one meeting about our moral and legal obligations as a caring community and public school.

### WHY CHANGE THE NAME?

My belief that the name should change is not because the name is offensive to everyone, or even to most, but **because it is offensive to some in our community and in a community that cares about all of its members, we want to choose a name that everyone can celebrate and feel celebrated by.**

I don't think a majority vote is the most appropriate way to determine if the name should change as the majority vote does not protect minority populations as schools are chartered to do. Under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 no person should be harassed or discriminated against because of their race, religion, or national origin. A district name that seems to contradict this leaves the district open to a lawsuit and/or corrective measures by the Office for Civil Rights and a majority vote does not address this or protect equity.

I would recommend that we define, as a group, the criteria for judgement to be able to decide what a "good name" is (i.e. "honors all voices of the community", "refers to being on Miwok land", "doesn't alienate any segment of our community", "feels inclusive", "looks to the future", "is innovative") and use a facilitated process. I think that we as a community need conversation and shared ideas vs. debate - the current "debate" stance and formats are not conducive to cooperative brainstorming. The 2 sides model will not generate a mutual win, only a winner. But a facilitated conversation can result in a mutual win and a more cohesive sense of community.

I'm glad that cost has been taken off of the table as a major issue, but even with the costs, I would consider the cost to the district of continuing to have this conversation as I don't think it will go away. And consider the cost of a lawsuit should legal action be taken as a contrast to the cost of the name change.

2/4/2019

Dixie School District Mail - Fwd: Dixie School District name change

Overall, I feel strongly that an inclusive community is a better community and that we should collectively try to make it more so. I appreciate all of your efforts toward that end and hope my thoughts contribute positively to the conversation.

best,

Johanna Pino

Johanna Pino (408) 595-1129  
johannadeipino@gmail.com



Comment on petitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

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## Dixie School Board January 20.docx

2 messages

**Vic Reizman** <vreizman@lucasvalley.net>  
To: commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org

Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 9:26 AM

.I did not get acknowledgement of receipt of my first submission of this letter.



**Dixie School Board January 20.docx**  
25K

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**Comment on petitions** <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>  
To: Vic Reizman <vreizman@lucasvalley.net>

Mon, Feb 4, 2019 at 11:03 AM

It has been received. Thank you!  
Kathryn  
[Quoted text hidden]

TO: Brad Honsberger  
Alissa Chacko  
Marnie Glickman  
Brooks Nguyen  
Megan Hutchinson  
Dr. Jason Yamashiro

January 29, 2019

RE: Dixie Name Change

On January 15<sup>th</sup> you patiently sat through several hours of a professionally orchestrated performance, with cameras running, put on by the change the name (CTN) advocates. You will surely be treated to a similar spectacle on February 12<sup>th</sup>. These are cleverly designed attempts to intimidate you on the one hand and tug at your heart strings on the other. The not so subtle message is; if you want to get back to the real mission of the Board, you had better change the name or this torment will continue.

On February 12<sup>th</sup> you will be faced with making a decision regarding a series of name change petitions. You can succumb to the pressure or pause and stick with the decision made by the prior Board to **put the issue to a democratic vote of the community**. My belief is that your decision can be made by answering five basic questions.

1. **Will the decision be based on emotion, or facts and logic?**
2. **Will the decision unite or further divide the community?**
3. **Is a name change supported by the majority of the Dixie District voters and financial supporters? In other words, 'our' community.**
4. **Will a name change contribute to furthering the education of our children?**
5. **Will a name change do anything to improve the lives and prospects of our children?**

I am opposed to a name change and feel the best way forward is to put the issue to a vote of the community. I apologize for the length of this letter but I want to put all my thoughts in one document. I thank you in advance if you have the

patience to read it through. But if you don't have the patience and would prefer instead to take some advice from **Abraham Lincoln** here it is:

President Lincoln was desperate to unite the Country once the war had been won "**with malice toward none, with charity for all**". As the celebration in Washington reached a crescendo and the bands were marching down the streets, he made a simple request. "**Play Dixie**" It is our song now!!

For those who want to delve a bit further into this issue consider the following:

First, the specific origin of the name Dixie will probably never be definitively proven. It might be the result of a bet, chosen to honor a Native American family, represent the ten (dix in French) children of James Miller, or a variety of other theories. What seems to be very clear, however, is that there is no evidence that James Miller, credited with bestowing the name on the District, was a racist or that racism had anything to do with the naming of the District. Quite the contrary, there is ample evidence, including the adoption of two Native American children, that *Mr. Miller was a benevolent and caring person*. James Miller's use of the word Dixie to identify the school district he helped establish had no racist connotation then and certainly does not have one now.

**Substantially all the arguments put forward by the name change advocates are emotional.** Most relate to the eras of slavery and Jim Crow (which I am familiar with having lived in Georgia for six months in the 50's) or experiences certain individuals had in their youth and/or in other parts of the country.

*The Dixie School District is an open, welcoming community* as is the broader community of Marin County. The occasional, isolated incidents of apparent racism in the County can more likely be attributed to ignorant pranks or comments by school kids. No connection to the word Dixie has ever been made, as recently confirmed by Superintendent Yamashiro.

The arguments put forward that have motivated the CTN advocates break down when subjected to even casual analysis. Here are just a few:

“The name Dixie establishes Marin County as an outpost of the Confederacy”. But Marin County has never been an outpost of the Confederacy, before, during or after the Civil War, which I will remind you, ended 153 years ago. This comment is ludicrous on its face. This individual has also stated that his goal is to “save Marin from itself”, whatever that means.

There was the comment by a speaker that the brutal murder of teenager, Emmitt Till, in Mississippi in 1955 had a particular impact on him because it happened in Dixie (a geographical part of America) and because Emmitt Till looked like him. Apparently, if the incident happened outside of Dixie and Emmitt Till did not look like him it would not have made any particular impact.

A contributor at the Board meetings compares the word Dixie to Auschwitz. Auschwitz was an extermination camp set up specifically to murder people. The comparison to Dixie is really an insult to the millions of people murdered by the Nazi's and a trivialization of the horror that the word Auschwitz reflects. Yes, slavery was horrible as were the succeeding Jim Crow years, but Dixie cannot be reasonably compared to Auschwitz. And there is absolutely no connection between our Dixie School District, Auschwitz or the 'Dixie' of long ago.

An opinion was expressed that it is not the people who have perpetually raised the issue of the District's name that are dividing the community, it is the word Dixie itself that divides the community. Really? The word Dixie has never divided the community. It is the people who are making the word an issue that are dividing the community. Bear in mind, the same word can be used in an endearing way or in an offensive way. It is the context and motive behind the use that makes it one or the other.

Descending further into a pit of illogic, one contributor, objecting to a vote of the community, asked how the people of South Carolina would have voted on slavery if asked in 1860. A comparison of South Carolina in 1860 and Marin County today is silly and I don't doubt how South Carolina would vote on slavery today.

Perhaps the saddest display of emotion was that of the African-American lady who stated she did not want white people making decisions affecting black

people. Does she not realize that hundreds of thousands of white people died to end slavery, that white people passed the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> amendments to the Constitution and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and that every person on the School Board is white?

There are many other examples which have opened the community up to ridicule but I will conclude this part of my letter with one more example of the emotion driving the CTN advocates.

A recent transplant from Texas stated, without any supporting evidence or examples, that he witnessed racist incidents in Texas. Apparently he believes changing the name of Dixie will somehow reduce racism in Texas and elsewhere or at least prevent its eruption in our community. This person, taking up the banner first waived by Board member Glickman, warns that unless the name is changed we will be inviting the KKK, Antifa, and various unaffiliated racists to unleash havoc on our community. So ask yourself, who is it that is really inviting, perhaps even hoping, that these despicable elements in our society descend on our peaceful community just to prove their point?

This person's embarrassingly childish behavior at the January 15<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, waving signs and beginning a chant, resulted in a well-deserved admonition by the Board's President. These antics and others are a clear reflection that emotion, not mature thinking, drives the CTN effort.

We can all recognize that certain issues do create an emotional reaction depending on an individual's particular circumstances. We should be sympathetic, validate and empathize with those emotions but not let decisions affecting thousands of people be driven by the emotions of a few.

The **Dixie** School District has been an outstanding educational resource for our children. Our community makes every effort to be inclusive and goes out of its way to be fair and unbiased. Generations of children have gone through our schools and become successful, contributing members of their communities. Dixie has never meant anything to them except the wonderful experiences, educational and otherwise, that have formed their characters and lives. It is exceptionally sad

that a small group of elite activists are now attempting to indoctrinate our children into believing that they belong to a community that supports racist symbols, is indifferent to the feelings of others and that all this can easily be corrected by changing the name of their school district. We have seen a stark display of the consequences of this indoctrination in the words of the children that have addressed the Board.

So how did all this begin? For about twenty years, a handful of activists, mostly from outside our school district, apparently have believed that eliminating what they perceived to be a racist symbol would be a life fulfilling accomplishment. Some of these activists seem to view every issue or event through the prism of racism. Repeated proposals to previous School Boards were not supported by fact or reason and were not pursued.

And then along came Marnie Glickman. A wealthy activist, searching for a cause, with open political ambitions, who had mislead voters to win a seat on the Board. Working secretly behind the backs of the other Board members, she inappropriately enlisted Superintendent Yamashiro and re-launched the name change initiative, perhaps believing that it might engender only modest opposition.

But the community did not remain silent. It researched the various theories of the name origin. It evaluated the character of James Miller. It spoke to a representative of a Native American community who addressed the Board and confirmed the validity of the Dixie family name and the possibility that the name was chosen to honor that family. It provided research to establish that the family name Dixie existed for hundreds of years before the formation of the Confederacy. It provided facts that **the word Dixie is in common usage today**, not only as a designation of a geographic area, but the name of many towns in America, of a National Forest, of a college, of music, of corporations and products and **the name of eight thousand African-American women living today in America.** It pointed out the futility of symbolic attacks on names and events that existed in a different time, in a different place and under different circumstances. Great people, black and white, have had character flaws or were victims of their



own circumstances. Washington, Jefferson, Martin Luther King. Great men. Flawed men. To be honored, nevertheless, and not erased from history.

Giving careful consideration to all the evidence and respecting the sense of the community, the most recent past School Board sensibly decided to **put the name change issue to an advisory vote of the community**. Recognizing the weakness of their position, the CTN folks immediately objected and continue to object accusing the Board of displaying a lack of leadership. They seem to feel that democracy is an unacceptable method for evaluating and deciding important issues. They further argue that the only way to end more of the chaos they have created is for the Board to change the name now. Otherwise, the issue will further divide the community and could potentially lead to violence. Do what we want or else is their message.

As already mentioned, this effort is being led by a small group of Marin County elites, using bullying tactics, who believe their lives cannot be fulfilled unless they are actively working on a politically correct cause. Many of them have no connection to the Dixie School District. They have not and will not contribute positively to the District regardless of the outcome of this controversy. They do not seem to realize how their reaction to a word that is harmless in its current context, Dixie, has given that word so much power over their emotions and self-perception.

They have been joined by a group of very well-meaning folks who feel badly, perhaps even guilty, about how minorities have been perceived and treated in the past and in other parts of America. They are being led by and supported by late joining political opportunists and a blatant political wannabe who feel that promoting this cause will enhance their political fortunes. Many are, in my opinion, hypocrites. Where were they when their children were attending a Dixie school or when they served on the School Board? The word Dixie did not seem to matter much then. How much better would it be to direct the time, energy and money that they are wasting to **make a real difference in the lives of the children** they are claiming to care for?

Despite its wealth, Marin County is faced with many **real** problems. Teenage pregnancy, drug addiction, inadequate housing, poverty, broken families, gang membership, educational challenges, poor job training, all contributing to a continuing cycle of hopelessness. These issues cannot be addressed with symbolic gestures that might make a few activists feel good about themselves but mean absolutely nothing to a child trapped in one of these situations. The Board should be allowed to **focus on the children** rather than on this divisive, useless name change initiative?

That's it. Make your decision. But as you contemplate whether to use logic or emotion in making this decision, ask yourself how you would like the children under your care to make important decisions. With logic or emotion? Will changing the name result in more inclusion in a community that is already a model of inclusion? Does a name change reflect the majority opinion of the Dixie community? And **will changing the name of the School District make any difference in the life of a single struggling kid in Marin County or anywhere else?**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

94903

**Dixie School Board Members**

Dixie School Board Members,

I am writing to urge you to reaffirm the process approved 4-1 last fall for considering changing the name of Dixie School District. Namely, that prior to considering any name change, you will include the submission of an advisory ballot to the voters that reside in the Dixie School District. Therefore, I ask that you vote against any and all name change proposals submitted to you at your February 12 Board Meeting. While apparently the Ed Code allows for people to submit proposals for name change you are the duly elected Board Members and you can reject any and all proposals.

To recap my personal involvement in the Dixie School District, my wife and I lived there for over 43 years, raised our children who all attended Dixie Schools. I served on the Dixie School Board for just shy of ten years from 1979 (appointed in late Jan) to Dec of 1988. I was co-chair of the first two parcel tax campaigns and have kept myself apprised of most significant actions and school board elections. During my tenure the Board dealt with Prop 13 aftermath, school closures and a teacher's contract dispute that barely avoided a strike. So I have some familiarity with conflicts and confrontations. While we now live in Austin, TX, we still own our house on Blackstone Dr. and it is likely we will return at some time in the future.

While I could recap the history of past suggestions by outsiders to change the name, I'm not sure it is productive for this upcoming meeting. I will say that the actions of the Dixie School District over all my association with it could be categorized as inclusive and caring. Board Members' duty is to create policies and programs that provide the best education for all the students of the District and be responsive and accountable to the voters of the District. Dixie is not now or has ever been an ethnically diverse District though currently there is a significant population of Latino children. That lack of diversity is outside the scope and purview of the School Board.

This is the appropriate place to comment on the so-called elected and community leaders who have weighed in on the name issue. In all my 40 plus years, I knew and worked with most of the ones that are offering opinions and "help." During that time, none ever voiced a concern to me over the Dixie name. For them, today, this issue is an irritating distraction or a distracting irritant. Most just want the issue to go away. But, when you decide one way or the other, they will be saying either "Well, I wouldn't have decided that way" or "I would have liked to see them handle the matter differently." In politics this is known as throwing you under the bus. Almost all are behaving as politicians not considered leaders.

I have also heard rumblings and rumors that suggest the Superintendent is behaving more like an advocate and supporter of one Board Member. The Superintendent is accountable to all five of you as a group or, worst case, a visible consistent majority. While on well-functioning boards,

the Superintendent can share his opinion on political issues, but he shouldn't have an agenda and certainly not a political one. The educational landscape of California is littered with the bodies of former Superintendents who thought they could manage the political discord of their School Board.

While much of what I say now is applicable to the entire Board, it is particularly aimed at the newly elected Board Members. This is not a trivial issue. Perhaps, the name should be a trivial issue after all what makes Dixie, Dixie is the great history of the partnership of parents, teachers, students and Board Members working together to create a great District with outstanding academic programs and enrichment activities available for all students. That commitment and success has also made the large community a vital partner in that success as the Can Do Foundation can testify.

It is that history and tradition that I am sure you want to retain. So, what is called for is an appropriately slow, considered process that reaches out to the Dixie Community in a variety of ways and not react to the politics of fear and intimidation that are currently fairly widespread.

The advisory ballot should not just be the beginning of the process, it should be the end of a thoughtful process that is inclusive. At that point, you will need a decision-making process for the Board, but not until. We have had the name Dixie for almost 150 years and in my opinion the name was never associated with the confederacy nor could any action of Dixie be considered racially motivated. Thus, time for reflective contemplation should be the guidepost for the process, not hasty decisions.

Respectfully Submitted,

[Redacted Signature]

[Redacted Name]

[Redacted Address Line 1]

[Redacted Address Line 2]



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

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## Please vote to change the name of the school district

1 message

Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 8:55 AM

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

Superintendent Yamashiro and Members of the Board of Trustees:

I am writing you to urge you to vote to change the name of the Dixie School District. I am a former school board trustee (1991- 1995).

As elected leaders of the District your primary responsibility is to act in the best educational interests of our students. What interest is served by preserving a name that is commonly associated with the Confederacy? Conversely, what educational interest will be harmed if you vote to change the name?

The financial argument of not spending District resources on this issue has been address by the Marin Community Foundation's generous offer to cover the cost of the name change. We have heard that students of color, particularly African American students and their families are harmed by the name of the school district. What students will be harmed by changing the name?

That is the crucial question to consider when making this very important decision.

In order to heal some of the divisiveness over this issue I if it is possible, I also urge you to include members of the We Are Dixie group to help find a new name for the District.

Given the process outlined in the Education Code, I am not sure how this could be accomplished.

Thank you for providing this opportunity for community input.


Sincerely,

Sent from my iPhone

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

## Comments on the Name Change

1 message

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

Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 8:50 AM

My name is Nathan Hunt, I am a father of two children in the district, one at Vallecito and the other at Miller Creek.

I am submitting my comments in writing based on the public comments I gave at the board meeting on January 15th.

I believe very strongly that now is the time to change the name of the school district. I understand others are strongly tied to this name as it is an outstanding district in regards to academics, however academics are not the only thing we need to be teaching our children. In my opinion, emotional intelligence is as important if not more important than academics.

You have heard from multiple name change supporters that this is a teaching moment for our children and the decision will impact their behavior and attitudes in the future. It may be hard to put a tangible value on that statement so I thought I would share a moment in my life that was not too different, what my teacher said to me changed the way I viewed and treated others going forward.

I grew up in the suburbs of Detroit, Michigan. In 4th grade our teacher gave us assignment to interview and tape record a person we knew that was either alive or served in WWII. My grandfather was a Torpedo man in the Pacific during WWII so I decided I would interview him about his experience. Although he served along many men of color, and I don't think he harbored any hatred towards people of color, I think he thought himself superior. The interview content had stories of his experience, but during the interview he referred to anyone that was not white as a nigger, Jap, or beaner. I was in 4th grade and didn't really think twice about it and understood what he meant with these names as they were not the first time I had heard them.

I turned in my paper with tape recording of the conversation and my teacher asked to speak with me privately. She explained to me that she knows that I probably love my grandfather, but the terms he uses to discuss other groups of people was offensive and flatly wrong. As I said, I don't think my grandfather was meaning to be hurtful, but it was almost as if he referred to minorities as not human. It immediately clicked for me and realized words matter, I do believe I strive to be empathetic to others. I believe by changing the name, you have the potential to amplify my experience to thousands of people in the district, and hundreds of thousands outside of the district and across California and the country.

Lastly, the momentum and support around changing the name is at an all time high. At this point, if you decide to not change the name, in a way, you are choosing Dixie as your school district name all over again. I understand that the Dixie has different connotations in San Rafael than it does in other parts of the country but that is not the point. This debate about listening to the ones who are offended, those who have probably experienced racism in the past. By allowing a larger, powerful, and white group decide what is and is not offensive is a form of supremacy, even if no names are called or physical harm is done.

Thanks for reading,

  
Nathan Hunt, Global GM of Gaming

