DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

Change name of Dixie School District

1 message

shershel <shershel@comcast.net> Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 10:31 PM
To: commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org

Dixie school district is outdated change it to something simple like Terra Linda School District.
Sher Sheldon

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

Name Change for the School District

1 message

Liz Rouman <slrouman@aol.com> Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 9:59 PM
To: commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org

Dixie School Board Members,

You will be doing a disservice to this community if you decide to vote in favor of one of these Name Change petitions. I believe the petitions do not even state a "reason" for changing the name . The 15 -signature petition policy is dated and does not represent a reasonable measure of our current community thought. You really need to pause, step back and really dig into creating a better process of a name change. Do not be pressured by an old policy that does not work in 2019 and only represents technically less than 1% of the District residents (15/13000??) This is embarrassing that my "neighbors " have forced this "process" on you and essentially have wasted hours of your time. Please take back control of this situation and demand that your time is better spent on the education of our kids and budgetary concerns.

Sincerely,

Liz Rouman
9 Creekside Drive

Sent from my iPhone

DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

CTN Transparency

2 messages

Alex Stadtner <astadtner@gmail.com> Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 8:50 PM
To: Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>
Cc: Jason Yamashiro <jyamashiro@dixieschooldistrict.org>

Dear Board of Trustees (BOT) and Jason Yamashiro,

Since I joined the Change The Name (CTN) community I have seen the group practice tremendous transparency and openness. Organizers have given the board ample notice and consistently explained forthcoming actions and plans with the BOT. For instance, you knew petitions were coming months in advance to give you time to prepare for this period. Supporters of CTN do not hide behind anonymous websites, we are not afraid to share our names and stories, and we have wanted to work collaboratively with the BOT and community. We still do.

Public Dialogue:
From the fall of 2018 I have seen numerous requests for more public dialogue and engagement from the CTN organizers. Prior to submitting petitions, these requests were ignored in practice. I'm grateful you have organized at least one facilitated community dialogue. I do wish you would do a more thorough and thoughtful notification about the upcoming dialogue. There is not a lot of buzz about it online and I'm afraid it may fall a little flat. But I know several members of the CTN core group who plan on attending and talking to their neighbors. Given the emotions that this fight for racial justice have raised in the community, and ignorance and recent incidents of racism on campuses, it would seem that this should be the first of many dialogues about race in our community. It would be amazing if the new BOT took a leadership role in helping our community through this difficult and ongoing transition toward racism-awareness and increased compassion.

CTN's and my transparency should not be taken for granted. You've had a very compassionate and professional group of activists knocking at your door for many months. So in the interest of continuing transparency I want to alert you to two things I'm aware of that may impact your decisions in the coming weeks.

2/12 Public Hearing:
1) Petition signers are coming in at a faster clip as media attention has increased. We're averaging 30+ new signers a day. This campaign now has a life of its own and the CTN core group of organizers are not responsible and cannot control what many supports will do at upcoming community events. The ACLU and several other large membership organizations are getting involved and notifying their members... so be prepared for a larger group on the 12th. Know that many are very fired up about national-, county-, city- and Dixie School District- recent events. By ignoring the smaller group of CTN activists a much larger group is now mobilizing. We cannot predict what these other activists will bring to the table, or the cultural norms they bring with them. So be prepared. Last time Brad didn't like that I started a chant during the last 30-seconds of my public comment. I will personally promise to you that I will not do that again at this upcoming meeting. But I'm so fired up after five months of this "process" that I cannot commit to abstaining should any other activist start a respectable form of civil disobedience (e.g., chanting, sit-ins, picket signs, remaining standing, clapping, etc.). How you - a predominantly white board - deal with non-violent civil action may have serious repercussions from an optics and crowd-control standpoint. So please discuss this possibility amongst yourselves, have a good plan, and do what you think best when/if the time comes.

2) I believe the core CTN group sees only three potential outcomes from the 2/12 meeting. Continuing on the theme of transparency here are the actions and reactions I would expect:

- A: BOT votes to change the name! (Yay - right thing. Then change the elementary school name and this saga will be for the history books.)
- B: BOT votes down all names, but indicates desire (commitment) to change name in the short-term (2 months?) after more "process." In this scenario you would probably organize many more dialogues, engage students (bigger "cookie party"), etc. (Okay - 2nd best thing. Probably allay many concerns and help release the growing pressure felt in the community. May also address many of the "process concerns" that have been raised. But this does drag out the timeline for all involved.)
- C: BOT votes down all names without indication of commitment to change the name. (Worst choice. At the very best, this will result in someone from the audience presenting another petition on the 12th or the morning of the 13th, starting another 40-day shot clock.)

I do hope that Brad and the BOT don't see these comments as threats or means of intimidation, but instead acts of transparency from a community member who cares deeply about you and ALL within our borders.

From day one my communications have been in an effort to move you in the right direction, and to help you see the troubled waters that lay ahead if inaction persisted. There is a path forward and you do have options. Hopefully the right choice in increasingly obvious as time has passed and most of my previous predictions have already come to fruition. I honestly cannot guess what would lie ahead if you voted no to all names at the 2/12 public hearing, but the thought does worry me. Regardless, please consider me a supporter of you and the community, and as a resource should you wish to discuss anything further.

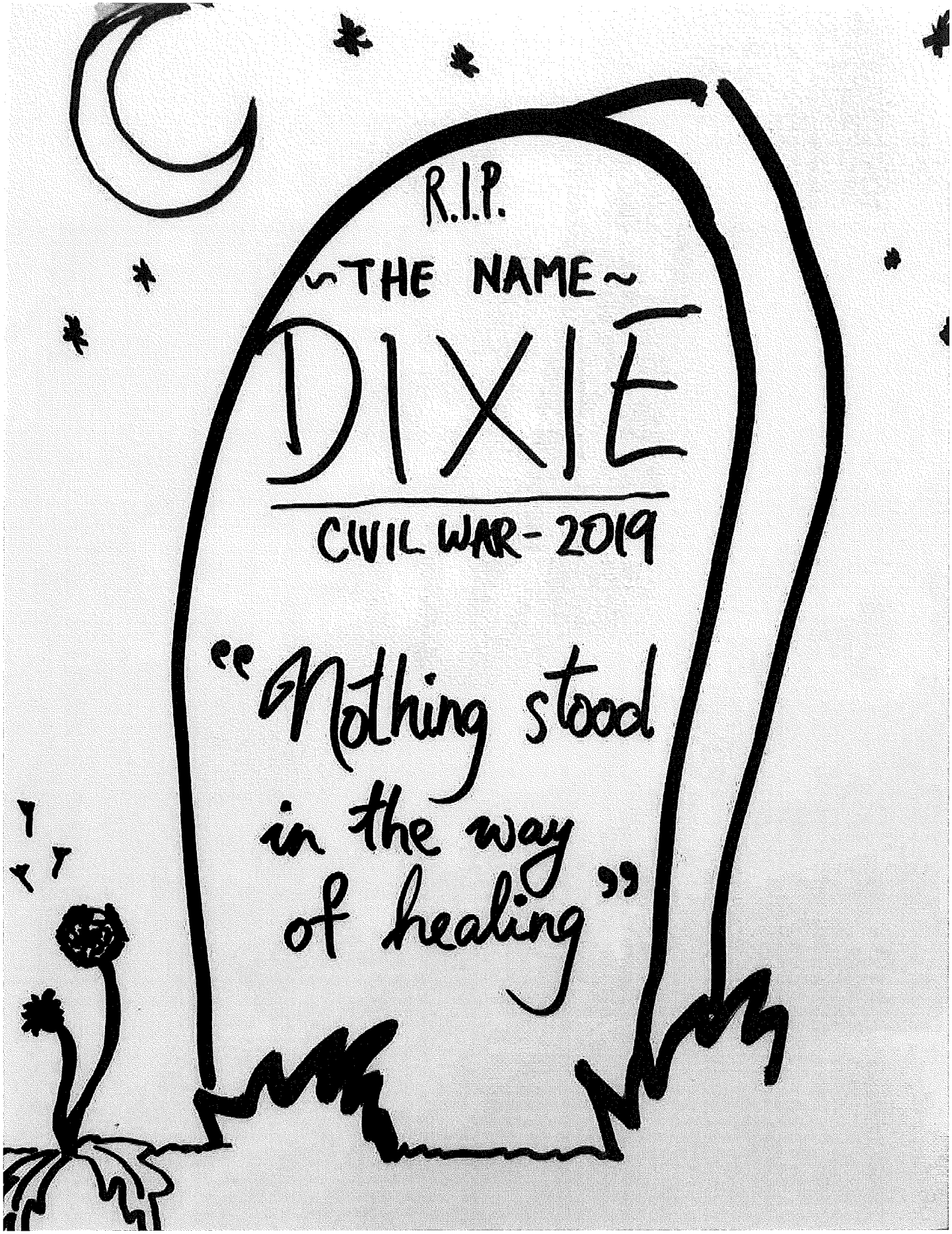
Please take this most recent act of transparency as a sign of respect and appreciation for the position you are in.

I really want you to do the right thing, and I really want this community to start healing and move on to other pressing matters.

Sincerely,
Alex Stadtner

BCC: Friends and neighbors who support positive change.

P.S. Attached artwork from a CTN-supporter created during the last BOT open meeting:



Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org> Fri, Feb 8, 2019 at 1:40 PM
To: Kathryn Neville <kneville@dixieschooldistrict.org>

DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

Name change

1 message

sempreciao@aol.com <sempreciao@aol.com> Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 7:45 PM
To: commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org

To the district board:

I would like to weigh in on the current matter of changing the name of the district. My opinion is: do it! The name is controversial and carries a meaning that is representative of a shameful period of history in our country.

A name change is just that - it doesn't mean a change in the excellent reputation that the district has earned through its years long outstanding contribution by an extremely capable staff.

This is my fifth decade living in this area....both my now adult children were schooled here. In reading all of the comments and letters in our local paper and made at board meetings, in my opinion the only negative result that come of this situation would be to NOT change the name.

Terra Wood Valley seems a good choice to me.

Thanks for your time.

Sincerely

JoAnn Hastings

DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

name change

1 message

shannon_griffin@comcast.net <shannon_griffin@comcast.net> Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 7:42 PM
To: commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org

Greetings to the School Board,

I am a resident within Dixie School District. I have ridden my bike past the little museum over the years and finally one day was able to visit inside. It is a sweet little museum and I enjoyed it. Until, I learned that the name Dixie was chosen to support the Southern Confederacy. I was shocked and saddened.

Please change the name to a neutral and respectful name. Even though I don't have children attending school I vote for bonds that support the District. I would like to think that some of my tax money will go to the cost of changing the name.

Let's teach mutual respect and let's practice it.

Thank you,

Shannon Griffin

175 Knocknaboul Way

San Rafael

Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach - Clarissa Pinkola Estes

DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

Race Counts

1 message

Alex Stadtner <astadtner@gmail.com> Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 7:28 PM
To: Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

BOT,

The attached data is from the Race Counts survey data which compared cities and counties across California: https://www.racecounts.org/about/

By keeping a name that scares and intimidates minorities you would support and perpetuate the fact that Marin County remains the most racially disparate county in California.

You can help support and encourage inclusivity and diversity, by taking a step in the right direction and changing the name. The word "Dixie" and its association with the Confederacy is a slap in the face to the few minority families who make a life here in San Rafael. They have pleaded with boards past… but to deaf ears.

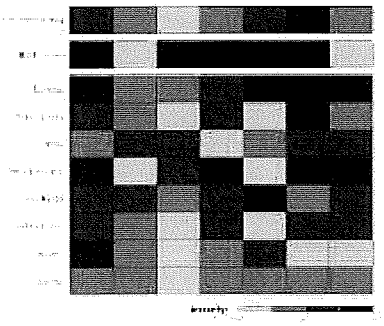
It's a great opportunity to do good before you.

Remove this racist symbol from your letterhead and school signs.

Thank you for your service to ALL in our community, especially the traditionally underrepresented in Marin and beyond,
Alex Stadtner

MARIN COUNTY RANKS THE 1ST MOST RACIALLY DISPARATE COUNTY IN CALIFORNIA.

2 attachments



Screen Shot 2019-02-01 at 7.22.13 PM.png
39K

Race Counts_Marin County data.pdf
954K

MARIN

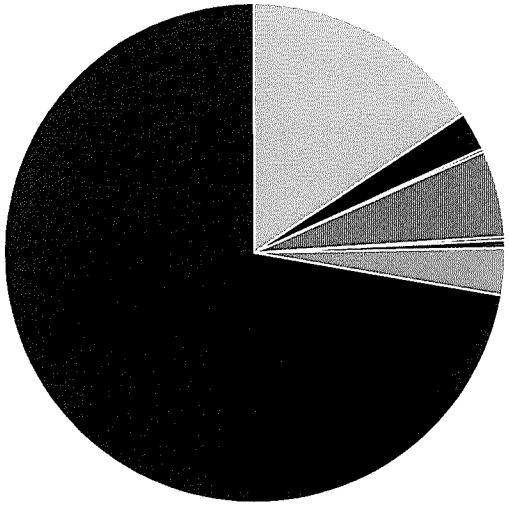
MARIN COUNTY RANKS THE 1ST MOST RACIALLY DISPARATE COUNTY IN CALIFORNIA.

ADD COUNTY COMPARISON

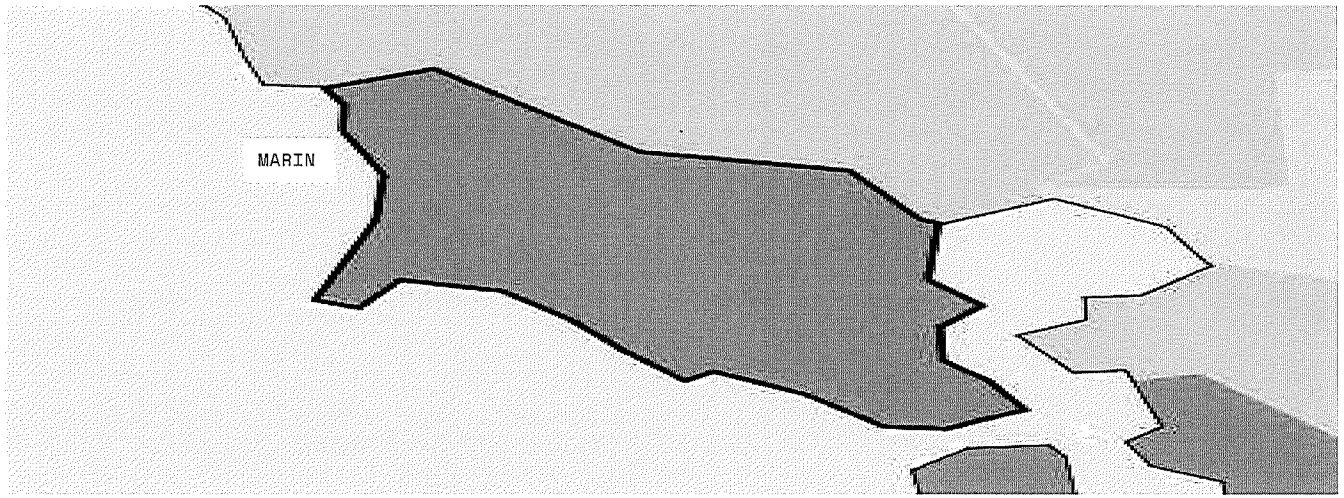
County Overview

An overview of the racial disparity level and how the county ranks statewide and across key issues.

RACE AS % OF POPULATION



MAP



Key Takeaways

Marin is a high performance, high disparity and less populous county.

After paying for rent in Marin County, Latino households are left with $16,367 while White households are left with $59,304.

Nearly one in four Latinos in Marin County is uninsured.

Marin County is among the most disparate in terms of poverty in California:
only 5% of Whites live below poverty while close to 35% of Native Americans are below the poverty line.

Asians are 2.5x more likely than Latinos to be employed as officials or managers

in Marin County.

Black youth are 14x more likely and Native American youth are 5x more likely to be arrested for curfew violations than Whites in Marin County.

PREV | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | NEXT

HEAT TABLE OF DISPARITY A visual snapshot of racial disparity and performance across seven key issues. Use the filters to toggle between disparity and performance.

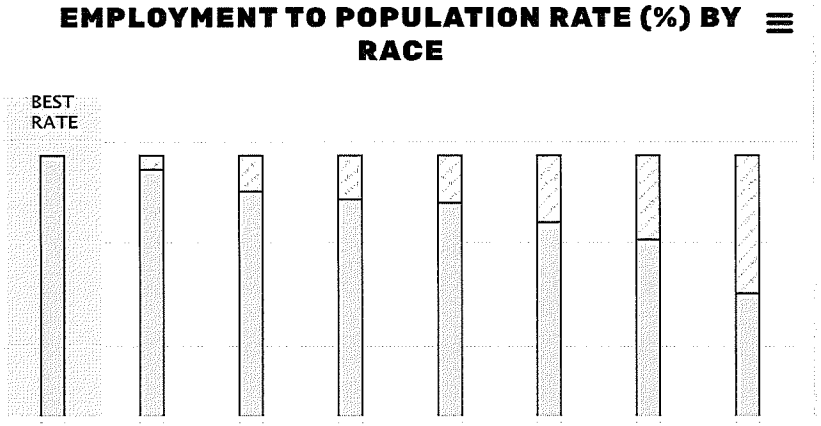
RANK BY: Quadrant Disparity Performance

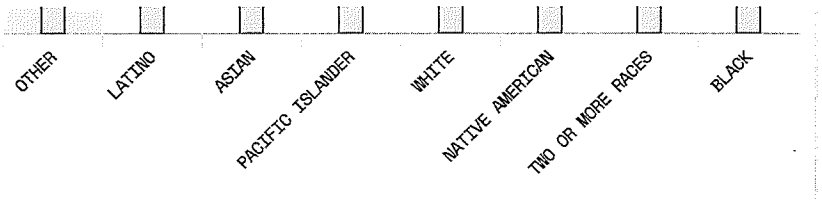
	Crime & Justice	Democracy	Economic Opportunity	Health Access	Healthy Built Environment	Housing
California Avg	0.1425	-0.25583				
Marin	1.04103	-0.3783	0.76786	0.4772	0.29063	
Alameda	0.78472	-0.27186	-0.11637	0.1118	0.42197	0.35625
Contra Costa	0.04355	-0.00591	-0.38398	0.02372	-0.27889	0.31363

Napa	-0.33627	0.37397	0.07327	-0.90874	-0.16366	0.19262
San Francisco	0.48606	-1.01447	0.20946	0.78317	-0.41718	0.72704
San Mateo	0.30083	0.37393	-0.18538	0.07744	0.27725	-0.10326
Santa Clara	0.41912	-0.29104	-0.28855	0.12088	-0.4875	0.04843
Solano	0.52804	-0.08411	-0.52484	-0.166	0.0011	-0.33494
Sonoma	-0.03009	-0.22197	-0.46298	-0.06374	-0.01735	-0.08074

Disparity: LOWEST AVG HIGHEST

01 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY





AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 5-YEAR ESTIMATES TABLE S2301 (2010-2014)

MARIN COUNTY

Total

- PERFORMANCE

60.3
%

- RAW PERFORMANCE

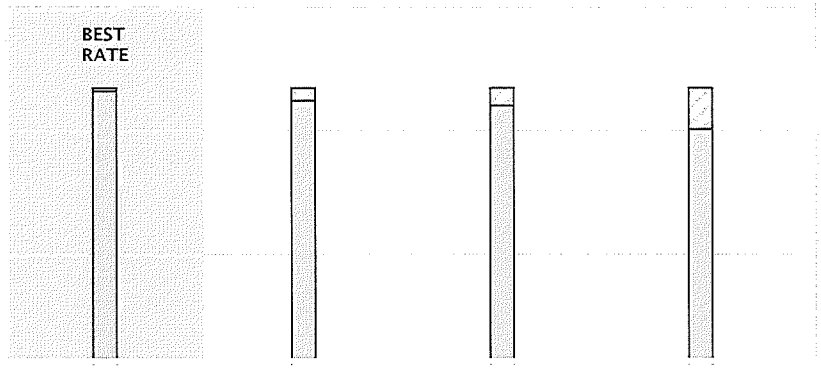
126,399

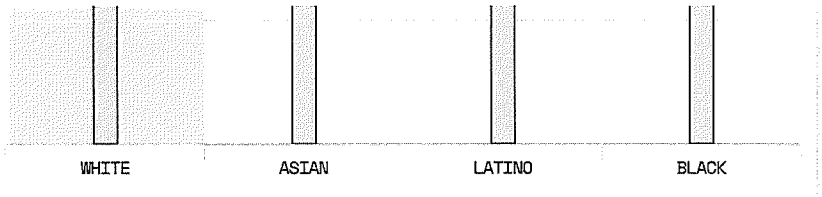
- DIFFERENCE FROM BEST

11.1
%

02 HEALTH CARE ACCESS

LIFE EXPECTANCY IN YEARS BY RACE





CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH DEATH MASTER FILE, CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE POPULATION ESTIMATES (2007-2011, 2006-2010)

MARIN COUNTY

Total

- PERFORMANCE

83.5
years

- RAW PERFORMANCE

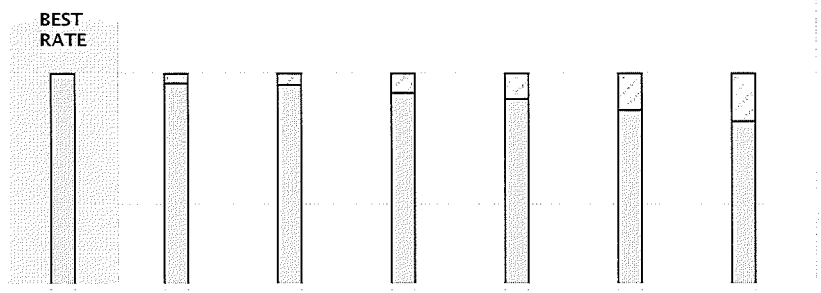
N/A

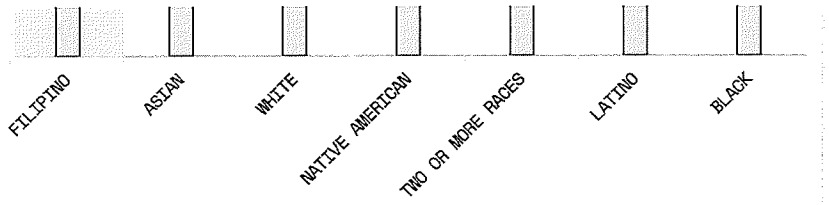
- DIFFERENCE FROM BEST

0.0
years

03 EDUCATION

GRADUATES AS A PERCENTAGE OF FOUR-YEAR ADJUSTED COHORT STUDENTS BY RACE





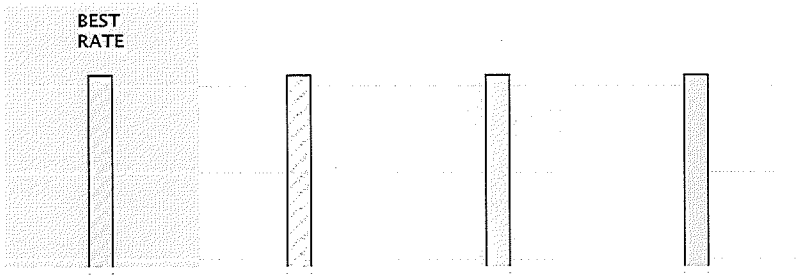
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (2014-15)

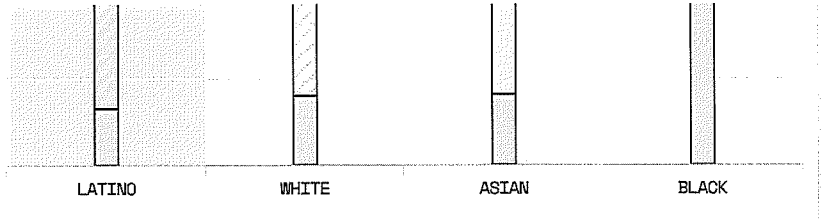
MARIN COUNTY

	Total
- PERFORMANCE	**91.9**
- RAW PERFORMANCE	**1,990**
- DIFFERENCE FROM BEST	**8.1**

04 HOUSING

SUBPRIME (HIGHER-PRICED) LOANS PER 1,000 MORTGAGE LOAN APPLICANTS BY RACE





HOME MORTGAGE DISCLOSURE ACT (2010-2014)

MARIN COUNTY

Asian

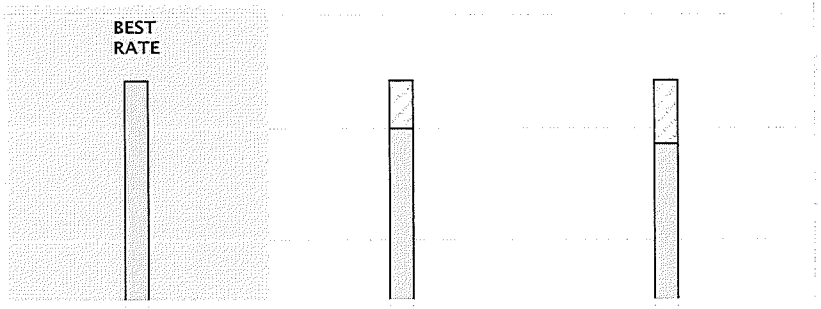
- PERFORMANCE **4.1**

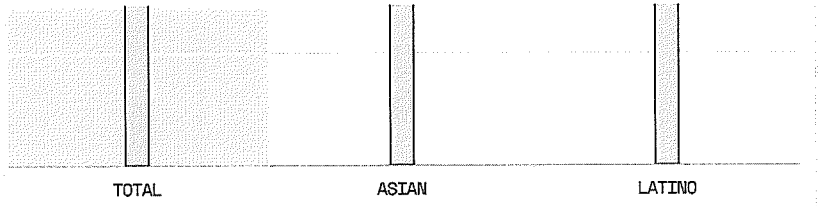
- RAW PERFORMANCE **18**

- DIFFERENCE FROM BEST **0.8**

05 DEMOCRACY

VOTING IN MIDTERM ELECTIONS (%) BY RACE





CALIFORNIA CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROJECT (AVERAGE OF 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014)

MARIN COUNTY

Total

- PERFORMANCE

68.3
%

- RAW PERFORMANCE

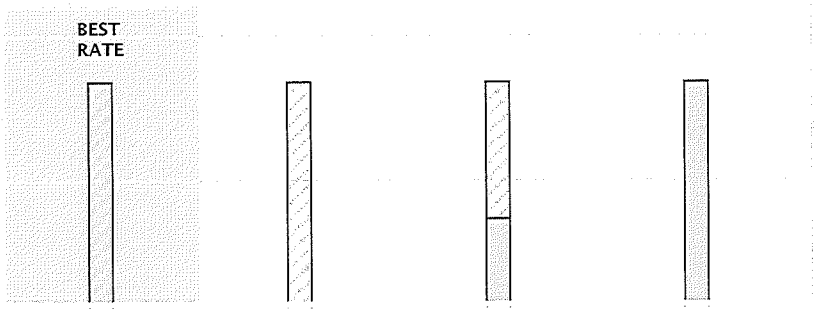
113,248

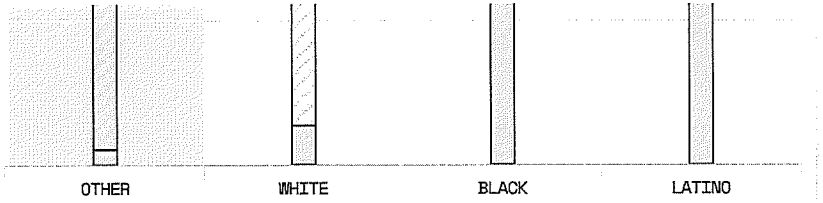
- DIFFERENCE FROM BEST

0.0
%

06 CRIME&JUSTICE

TRUANCY ARRESTS PER 10K SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN BY RACE





OPEN JUSTICE DATA, CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (2010-2014); CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (2015-2016)

MARIN COUNTY

Total

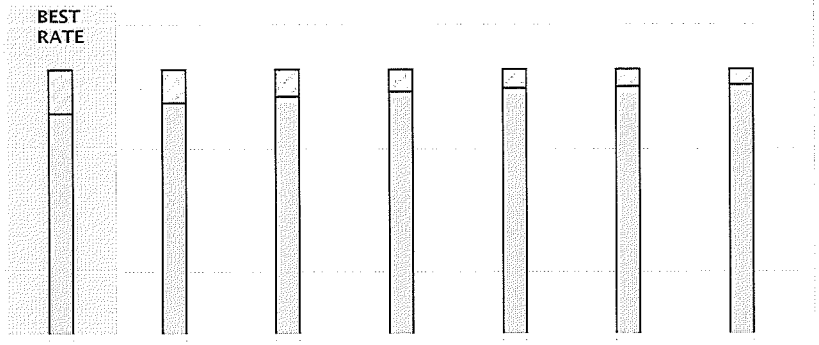
- PERFORMANCE **9.51**

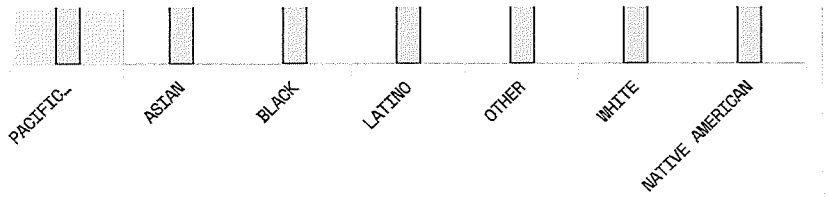
- RAW PERFORMANCE **160**

- DIFFERENCE FROM BEST **8.4**

07 HEALTHY BUILT ENVIRONMENT

DRINKING WATER CONTAMINANTS BY RACE





OESHHA CAL ENVIRO SCREEN 3.0; AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 5-YEAR ESTIMATES TABLE B03002 (2010-2014)

MARIN COUNTY

	Total
- PERFORMANCE	**263.1**
- RAW PERFORMANCE	**N/A**
- DIFFERENCE FROM BEST	**35.8**

Get data updates and campaign news. Enter your email and zip code.

ZIPCODE	EMAIL	SUBMIT

- Section
  - STATE
  - COUNTIES
  - CITIES
  - ISSUES
  - MAP
  - CAMPAIGNS
  - DATA
  - ABOUT
- ISSUES
  - CRIME AND JUSTICE
  - DEMOCRACY
  - ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
  - EDUCATION
  - HEALTHY BUILT ENVIRONMENTS
  - HEALTH CARE ACCESS
  - HOUSING

- OUR PARTNERS

Unlocking the Power of People™

ADVANCEMENT PROJECT

Advancement Project is a next generation, multiracial civil rights organization. In California, we build alliances and trust, use data-driven policy solutions, create innovative tools, and work alongside communities to ignite social transformation!

DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

Kerry Pierson's pieces from the IJ

1 message

Alex Stadtner <astadtner@gmail.com> Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 7:16 PM
To: Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

Hello BOT,

Please accept and read these comments involving local activist, Kerry Pierson.

Excerpts from the Marin IJ.

Thanks,
Alex

2018-11-30: Why does Dick Spotswood want to preserve 'Dixie'? by Kerry Pierson

"Dick Spotswood's columns should be accompanied with a disclaimer. Something to the effect of, "The thoughts, history and recommendations following have no connection to truth, reality, or sensitivities of non-white people."
His recent articles suggesting that the name of the Dixie School District should be determined solely by a vote of district residents ignores the fact that 78 percent of the Dixie budget is made up of state and federal funding. His recommendation might make sense if Dixie were a private district. Perhaps that is the solution … a private district.

I also note that Dick has never mentioned the fact that Marin leads the state in racial inequity, a distinction we should be ashamed of.
The suggestion that Noah Griffin and I are "outsiders," while some lady from Calaveras has standing, is as self-serving as it gets. Why is Dick so committed to preserving the name Dixie, no matter what the verifiable history shows and no matter how African-Americans or other social justice advocates feel about it.

2015-07-20: Confederate flag rekindles Marin effort to change Dixie School District"s name, by Janis Mara

Two longtime Marin residents are calling for the Dixie School District to change its name, a decades-old demand revived by the national controversy over various associations with the Confederacy and racism.

Kerry Peirson of Mill Valley and Noah Griffin of Tiburon are spearheading the movement to change the San Rafael district"s name. To these activists, and to Marin residents from similar movements in 1997 and 2003, "Dixie" is a Confederate anthem that conjures images of the slave era, racism and the Ku Klux Klan.

South Carolina this month took down the Confederate battle flag, a powerful symbol of slavery and the Old South that has roiled emotions in South Carolina for decades. The move was sparked by the slaughter of nine African-Americans at a church Bible study by an accused shooter who is an avowed racist.

The decision reverberated around the country, and Peirson and Griffin say it"s time to take similar action.

"I"m hoping that Marin has evolved on these issues and is ready to embrace a new name and a new start for this old and distinguished school district," said Peirson, a local political activist and former Marin Community Foundation trustee.

"In the arguments going on in South Carolina and other places, at least those supporting the (Confederate battle) flag have an argument because they are in Dixie. For that to be here in California, it"s inappropriate to the state," Peirson said.

District"s response

Brad Honsberger, president of the governing board of the Dixie School District, was reluctant to say too much about the proposal.

"My understanding is that our district is named after Mary Dixie, a descendant of the Miwok Indian tribe, and she used to live in Vallecito, California. There is no relation to the Confederate flag," he said.

Honsberger said he could not recall the name of the book or who showed it to him, "but I do remember seeing it with my own eyes."

Asked if he was receptive to changing the name, he said, "It wouldn"t be my decision. I couldn"t comment on that."

Asked if he would be willing to give the proposed name change a hearing by putting it on the agenda of the next school board meeting, Honsberger said, "I don"t have a comment on that."

Other school board members did not return calls seeking comment.

"Obama District"

The suggestion comes at the same time Sen. Steve Glazer, D-Orinda, introduced a bill in the California Legislature that would prohibit using the names of Confederate elected and military leaders on state and local property.

Glazer also sent a letter to Fort Bragg Mayor Dave Turner asking the city to eliminate its connection with Braxton Bragg. Bragg was a U.S. Army officer when Fort Bragg was named for him but later became a Confederate general.

The Board of Trustees of the Dixie School District held public hearings on the Dixie name in 1997, voting to continue using it.

In the 1990s, "I went to the school board meeting and asked them to consider it (changing the name)," Peirson said. "The room turned into the antebellum South. I was called a gorilla. I was afraid."

In 2001, the appropriateness of the district name was brought up by several speakers during hearings of the county Committee on School District Organization. Several speakers called the name "Dixie" offensive.

In 2003, district Superintendent Thomas Lohwasser was presented with a petition signed by 23 residents who wanted the name changed to the Miller Creek Elementary School District. Lohwasser could not be reached for comment last week.

Peirson said, "I don"t want it to be like we are forcing them to change the name. I want it to be like South Carolina where they decided it was best.

"Name it the Obama School District. We will be the first of many," Peirson said. "Wouldn"t that be a delicious outcome?"

Little Rock Nine

Griffin said he wouldn"t mind the school district being named after President Barack Obama, but his idea would be to call it the Glenn Robinson School District, after the late African-American school trustee from Marin.

"Glenn Robinson was on the (Marin County) school district board for 40 years. I would not be against "Obama," but because of Glenn Robinson"s service and local ties to Marin County, I would suggest that name," said Griffin, a public affairs consultant, speaker and musical performer who is an IJ columnist and former public member of the IJ"s editorial board.

"I equate the massacred nine in Charleston with the massacred Little Rock Nine who opened the way to school integration," Griffin said. "There were nine martyrs to the cause in Charleston. You never know what your life is going to stand for, but because they gave their lives we are looking at putting the Confederate flag where it belongs and looking at the symbols fraught with meaning, especially for the African-American community."

The word "Dixie" is one of those symbols, Griffin and Peirson said.

"Dixie is synonymous with the Old South, the slave-bearing antebellum South," Griffin said.

The history of the name"s origin is uncertain. Evidence from the Anne T. Kent California History Room backs assertions that the name was chosen on a dare by a Southerner who participated in the building of the old Dixie schoolhouse in 1864 on land donated by James Miller.

Griffin said his research shows that Miller, a slave owner from Missouri, purchased the land and gave the district its name.

Another theory suggests the school was named after land grant owner Don Timoteo Murphy"s daughter, Dixie.

Huffman"s view

Marin Supervisor Damon Connolly, a former Dixie School Board member whose supervisorial district includes the Dixie district, also did not return calls seeking comment.

When contacted, Connolly"s aide, Chris Calloway, said, "I mentioned it to him (Connolly) and it"s something he has no background in or knowledge of."

Rep. Jared Huffman, D-San Rafael, introduced legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives this month to ban federal display and sale of the Confederate flag under certain circumstances.

Asked about the Dixie district proposal, Huffman said he "always wondered about the origin of the Dixie School District. It has always seemed a little out of place to me....

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DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

Noah Griffin IJ Pieces

1 message

Alex Stadtner <astadtner@gmail.com> Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 7:06 PM
To: Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

Dear BOT,

Please accept and read these Marin IJ Voice pieces from local author, Noah Griffin.

Thank you,
Alex

4 attachments

Marin Voice_ Dixie name-change issue 'a wake-up call for Marin' – Marin Independent Journal.pdf
588K

Marin Voice_ The name 'Dixie' is a throwback to the days of human suffering – Marin Independent Journal.pdf
940K

Marin Voice_ How will the next generation respond to past atrocities_ – Marin Independent Journal.pdf
1727K

Marin Voice_ Why the message of Martin Luther King still matters – Marin Independent Journal.pdf
3063K

OPINION > COLUMNISTS

Marin Voice: Dixie name-change issue 'a wake-up call for Marin'

By **NOAH GRIFFIN** |
PUBLISHED: January 11, 2019 at 10:00 am | UPDATED: January 12, 2019 at 7:49 am

Each year a service organization to which I belong pays for and passes out hundreds of dictionaries to Marin third-graders. On the walls of many classrooms are pictures of American heroes. Inevitably one sees an image of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

As Marin County grapples with the quandary of a Dixie School District in our midst, I wonder what Marin is willing to do of a concrete nature to honor the memory of the martyred civil rights leader.

One way is to rid ourselves of the name Dixie. School board Trustee Marnie Glickman, the only Dixie board member to publicly support the name change, has gone on record, stating: "We have a moral obligation to teach our children about history. Dixie is a synonym of the Confederacy. It is a reminder of slavery, segregation and lynching."

In the past few weeks a phalanx of public officials, respected community leaders and organizations have stepped forward to join the movement to change the district's name. In addition to Congressman Jared Huffman, they include state Sen. Mike McGuire, county schools Superintendent Mary Jane Burke, county Supervisors Kate Sears and Dennis Rodoni, San Rafael Mayor Gary Phillips, Marin Community Foundation President and CEO Thomas Peters, the Marin Human Rights Commission, the Marin Democratic Central Committee, the Marin Green Party and the Marin Interfaith Council. For a complete list of supporters, now over 1,500, visit changethename.net.

Despite the snowballing avalanche of public support, there are still elected officials sitting on the sidelines, some trying to have it both ways. When you walk into Assemblyman Marc Levine's office, you'll see prominently displayed a Black Lives Matter placard. Unwilling to take a public stand on this issue, he told me and others who met with him that we should end our discussion by thanking him for meeting with us and that he would let us know he would think about the name-change issue. It's now been several weeks.

Marin Supervisor Damon Connolly, himself a former Dixie School Board member, wrote a letter to the district board, stating, "We can do better." Yet when asked directly, his staff wouldn't say whether he's for or against the name change. He reminds me of a politician who once said: "Some of my friends are for the issue, some are against. And I'm four-square for my friends."

Not taking a stand is taking a stand. Quoting Dante: "The hottest place in hell is reserved for those who in times of moral crisis, preserve their neutrality." I'm certain the newly elected Dixie trustees are weighing that thought. It was pointed out in a recent IJ editorial they sidestepped the issue in their endorsement interviews, which did not go unnoticed.

This issue is a wake-up call for Marin. It holds up a mirror to ourselves. It allows us to see who we really are rather than how we would like to see ourselves. Evidence of the skittishness of the "We Are Dixie" contingent is their unwillingness to attach their names to their website. How proud of their stance can they be?

Marin has deep-seated issues it must address, well beyond a mere symbolic step such as a name change.

Just in the past two weeks the principal of Miller Creek Middle School within the Dixie School District issued a letter to parents concerning "an increase of hate filled speech including racial slurs, imitations of accents, perpetuation of

Clearly there is much work to be done. On Jan. 15, the day of King's birthday, 10 names will be submitted to the Dixie Board of Trustees, which is legally bound to act upon them by Feb. 24. Please show your support that evening by attending the meeting at 6 p.m. in the district office, 380 Nova Albion Way in Terra Linda, and honor the memory of Dr. King in the process.

Tags: **Marin Voice**

Noah Griffin

Noah Griffin of Tiburon is a public affairs consultant, speaker and musical performer. He is a former public member of the IJ's editorial board.

OPINION > COLUMNISTS

Marin Voice: The name 'Dixie' is a throwback to the days of human suffering

By **NOAH GRIFFIN** |
September 21, 2018 at 10:00 am

The fight to strike the name "Dixie" from a Marin County school district is as old as the Republic and as young as the memory of those unmindful of the past. The arguments against the name change are straight out of the civil rights resistance playbook.

One of the arguments is that the people advocating change don't live in the district. But of the 23 speakers at the last Dixie School District board meeting, 18 live in the district. Other longtime veterans who initiated the struggle still live in the county and were asked to participate. Similar "outside agitator" labels were leveled at Martin Luther King Jr. when he left Atlanta to go to Alabama. He answered them in his "Letter from the Birmingham Jail" — "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Truth is no less true because of who says it or where they live. Some whites claim not to have witnessed racism in the district. To tell minorities what to be offended

Alums of Marin County high schools such as Tina Mitaine had to endure Slave Day in 1988 when white students came to school in black face. Others withstood Mexican Day, when wearing sombreros and bandoleros was thought funny. Sally Matsuishi, on the anniversary of Pearl Harbor, found "Jap" painted on her locker at a Marin County school. Her counselor excused the slur with another, explaining that it might have just meant she "was spoiled."

In the past two years the painted "N" word greeted the newly arrived principal at Tamalpais High School. The same word was recently spray-painted at Redwood High with the name of a long-time counselor attached.

Tam High faced its own moment of truth in 1988 when it changed its mascot from the Indians to the Red-Tailed Hawks. San Rafael barbershop owner Tino Wilson told me recently he started the school as an "Indian," finishing as a "Hawk."

Researching history clearly shows nothing is new. The arguments then were against political correctness, the desire to maintain history and tradition. Basically, their view? Get over it. Dixie area residents may soon find themselves up Miller Creek without a paddle.

Think back to the resistance to Muhammad Ali changing his name from Cassius Clay. Or Pittsburgh Pirates outfielder Roberto Clemente demanding to be called by his given name and not Bob, as the sportscasters insisted.

"Dixie" is an anachronistic throwback to an era of slavery, bondage and human suffering. By maintaining the name, we do a disservice to the district, the county and the children we seek to educate. It is disingenuous to maintain that Dixie is anything but synonymous with the Confederacy. That was acknowledged in the Dixie School Foundation's application for landmark status.

The war is over. The South lost. That chapter is closed. I do not deny Confederate history. There is, however, no need to celebrate it, to honor or to memorialize it in Northern California outside of a museum. Let that museum be the original Dixie Schoolhouse with an accurate acknowledgement of the name's origin. There should be no pride in maintaining a name that brings pain to any segment of our community.

We are missing a teachable moment. Our children need to learn to neither trivialize nor dismiss the sensitivity of others. Or worse yet, to become generationally numb to their pain. What better opportunity than to stand up for Marin County values. Whose side are you on? Certainly, the David Dukes and the Donald Trumps of the

James Russell Lowell has written: "New occasions teach new duties. Time makes ancient good uncouth. They must ever up and onward who would keep abreast of truth." Winds of change are sweeping the land. The name Dixie, the song, Confederate statues and flags are being retired. We in Marin are not so special to ignore or think ourselves above doing our part to keep pace with the times.

Quoting Lincoln: "We cannot escape history. The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down in honor or dishonor to the latest generation."

Noah Griffin of Tiburon is a public affairs consultant, speaker and musical performer. He is a former public member of the IJ's editorial board. He has been advocating for a Dixie School District name change since 1997.

Tags: **Marin Voice**

SPONSORED CONTENT

This Is What the Alaskan Bush People Don't Want Their Fans to Know

By Ranker

Ranker

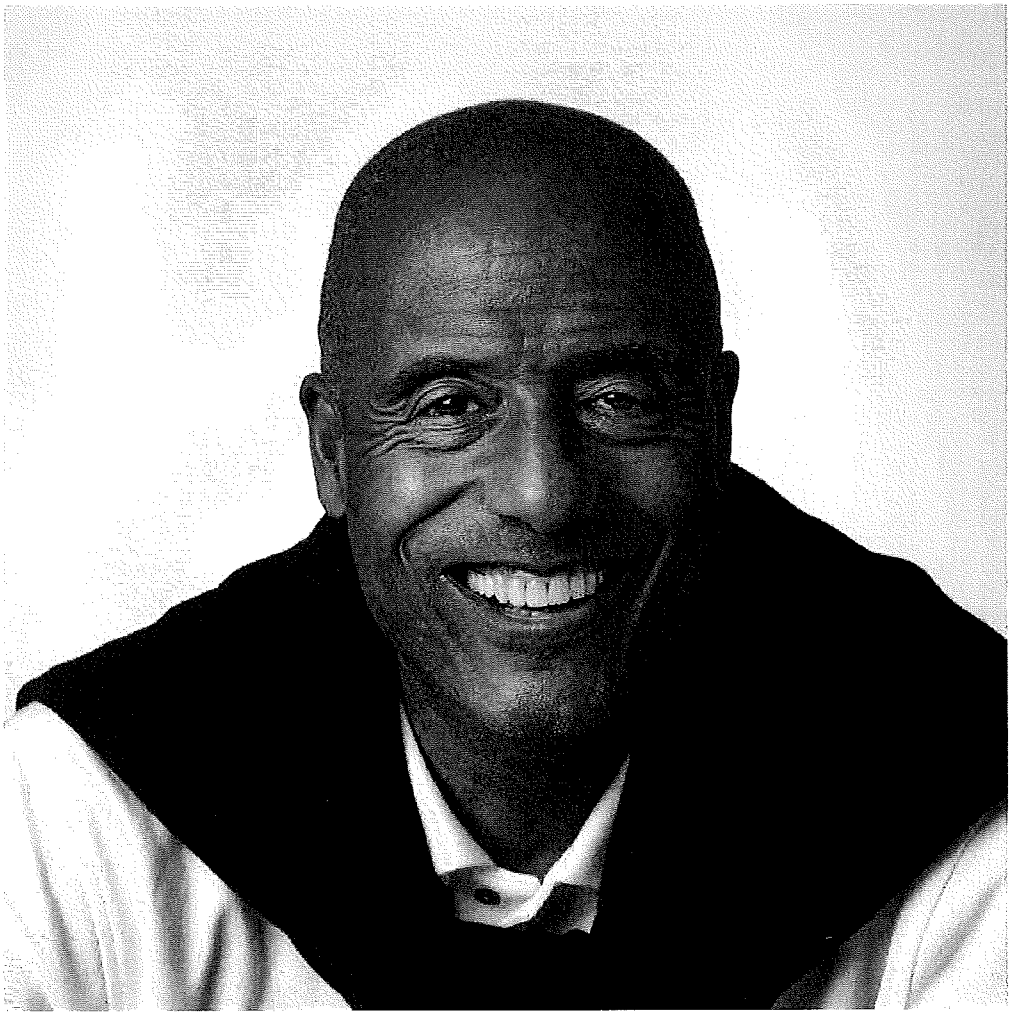
The Alaskan Bush People captivated Discovery Channel viewers everywhere, but as we've learned in recent years, these...

Noah Griffin

Noah Griffin of Tiburon is a public affairs consultant, speaker and musical performer. He is a former public member of the IJ's editorial board.

OPINION > GUEST COMMENTARY

Marin Voice: How will the next generation respond to past atrocities?



Noah Griffin. Wednesday, Nov. 13, 2013. (Robert Tong/Marin Independent Journal)

Childhood trauma. We all go through it. The question is whether we grow from it, are stunted by it or feel impelled to action.

Tom Steyer and Kat Taylor's TomKat Foundation recently funded a trip for 25 students, largely from Marin City, to attend the opening of the National Memorial for Peace and Justice and the Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration, in Montgomery, Alabama.

The museum is on a six-acre site overlooking the state Capitol. It is dedicated to the thousands of known and unknown victims of lynchings whose collective stories are told on steel columns hanging from the ceiling.

To wit, just one: Mary Turner "who after denouncing her husband's lynching by a rampaging white mob, was hung upside down, burned and then sliced open so that her unborn child fell to the ground." One of the students upon witnessing this account wrote she was lost for words.

I thought of the trauma I experienced when, as a youngster, my parents took me to hear the mother of the slain 12-year-old Emmett Till. Accused of whistling at an Alabama white woman, he was kidnapped and found three days later in the Tallahatchie River.

"The barbed wire holding the cotton-gin around his neck had become snagged on a root. There was a bullet in the boy's skull, one eye was gouged out, and his forehead was crushed on one side." The story was horrific enough. The lasting trauma for me was seeing the picture of his mangled, disfigured face on the cover of the memorial program. Part of my childhood innocence left me that day. Heading by train through the South that next summer I stayed as much as I could beneath the level of the window for fear of being shot.

The students from Felicia Gaston's Performing Stars who toured the museum in Montgomery have returned with a variety of responses. They range from anger, grief and sadness to resolution to right historical wrongs, in the various forms in which they exist today.

Who knows, maybe out of them may emerge the next Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, John Lewis or even Barack Obama. In the words of Alexander Pope: "As the twig is bent, so grows the tree."

Of further interest to me is how the rights of African-Americans can are so often sacrificed for the so-called greater good. One of the original aims of the NAACP was to enact federal legislation against state lynching insofar as it was sanctioned or not enforced on behalf of black people in the South. President Franklin D. Roosevelt claimed his hands were tied. To do so would alienate powerful Southern voting blocs within Congress and thereby stifle his New Deal programs.

Only time will tell how the trip to Alabama will play out among those who went. One student is returning to attend a college his grandmother never finished as she headed west to escape Jim Crow.

Jeannette Egenlauf filmed the excursion and is intent on making a documentary of the experience in hopes it can be shown throughout Marin County high schools to broaden the experiences of the general student population.

The Marin Community Foundation has stepped up to fund Marin City students under the auspices of the newly founded Social Justice Initiative to attend an Al Gore climate change conference in Los Angeles. The issue of environmental justice is critical within communities of color nationwide, demanding new leadership emerging from within to tackle issues such as those of Flint, Michigan.

Perhaps the lesson from these experiences is just to plant the seed. You don't know when harvest time will come.

Noah Griffin of Tiburon is a public affairs consultant, speaker and musical performer. He is a former public member of the IJ's editorial board.

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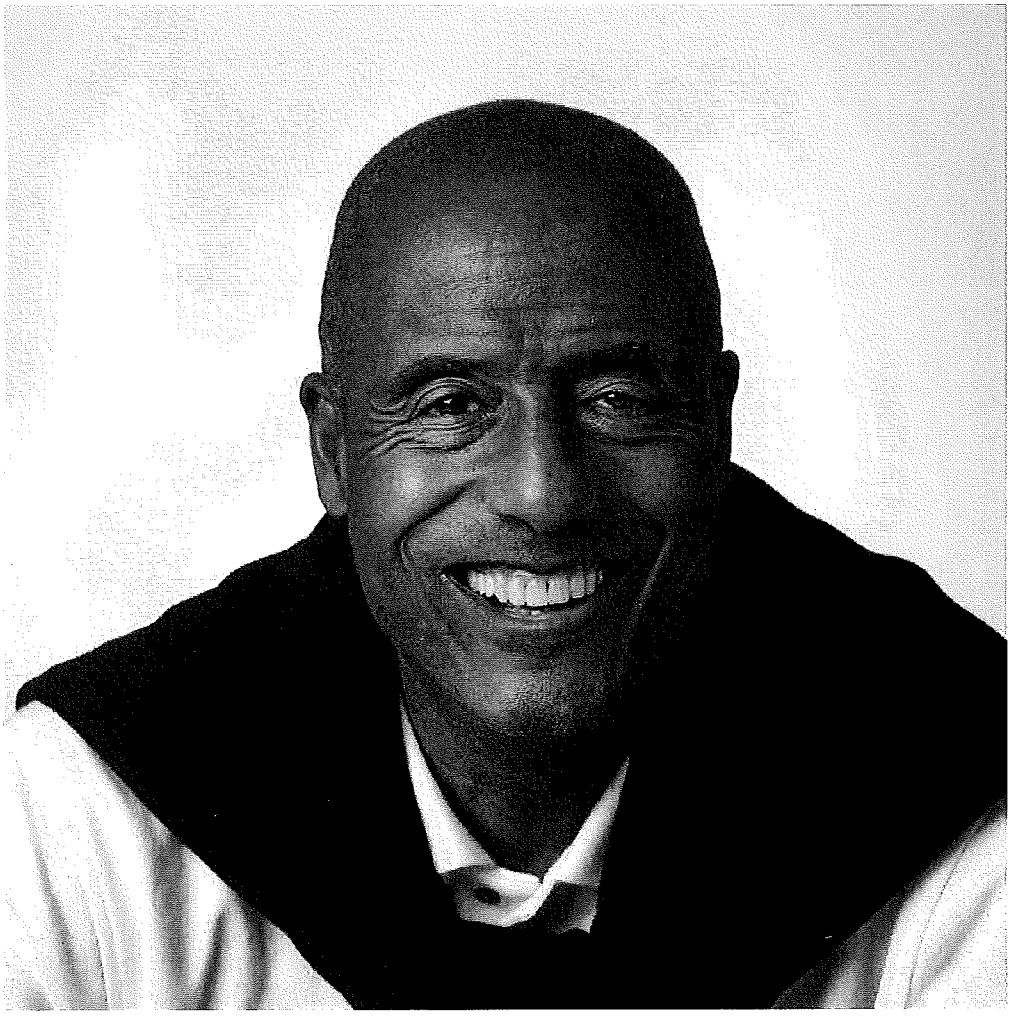
By ADTAXI - Adtaxi

Noah Griffin

Noah Griffin of Tiburon is a public affairs consultant, speaker and musical performer. He is a former public member of the IJ's editorial board.

OPINION > GUEST COMMENTARY

Marin Voice: Why the message of Martin Luther King still matters



Noah Griffin. Wednesday, Nov. 13, 2013. (Robert Tong/Marin Independent Journal)

By **NOAH GRIFFIN** |
PUBLISHED: April 6, 2018 at 11:42 am | UPDATED: July 23, 2018 at 11:51 am

ADVERTISING

Every era, every nation is blessed with its own heroes and martyrs. India had its Gandhi, South Africa its Mandela and America its Martin Luther King.

What do their lives teach us? How can we learn from them? Are they still relevant to us now?

Longfellow summed it up best. "Lives of great men all remind us/ We can make our lives sublime/ And departing leave behind us/ Footprints in the sands of time."

In the case of Gandhi, he was visited by the great theologian and mystic Howard Thurman, who in 1935 led the first delegation of African-Americans to meet with him in India. A member of Gandhi's delegation challenged Thurman's adherence to Christianity: "It was in the name of Christianity your people were enslaved."

Wrestling with that question, Thurman returned home to write "Jesus and the Disinherited." What would Jesus do with the pariahs, the outcasts of society? His writings were of tremendous meaning to Dr. King, about whom it was said he was never without a copy of the book. Thurman's thesis helped explain the revolutionary nature of Jesus' religion and how love and non-violence could transform America, as Gandhi did India.

King was able to synthesize Eastern thought with Western challenges to initiate the American Civil Rights Movement.

Mandela, from a jail cell at Ryker's Island, inspired my law school classmate

Each man's life built upon the other to inspire, to educate and to meet the challenge of his circumstances.

Who's to say King's life was not the impetus for the recent "March for our Lives" in Washington, D.C.?

King's "March on Washington," because of his iconic "I Have a Dream" speech, is emblazoned in our minds. Its impact galvanized the youth of America to engage in the sit-ins and the anti-war protests of the 1960's.

The year 1968 is forever seared in the minds of those who lived through it. Not only is it associated with the death of King but with the Tet offensive, the assassination of Bobby Kennedy, the passage of federal fair housing legislation, President Johnson's announced intention not to seek re-election and the nomination of Richard Nixon to the presidency.

Each event had its separate impact, but taken as a whole they signaled a watershed decade in American history.

The unanswered question remains: How would King be viewed had he not been assassinated?

The fact is, at the time of his death his image was taking a beating.

Many in the civil rights movement thought he had lost his way. They disparaged the Poor People's Campaign that King was in the process of organizing; many felt it diluted the strength of his battle against bias and segregation.

Others felt he was out of his depth campaigning against the war in Vietnam.

Still, others demanded he take a more militant stance on all the issues and lean more to the outspoken rhetoric of a Stokely Carmichael or a Malcom X.

Also left unanswered is the question: Were King to have lived out his normal course of days, would he be lumped in and largely overlooked and under-appreciated with the NAACP's Roy Wilkins or the Urban League's Whitney Young or even CORE's James Farmer?

Assassinations from the time of Lincoln forward put an abrupt end to life and at the same time ushered in the flower of immortality rooted in the soil of what-might-have-beens.

One thing for certain: King's legacy has been claimed by liberals and conservatives alike. Those who marched with him, such as Rep. John Lewis, continue his fight in the halls of Congress. Jesse Jackson still speaks out on issues of concern. Andrew Young, former mayor of Atlanta and ambassador to the United Nations, is a respected elder statesman in the struggle.

Some little-known and forgotten King facts: King's mother was assassinated in 1974. His brother died under mysterious circumstances in a pool drowning. The family sued the government in civil court for involvement in King's death and won.

Despite all this, Martin Luther King's life, legacy and spirit lives on to be claimed by succeeding generations in whatever struggle they feel is on behalf of truth, justice and equality.

Noah Griffin of Tiburon is a public affairs consultant, speaker and musical performer. He is a former public member of the IJ's editorial board.

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Is your automotive digital advertising hitting a speed bump?

By ADTAXI - Adtaxi

Noah Griffin

Noah Griffin of Tiburon is a public affairs consultant, speaker and musical performer. He is a former public member of the IJ's editorial board.

DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

Change of Name for Dixie School District

1 message

Marilyn Laatsch <marilynlaatsch@gmail.com> Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 5:01 PM
To: commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org

Dear Board Members & Staff,
I strongly agree with changing the name "Dixie".
It is a confederate symbol which represents an enormous history of slavery, poverty,& hideous suffering of the Black members of our society.

You now have an opportunity to change your district's representation to one of inclusion, acceptance and honor of all peoples who have contributed to building our country, and Marin County in particular.

I do not have a particular name in mind, but would suggest honoring the Native people who once flourished here and still have living descendants in the area.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Laatsch
marilynlaatsch@gmail.com
Muir Beach

DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

James Miller

1 message

We Are Dixie <werdixie@gmail.com> Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 4:51 PM
To: commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org

12_13.docx
106K

#1- Holding up the portion of Noah's piece that talks about saving Marin from itself and passing it out to the school board members:

This is a school district and education is key. We talk over and over again about having good role models out their for our kids. What kind of role models are we being when bullying by grown ups is being accepted, when bringing people in from the outside to "fight" your battles is acceptable and when using social media for these purposes is rewarded. These people care nothing about our community, for them it is a fight to win, and will spare no expense in the casualties. They are ripping our community apart. Where will they be when this all blows over, when we have to pick up the pieces from a divided community that until now worked together....oh right, they will be making their documentary and gaining national attention and moving onto a new district and new cause so they can save all of Marin from itself.

I also want to add something about what kind of role model have our past school board members been who say the were embarrassed to say they were from the Dixie School district. We teach our kids to stand up for who they are and be true to themselves oh, right and not care so much whatever people think.

#2 History Repeats:

I would like to read you some quotes from descendants of James Miller. While these quotes are 21 years old, they speak to the character of the man. For you reference, this appeared in a Marin IJ article dated 2/12/97.

One of the descendants told the trustees at the school board meeting that James Miller fled Ireland, in part, to escape persecution for his Catholic beliefs. "His family came to America for freedom." "He was a supporter of minorities and not a persecutor of minorities." She also said I don't think we should try and erase history. We can't do away with the fact that Dixie existed.

Another descendants said, " History is sketchy as to the naming of the school. I think if you look at the character and the things that he did, he was not a person that persecuted and demeaned. He was a person that enriched."

While you say that was 20 years ago, perhaps their views have changed....well you can't change the character of a person who has been dead for 128 years.

What also hasn't changed is the objections from the community. Within the article it states, "Readers take objection to a Mill Valley man's proposal to change the name of the Dixie School District" That btw that person is Kiery Pierson and he still doesn't live in our district. I guess something has changed a little... now our community objects to an additional man from Tiburon joining forces to divide our neighborhood.

Please let our community decide what is best for us.

#3 The Dixie Name

What we do know....James Miller was a great man and one that cared deeply about education. He was pro Northern.

Tonight, I would like to ask these questions....

Have we seen anywhere what the actual dare or challenge for naming the school is? No

Is this all hearsay? Yes

Is it possible James Miller named the school after the Indian family with the last name Dixie who he came in contact with on his travels -- it's possible

Is it possible that James Miller named the school Dixie, for his 10 children, the last one born in 1858. -- it's possible. Let me remind you James Miller lived in Quebec for 13 years where they speak French and coincidentally, the French word for 10 is DIX.

Is it possible that he named the school district after the Confederate states where he never lived, to demean and oppress a group of people? Doubtful!

From what we know about James Miller and what his descendants have told us, it's highly unlikely that he would have chosen this name for harm.

Please let our community decide.

DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

Dixie School Name

1 message

Paulette McDevitt <paulettemcd@comcast.net> Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 3:17 PM
Reply-To: Paulette McDevitt <paulettemcd@comcast.net>
To: commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org

Hello,

I have attached my letter to the Superintendent and School Board.

Thank you for taking the time to read it.

Sincerely,

Paulette McDevitt

Dixie School Name.docx
16K

February 1, 2019

To: Dr. Jason Yamashiro, Dixie Superintendent
Dixie School Board
Re: The name of Dixie School District

I would like to present my perspective on the name "Dixie School". I have lived and paid taxes in the District for 36 years; my children attended Vallecito School for kindergarten. I was born in Marin and educated in the county.

I am well acquainted with the truth of what Dixie School represents from my knowledge of its existence growing up in Marin. Dixie School District was always held in high regard. In fact, when I was obtaining my teaching credential at Dominican University in the 1970, our program visited Dixie School as a model school for excellent teaching. I also did my student teaching at Dixie School. The school and district has always represented excellence in teaching and an inclusive atmosphere.

I have another bit of personal history which has greatly contributed to my opinion of Dixie School District:

I have visited the little white school house on Las Gallinas and there within read the registry of students. I have ancestal interest in these names signed so long ago, for they record the schooling of my aunts and uncle during the 1920's. I read Vivian Silva, Lucille Silva and Evo Silva, Jr and see that the children of immigrants were offered the gift of free schooling in this beautiful county and country.

Before the Golden Gate Bridge, before World War II, my grandfather, Evo, made the long journey from the Azores to work in Marin's dairy farms , as did many other Portugese immigrants. At that time, Marin was rural and mostly undeveloped. Those immigrants were laborers from islands and might not have fit into the communities of mansions where many of them were employed, but their children received an education, one which my grandfather had not received in his home land.

My grandfather, Evo Silva, worked long, difficult hours in messy hard work; dairy farms in those days did not have the conveniences of

modern machines. Yet, his children went to school in a beautiful one room school house. To them, this was an American dream.

To me, Dixie School is a part of my family history, the history of many other American immigrants. It represents freedom and roots in a new culture and land.

And this is the meaning that Dixie School holds for me. California was a free state during the Civil War. Many people followed their dreams to come here and build a new life.

Perhaps this little school house and its name can be viewed from the context of what it truly represents, a school of hope, education and equal opportunity, a name to be proud of. There has never been any innuendo of racism in this District.

The truth of this district is represented in its name and real history and stands true and powerful. To attach any other meaning is not in service to the real long history of students, teachers and families who have maintained the highest standards of education, no retelling or false naming can erase that Truth in the real meaning of Dixie School.

Sincerely,
Paulette McDevitt
39 Tan Oak Circle
San Rafael

DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

The Dixie Name

1 message

Patti Bender <pattibender@ymail.com> Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 3:00 PM
To: "commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org" <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

#3 The Dixie Name

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From what we know about James Miller and what his descendants have told us, it's highly unlikely that he would have chosen this name for harm.

Please let our community decide.

Patti Bender

DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

Fw: Community Input

1 message

Patti Bender <pattibender@ymail.com> Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 2:35 PM
To: "commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org" <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

re-sending.

----- Forwarded Message -----
From: Patti Bender <pattibender@ymail.com>
To: Alissa Chacko <achacko@dixieschooldistrict.org>; Brad Honsberger <brad.honsberger@gmail.com>; bnguyen@dixieschooldistrict.org <bnguyen@dixieschooldistrict.org>; mhutchinson@dixieschooldistrict.org <mhutchinson@dixieschooldistrict.org>
Sent: Wednesday, January 9, 2019, 8:46:01 AM PST
Subject: Community Input

Happy New Year. I hope you all had a wonderful holiday.

While I wish at this new year would allow the board to focus on our children, I believe your objectives might have to take a back seat to the name change issue. I know it is inherent that you hear from our community. While holding public forums is one way to do this, having the advisory election is the way to accurately hear from your constituents. There is fear running throughout our community members who do NOT want the name change as they are witness to the deceitful tactics the CTN group is enacting in order to get their message out unopposed.

Here are some examples:
1) Bruce Anderson asked the leadership of Can Do!, the Dixie School District Education Foundation, to immediately ask for my resignation because I dared to speak out against him and the Change The Name group. Please note when I did speak out, I did so as a private citizen not as a Can Do! board member. I wish I could say the same about Marnie Glickman.
2) A change the name advocate walked into a place of business of one of the We Are Dixie Supporters and berated her in front of clients and potential clients.
3) David Curtis, Marnie Glickman's husband, filed a police report against members of the We Are Dixie with false accusations.
4) David Curtis, posts demeaning and false information about the WE are Dixie supporters.

For those of you who know me and know the WAD supporter who was berated, you know we will not back down because someone tries to take us down. Unfortunately there is a large portion of our community that feels they cannot speak out for whatever reason.

Additionally as we have seen from all the recent press, the CTN group is doing everything to get media to be part of their narrative. They have hired someone to film every school board meeting and my guess is the media will show up at all public forums. For those of you who don't know, they have just reached out to the LA Times and the Huffington post to pitch them a story.

Again, for most people it takes a lot for them to speak in public. Some people might be comfortable being filmed but I know others who would never speak out if there was a camera in the room. So let me ask you this, do you think you would get a true representation of our community in these forums?

Here are some excerpts from personal emails I received and emails received by WAD that show that while people support WAD, they cannot are either afraid or cannot speak out publicly:

1)A senior in the community who was open to helping her daughter gather signatures for the We Are Dixie Petition now remains silent. As she sat there at an event, she heard two of her close friends say if you don't support the name change, you are racist. While she has made it clear she supports our efforts she is afraid to outwardly do so.
2)A Dixie School District graduate who chose to raise her kids in the district had this to say: " I'm in a totally tough situation that frankly I'm pretty disturbed about. A couple of my clients support the other side of this issue. My husband and I discussed this at length and I need to be super careful not to jeopardize my business. In addition, there are other possible issues with coaches that involve our kids- go figure. I'm going to have to reluctantly pull out of this. I am so sorry!!!!!! I appreciate what you are doing. Isn't this sad and ridiculous?!"
3)Another quote from a Dixie resident "I totally support your efforts but I am not supposed to be commenting on politics as a State of CA employee. County employees for Marin would also not want to be speaking in public about politics, or any public servant. We sign a form when hired."
4)Another resident commented that she has a high level job at a large local employer and is afraid to speak up as people might retaliate against her company.
5)"I signed the petition and left a comment, but meant to do it anonymously. Is there any way you can change my signature and posting to anonymous? I have a neighbor who is a real name change fanatic and heard she is checking the list routinely. While I do not support any school funds being diverted from educating our kids towards a name change, I'd like to keep the peace in the neighborhood."
6)"I support keeping the school name as is. Unfortunately I cannot openly show my support due to my employment."

Unfortunately Ms. Glickman and team will use any public forum as a soap box and media circus. I urge you to stay the course with the advisory election so you can truly hear from your constituents.

All the best,
Patti Bender

DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

Submission to Change the Name

1 message

Michael McCarthy <mccarthymich@yahoo.com> Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 2:33 PM
To: "commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org" <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

To whom it may concern,

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

Thanks.

Michael McCarthy

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,

Michael McCarthy
2209 Mulberry Terrace,
San Rafael, CA 94903

DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

DON'T change the name of our school district

1 message

Michael Haines <MichaelHainesSFB@outlook.com> 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.

Mike Haines

resident of Terra Linda

Sent from Outlook

DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

letter regarding keeping the name.

1 message

Rozanna Ogneva <ogneva@yahoo.com> Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 1:46 PM
To: "Commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org" <Commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

----- Forwarded Message -----
From: Rozanna Ogneva <ogneva@yahoo.com>
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
> Chef Rozanna
> http://www.chefrozanna.com
> 1415-898-0163

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

*Just wanted to send a quick but I**MPORTANT 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

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 24th - February 4th.** 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 . 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.

We greatly appreciate your support and willingness to send a letter directly to 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!

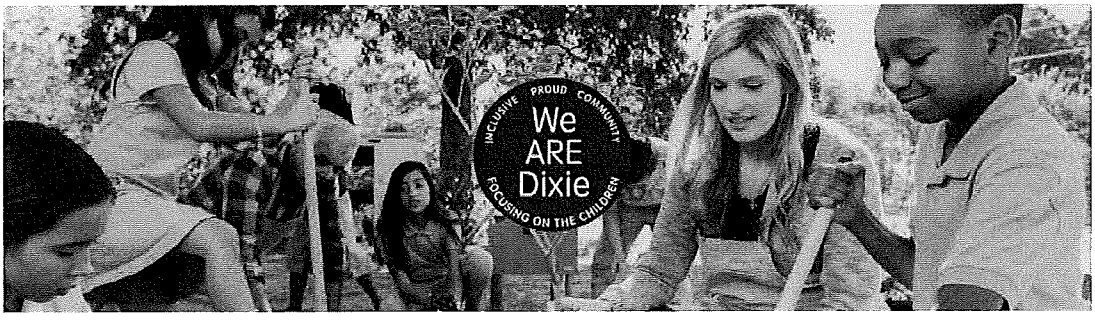
THANK YOU SO MUCH,

WE ARE DIXIE

WERDIXIE@GMAIL.COM
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!



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You are receiving this email because you opted in when you signed the We Are Dixie ipetition.

Our mailing address is:
WeAreDixie
1 Miller Creek Dr
San Rafael, CA 94903-1067

Add us to your address book

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.

mailchimp

Dixie School.docx
12K

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

Rozanna Ogneva

DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

No to Miwok and Miwok Hills

1 message

Bruce Anderson <bruce@home2150.com> Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 1:26 PM
To: commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org

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.

Bruce Anderson
Resident of Dixie school district
Change the name Petition Wrangler

DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

Save the Name!

1 message

Carolyn Potter <cbpotter27@gmail.com>
To: commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org
Cc: werdixie@gmail.com

Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 12:45 PM

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,

Carolyn Potter
102 Dockside Circle
San Rafael, CA 94903
Dixie Elementary School Class of 1966

Virus-free. www.avg.com

DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

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

1 message

Bruce Anderson <bruce@home2150.com> 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

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

Bruce Anderson
Parent/Guardian of a seventh grader at Miller Creek.
15 Sandstone Court, Marinwood, CA 94903

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

Bruce Anderson.
Sent from my iPhone

DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

Thank you Re: Fwd: Please change the name ASAP

2 messages

Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org> Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 11:40 AM
To: astadtner@gmail.com

Your submission has been received. Thank you!

Alex Stadtner <astadtner@gmail.com> 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,
Alex

> 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.

DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

"Big Five" weigh in

1 message

Alex Stadtner <astadtner@gmail.com>
To: Comment onpetitions <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,
Alex

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 ar 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 s 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 nations'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."
- "[The] 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 poir 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.

"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.

DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

Fwd: Current list of nominated names

1 message

Alex Stadtner <astadtner@gmail.com> Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 12:02 PM
To: Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>
Cc: Bruce Anderson <bruce@home2150.com>

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,
Alex

Begin forwarded message:

From: Alex Stadtner <astadtner@gmail.com>
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,
Alex Stadtner

On Dec 23, 2018, at 11:55 AM, Gary Phillips <Gary.Phillips@cityofsanrafael.org> wrote:

Bruce and Alex;

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.

Gary O. Phillips
Mayor - City of San Rafael
1400 5th Street
San Rafael, California. 94901
415-485-3074 (office)
415-812-4802 (cell)

On Dec 23, 2018, at 10:05 AM, Bruce Anderson <bruce@home2150.com> wrote:

Hi Gary,

Alex Stadtner asked that I forward it to you.

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.

Bruce Anderson.

Sent from my iPhone

DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

Change the Dixie Name

1 message

sherry fink <link2sherry@gmail.com> Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 11:57 AM
To: commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org
Cc: Superintendent Jason Yamashiro <jyamashiro@dixieschooldistrict>

165 Cobblestone Dr.
San Rafael, CA 94903

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,

Sherry and Robert Fink

DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comment onpetitions <commentonpetitions@dixieschooldistrict.org>

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

1 message

Alex Stadtner <astadtner@gmail.com> Fri, Feb 1, 2019 at 11:56 AM
To: Comment onpetitions <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,
Alex

Begin forwarded message:

From: Alex Stadtner <astadtner@gmail.com>
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,

Alex Stadtner

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 racket 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 21st 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.

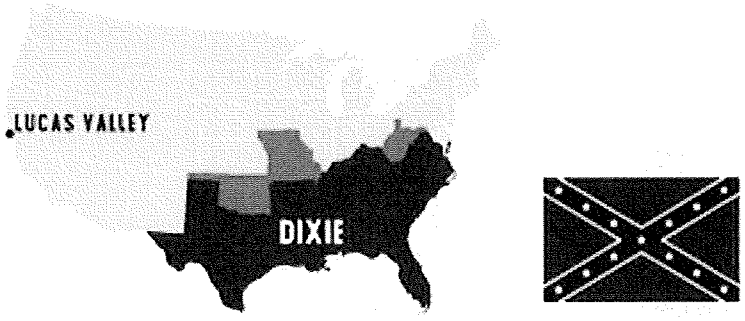
Thank you for your service and leadership during these trying times. There is a future beyond "Dixie," and it's a brighter one. We all need your help getting there.

Sincerely,
Alex Stadtner

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 or 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

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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) 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).[1] 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.[2]

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 Tecumsuh 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.[3]

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.[4]

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.[5]

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.[6]

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."[7] 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.[8] 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.[9]

Sincerely,

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[1] *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.

[2] *Red Bluff Independent*, December 11, 1863, Vol. 4, No. 36.

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

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

[5] 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."

[6] *Marin County Tocsin*, June 1, 1861, Vol. 1, No. 11. Page 1.

[7] *Marin County Tocsin*, June 1, 1861, Vol. 1, No. 11. Page 2.

[8] 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."

[9] 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."