

Public Comments
July 13, 2020 Board Meeting

Return to School/Fall

- **Benjamin Hart**, benjamin.a.hart@gmail.com

I read the Return to School Update email the district sent out to parents on June 26th. I am happy to see that schools will reopen in the fall. There is no good substitute for in-class instruction. However, my wife and I are deeply concerned with the logistics of this hybrid plan.

My wife works as a middle school teacher and I work as a teacher at Redmond High School. We live within Lake Washington School District boundaries and we have three young kids. Our oldest child will be entering 2nd grade next year at Einstein Elementary School and our other two children had been attending preschool at Timberlake Church in Redmond. The preschool at Timberlake Church is currently closed. In the fall they are planning to reopen only part of the school that our youngest will not be old enough to attend.

After months of searching, we have since found a new childcare option available for our youngest two children for the fall. This childcare only allows my wife to drop off since it opens at 7 am on Redmond Ridge.

The hybrid school plan presents huge logistical challenges for us. **First, will there be before school childcare available?** Before school care had been at Horace Mann for Einstein. I would drop my son off at 7 am and he would be later bused to Einstein. If before school care is no longer offered, we will need to arrange transportation if he is to continue to go there. I honestly do not know where that transportation option would come from or who that would be. **Second, what sort of childcare options could be potentially available on the days that students are not in school?** Many childcare facilities have closed, are not licensed for school-aged children, lack space, or are not licensed for school-aged children. One of the facilities that permanently closed was one of only two facilities that provided care to Einstein before and after school. We typically use YMCA on early dismissal days. I imagine this would not be an option for alternate days when children are not in school, as the school building would be used for the other students attending school. Furthermore, nannies are already in super high demand and prohibitively expensive for us. Au pairs are not allowed in the country until at least December 2020.

We (working parents of young school-aged children) are being put in a very difficult if not impossible situation. The needed childcare infrastructure does not yet exist. **LWSD leadership is needed to facilitate the creation of childcare options that would allow parents to work while their children are in part-time school.**

Thank you so much for your time and attention. I appreciate all the hard work you are doing in these difficult times.

- **Lisa Berenson**, LEED AP lisab8186@gmail.com

I have sent numerous responses to LWSD surveys and emails regarding the Opening of Schools In-Person. I won't go into all of "it" again.

However, as of Today, Monday, July 13... The Bellevue School District is working towards Opening School IN-PERSON 5 DAYS A WEEK !!!

My understanding from OSPI in Olympia; Equity and Equality is a factor in opening school in-person as well as numerous other factors.

If Bellevue school district is aiming for 5 days a week in person instruction as the "norm".... well then LWSD and Other Neighboring School Districts ALL should and need to be working together to Achieve the Same Goal - 5 days a week In -Person and the Only other option is to Opt Out for those that want and need to home school.

That is Equality and Equity...

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

- **Greta Climer**, Parent, Volunteer, Guest Staff, & Community Member gretacl@hotmail.com

As you apply your creative and compassionate lens to the question of how to deliver education to our children this school year I ask that you consider these astute questions circulating on Facebook.

- If a teacher tests positive for COVID-19 are they required to quarantine for multiple weeks until after recovery and getting negative test results? Is this paid? Is it possible for them to teach absent the quarantine? Is our sick leave policy adequate?
- If that teacher has 5 classes a day with 30 students each, do all 150 of those students then stay home and quarantine for 14 days until they demonstrate they have not acquired COVID-19? Can we deliver remote instruction during that time?
- What if someone who lives in the same house as a teacher tests positive? Does that teacher now need to take 14 days off of work to quarantine? Is that time off covered? Paid?
- Where is the district going to find a substitute teacher who will work in a classroom full of exposed, possibly infected students for substitute pay?
- Substitutes teach in multiple schools. What if they are diagnosed with COVID-19? Do all the kids in each school now have to quarantine and get tested? Who is going to pay for that?
- What if a student in your kid's class tests positive? What if your kid tests positive? Does every other student and teacher they have been around quarantine? Do we all get notified who is infected and when? Or because of HIPAA regulations are parents and teachers just going to get mysterious "may have been in contact" emails all year long?
- What is this stress going to do to our teachers? How does it affect their health and well-being? How does it affect their ability to teach? How does it affect the quality of education they are able to provide? What is it going to do to our kids? What are the long-term effects of consistently being stressed out?

- How will it affect students and faculty when the first teacher in their school dies from this? The first parent of a student who brought it home? The first kid?
- How many more people are going to die, that otherwise would not have if we had stayed home longer?

I urge you to think long-term. If we can't deliver in person instruction in a manner which is safe for all it is a foolish, short-term decision to offer it. Be courageous. Don't bow to pressure from the federal government. It is not your job to restart the economy. It is your job to deliver education in a manner which is safe for your staff, the children and the community. If you are not presently equipped to do so the focus should be on how to deliver education remotely and how to become equipped to deliver in person education safely over time. And remember, racial equity is an essential component of these and all other leadership decisions.

Inclusion / Equity

- **Chanel Murray**, cmurray@lwsd.org

We need racial awareness / equity to be at the forefront of everything that we do.

We need to implement the following measures:

- Increase funding for LWSD's equity department.
- We need to work with Gloria Henderson to make sure she has the financial resources needed. Far too often, these departments are the least funded and understaffed.
- The district level equity team should have voting power. The team is currently an advisory team.
- Week-long racial awareness training during Leap Week. This needs to be our focus.
- Continuous trainings throughout the year for all staff (at least 2 staff wide trainings per semester)
- All Leap meetings designated to race/equity

- **Stephen Hynden**, Kamiakin Middle School Counselor, shynden@frontier.com

It concerns me that as our staff exits for summer, the LWEA pursues a racial equity message to your attention with 'demands' that do not represent, nor even discussed, with LWEA members like myself. I am a school counselor with 24 years in LWSD. I'm barely keeping up to emails and texts in the close of year as my work duties continue this week. It alarms me to come to the racial equity demands only now, too late to submit by a deadline my comments. I hope you will read this before any reactionary decisions are made to reactionary demands amidst hot topics in our country, too easily compounded by pandemic concerns.

Most concerning is to see LWEA ask for the end of the SRO pgm. Based on what?! I've seen this be a positive and effective pgm in my middle school's for over two decades. And they propose what?...more social emotional mental health supports! WTF!?

This is not Working Toward the Future! It is impulsive and a band wagon reaction trickling down to a small group of LWEA that appear to be pushing an agenda apart from the majority of members.

Please slow this down and take the thoughtful steps to evaluate a program before moving monies to other areas that we can barely sustain in normal non-covid times.

- **Mahtab Mahmoodzadeh, mahtab9@aol.com**

I am a parent of a multi-racial black and middle eastern child. I have two school aged children, but after my daughter's experience as a student, and interviewing the principal of the elementary school, I pay for my son to attend a private school because of fears for his safety. Physical, but also emotional as I witness spirit murdering of black children in your school district at all levels. I state this an experienced educator with 22 years of teaching practice. Your niceness and ignorance and omission of black lives of students in your schools is violence. I demand as a parent that before my child enters in the fall, in the short term, all schools do mandatory training on race equity in your schools, that black children are placed in classes together with the most culturally competent teacher and advisors, and black counselors are hired in your schools. In the face of increased racial tension, I am afraid for my child's safety and I know you don't care, because I see what you do. In the long term, black parents of your students need to have agency and rights to state their experience with your district and our children's experience to help form some long term solutions, but in the immediate, this is what I demand as a parent. your district can not continue to operate with racist practice, because it does harm to all students- black, brown, and white.

- **FABSE of Lake Washington, parentandfamilyimpact@outlook.com**

(The Family Alliance of Black Student Excellence, Lake Washington/ **letter attached**)

The Family Alliance of Black Student Excellence Lake Washington, appeals to you on behalf of LWSD Black, Brown and African-American students, both present and future, impacted by the racial trauma and systemic oppression that exists within the Lake Washington School District.

Under this Board's leadership, The Lake Washington School District's commitment, as stated on the district website, is that "Each student will graduate, prepared to lead a rewarding and responsible life as a contributing member of our community and greater society."

As parents of Black, Brown and African American students, we believe that this commitment should include Black, Brown, and African-American students. If that commitment was upheld for Black students, we would not be speaking before you today on this issue, as so many have done in recent past. We do not see, hear or believe that there is a sense of urgency to implement to fully support, staff and fund the racial equity work required to dismantle the inequities forced upon Black students in Lake Washington.

The Lake Washington School District maintains a ranking of 2nd in the state while thousands of it's students matriculate through the district never having had at least one Black classroom teacher or educator. This is a harmful practice not just to Black and Brown students but it also puts White and other races of students at risk of knowingly and unknowingly adopting racist attitudes and behaviors.

While all of our students and their families have been adversely impacted by COVID-19 in one way or another, the trauma, terror and isolation of LWSD's Black students is compounded by the visceral killing of Mr. George Floyd, but not to forget Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Aubrey and all of the citizens who lost their lives at the hands of members of our society who matriculated through districts mirroring this one.

Black students have appealed before this Board in the past, relieving their racial trauma, in hopes that their stories would be heard and acted upon with measurable outcomes.

We will no longer subject our Black children to the trauma of appealing to this Board. On their behalf, we demand that you uphold your commitment to serve ALL students and immediately:

- Hire Black school counselors at the Elementary, Middle and High School before the Fall of 2020
 - LWSD has employed over 2,000 certificated staff members including classroom teachers. Less than 20 of them are Black and/or African-American. Hire Black educators in proportion to the number of schools and students in the district
 - Demonstrate how the ongoing feedback, surveys and responses the district continues to draw from the parents of Black & African-American students translates to measurable outcomes
 - Transparency: Share the hiring, promotion and retention practices of the district's current Black staff members.
 - Approve an equity budget that the Department of Equity, Opportunity and Inclusion requires to support training and staffing needs.
 - Partner with the LWEA and establish required racial equity, anti-bias, and ethnic/racially responsive teaching practices.
 - Update the curricula and reconstruct the deficit based instruction of Black history.
- **Abby Hu**, rising senior at Eastlake High School, ABHU@lwsd.org
How do I know, as a student of color, that I have staff and admin that I can connect with, trust, and will listen to me, given the lack of diversity of adults within LWSD? As someone who has not only witnessed staff turn a blind eye on blatant acts of racism and microaggressions, but has been the runt of the "joke", there are three ways the victim can handle it:
 1. Laugh with the aggressor(s)
 2. Be passive and "just take it"
 3. Stand up for themselves

Option three is easier said than done. When students of color, and even LGTBQIA+ students, see teachers/staff turning blind eyes, there is no trust. We cannot trust anyone to help us or be there for us, except ourselves. This leaves options 1 and 2 as the more realistic option.

LWSD needs to start reprimanding and educating students why actions like saying the n-word is not acceptable. Teachers hearing students say the n-word and replying with "Don't say that again" does nothing. I have seen that happen too many times. Racism and microaggressions are being normalized in LWSD when students get let off with no consequences.

Education starts with changing the curriculum to accurately reflect and tell the history of, not just the world, but the United States and Washington.

Moving forward, how is LWSD going to diversify staff and admin across the district? If there is a trend of BIPOC teachers quitting, that should be a calling for LWSD to reflect and analyze why BIPOC teachers quit.

I would like you all to take a look around the room the next time you are in a meeting, maybe even this meeting, and take a mental note of how many BIPOC voices are present.

Do better.

- **Cleo Rohn**, Eastlake High School, crohn@lwsd.org
When I first heard of LWSD, I heard about the district's values of equity and inclusion. In practice, I have not known this to be the case. At my teaching interview, I was met by an interview committee of entirely white faces. I did not feel intimidated or endangered by this fact, as I am white myself. But I have been personally told by my incredible colleagues of color that this was an incredibly intimidating experience, made especially uncomfortable when these all-white interviewers tried to tell them about the school's commitment to diversity.

I am proud to work at Eastlake, yet disheartened by the fact that we have only one black teacher in our faculty and only a handful of teachers of color. These few are constantly tokenized, met with microaggressions, and burdened with doing the work of educating white colleagues on racism. It is unfair, it is violent, and we should hold ourselves to a higher standard for the sake of our colleagues, our children, and the world we wish to see.

I am asking for a deliberate push to seek out and hire people of color, particularly BIPOCs, in teacher and leadership positions across the district. To go hand-in-hand with this, I request that the district make an honest, sustained effort to be a space where these new hires feel safe to work. It is not enough to bring a new teacher of color into a school in which they are tokenized or met with an unwillingness to acknowledge racism. I ask the board, what will you do to hold every one of us accountable for doing anti-racist work inside the classroom and within our school communities?

Lately, we have seen companies and organizations make vague statements and empty promises of equality. I have faith that Lake Washington can rise above this and be a true leader in the fight for racial equity, starting with the makeup of our schools and the training of our teachers.

- **Crystal Visperas**, Eastlake High School, cvisperas@lwsd.org
My name is Crystal Visperas and I am a 14th year teacher. This is my second year in LWSD. I am one of two colleagues of color in the Humanities Department at Eastlake.

First, I implore the School District to make direct action in actively seeking out and hiring more teachers of color and teachers with varied identities (including LGBTQ+ community). If we are anti-racist in our teaching practices, so must our hiring practices. Gloria Henderson is the only Black administrator. This is wrong and must be changed. Also, I hope yall are paying her more.

Secondly, my colleagues and I wrote a letter to the School Board and Dr. Stavem on June 1st to correct the community statement to include the word "Black" and proudly proclaim Black

Lives Matter. A second communication was sent to Dr. Stavem in urging her to apologize for the grave mistake of not centering Black people's lived experiences and protection of their lives by the violent hands of police. We have not heard follow-up on how this was taken into serious consideration. This silence pains us.

Finally, I want to commend Mark Stuart for his comments last meeting. We watched in disappointment as the School Board did not want to make motions to dismantle the racist Juanita mascot despite calls for justice from the Black community and POC/white allies. You wanted to wait until this meeting to make changes. Mark Stuart is the only person who I know is an ally for the Black movement on the School Board.

How will you show us you are continually listening to Black demands? How will you show us that justice overrides needing to wait and follow precedent? How will you show us your all white School Board is not complicit in this movement?

We'll be waiting...

- **Adam White**, adamwhite40000@gmail.com
As a white supremacist, I think you masterfully approached the previous board meeting. Like any good white supremacist in power, you offered meaningless sympathies to the BLM movement and then refused to make any actual change, even though you knew more people than ever wrote in and were expecting decisive action--including students. You cited concerns of making the language perfect (as if you can't revise it later) or because traditions don't allow it to be done the same day (hoorah for traditions!). I love it! Also, please remove Mark Stuart from the board for actually wanting to send a meaningful and timely message. It disgusts me that an old white man--someone who *should* be in our corner--is the only one who is trying to make our BIPOC students and staff feel safe and valued.

P.S. Bravo for the all-white Board!

- **Delaney Chenevert**, Redmond High School student, delaneychenevert@gmail.com
my name is Delaney Chenevert and I attend RHS. I am emailing to address the racism that has been tolerated and instigated by the students and staff within this district. I could bring up a list of racist or at least racially insensitive moments that have happened over middle and high school, but i'd rather summarize the moments and spend some more time addressing the lack of accountability . i've been singled out by a teacher to discuss my skin color in front of the class, had a teacher encourage black face, listened to my teachers vilify black historical figures during the only unit black people are included in, stared at during all units of african american history especially when discussing slavery, been stared at while my teacher read the n-word with an a and a hard r every time it occurred in any of the curriculum novels, and have witnessed too many of my teachers be shocked when I receive good grades although I am a consistent and hardworking student who is always receiving high marks. i listed only teacher incidents to help point out that all of these moments could have been prevented through proper anti-racist education for teachers and/or a curriculum change. I know that many other

poc students have different stories that they could add, which are most likely much worse. although many students can attest to the racism that is brought by other students i wanted to focus on the staff. because if our teachers are encouraging the same behavior, then how can we expect them to recognize inappropriate student behavior when they act inappropriately themselves? this is not a time for adults to get defensive about their actions. it is about a time of deep reflection for all teachers. these are the developing ages for many kids. when you allow kids to say racial slurs in your class and say other offensive things, you are telling this kid that their behaviour is okay. if a teacher isn't calling them on it, they think how bad could this really be. furthermore, when you allow marginalized groups to be disrespected in a classroom setting, you are telling them that not only will adults not stand up for you, but that this behavior and feeling of inferiority and unease is normal as well. I have seen accountability from adults but they are typically not the ones directly in the classroom. I hope that not only will staff members consume anti-racist educational resources, but that our district will take a deep look at what curriculum we are using and what type of story that tells as well. thank you for listening.

- **Vivek Gopalam, vivekgopalam@hotmail.com**

Hello, my name is Vivek Gopalam, and I am a rising senior at Tesla STEM HS, and I would like to share some thoughts regarding the issues that have been or will be brought up by others today. A detail that I believe is relevant to this conversation is that I am a person of color and an ethnic minority.

I do not support any changes to the LWSD history curriculum. Rewriting it in the name of "racial diversity" is inherently racist as it celebrates individuals solely for their race, and not their achievements, which is what our current curriculum does.

I also would like to speak out in support of our local police that help contribute to LWSD. Our School Resource Officers are extremely valuable individuals, and greatly benefit their schools. They take on roles beyond that of "Cop" such as friend and coach. I can positively say that the SRO program has enhanced my student experience, and I feel much safer knowing that there is a police officer on campus. This is why I condemn any current or future proposal by LWSD to defund or eliminate the police presence in our district. In fact, I support increasing the police presence in our district. This would have multiple benefits such as allowing better relations between students and police to form, and would make schools safer for students.

The positions that I have shared are held by the majority of students, however many are not speaking up due to fear of being "canceled" (a process in which lwsd staff can be complicit)

To summarize, I do not believe LWSD should take any action whatsoever in response to current events as LWSD already creates an environment that fosters dignity and respect between students of all races and ethnicities.

- **Jennifer Marin**, EHS Teacher, jmarin@lwsd.org

My name is Jennifer Marin, and I am a teacher at Eastlake High School and work in the Humanities Department. Over the last several weeks, I have watched with optimism the public outrage over the inequitable treatment of African Americans, and I appreciate that many in our district (including my principal, Chris Bede) have acknowledged that we must actively work against inequity and injustice. There is definitely more that needs to be done.

One way I feel LWSD can address systemic racism is by strategically hiring teachers of color. The staff at Eastlake High School (and our district as a whole) is sorely lacking in racial diversity – particularly African Americans – and not having teachers of color underserves our students of color by not providing them powerful role models. We need an intentional approach to recruiting and hiring more teachers of color. Is there such an approach currently?

It has also come to my attention about the debate over Juanita High School's mascot. I watched a news segment this morning about this conversation – and how black students feel like they have not been heard – and it shocks me that there is a school in our district that has a mascot with connections to the Confederacy. It should be immediately changed. Nothing about the Confederacy should be honored.

Finally, I have been horrified to hear about LWSD students spreading racist content this summer through social media. One particular post stands out to me because I saw one of my former students liking the image: a post ridiculing the deportation of a Latino worker who had been renovating the student's bathroom. This student's post – and my former student giving it a positive reaction – magnifies the lack of compassion and accepted racism that unfortunately permeates our community, and it was just one of several posts I saw which highlight that our white students in particular need more awareness about white privilege and systemic racism. We need to be having more conversations in the classrooms (and all together as school communities) about these topics.

Thank you for considering my concerns.

- **Jana Mansour**, janamansour2345@gmail.com / {screenshots attached}
We the students, demand there are no more police officers in our schools. The reasoning for this is best put by @mind.fullyresilient on instagram. I shall link screenshots; please read through.
- **Jocelyn Randall** (Parent of 6th/8th graders), Ann-Marie Granger (Parent of 10th grader), joyous1118@gmail.com

This letter follows a recent letter to Superintendent Holmen and continues a call for our district to lead the way to initiating racial justice and true anti-racist education for our students.

I acknowledge the difficulties in coping with a pandemic and demands on re-opening, but the urgency to change a system that continues to uphold racist policies has to begin. Providing the

emotional and social support that students, teachers/staff need, and not just those that are BIPOC, is vital considering the traumatic modern events that have now fully come to the forefront. We cannot continue to be complicit by not addressing the changes we must take.

To begin, providing more support to our Equity Director, Gloria Henderson, who must be quite burdened being one of the few Black representatives in our district and only has two staff on her Equity team. Support can begin by providing more funding and also establishing an Equity Policy for the district. How can the district begin without the support even provided to the Equity Director and no Equity Policy?

Second, mandatory Antiracist training specifically for all teachers and staff. Too long have watered down statements labeled with "diversity" and "inclusion" been used. It has not been enough, it simply promotes the "colorblindness" that deflects the ongoing and true issues. We see why from the silence and lack of urgency too many people in our community continue to comfortably sit in.

Third, serious work towards increasing diversity of all teachers and staff. What are the hiring practices being used and must be changed to ensure it focuses on antiracist hiring and promotion practices that encourage the hiring and ongoing support of BIPOC faculty.

Fourth, to dismantle racist structures, the district must begin teaching that does not solely focus on Euro-centric white cis-male, heteronormative, anti-Black ideologies. Stop promoting the viewpoint that US history is seen only through the eyes of White America and begin to teach about Black inventors, authors, teachers, activists that for so long have been absent from the curriculum.

Our education system certainly is pushed in many ways and that is evident in this pandemic. We as parents will continue to support you in coping with the difficult challenges that lay ahead. Please do not push social justice, racial justice aside. Our education system holds a vital responsibility to help students build their capacity to understand and confront racism and contribute to a society where peace and justice are fully realized for all people.

Us and many parents will help you in whatever ways we can to try to achieve this. We must work together. Our district can lead the way.

- **Steph Hodges, shodges@carroll.edu**

Hello, my name is Steph Hodges and I am a recent graduate of Eastlake High School. I am emailing to address the racism, sexism, and homophobia that continues seemingly without consequence in our district.

There are many stories that have been told to you, and now it is my turn to share my experiences. I have heard classmates use the n-word after just being told not to by teachers, treating it as a joke instead of acknowledging the significance and power such a word holds. In my 4 years at Eastlake, I've only had a single teacher who was not white. Recently, there was a Twitter thread made of students who attend Eastlake who used racial slurs and "joked" about

minority groups. It was hurtful to see students who have previously been celebrated for their kindness and leadership abilities by the school to have taken such harmful actions. I have also seen students mock Asian students by pulling back their eyes. This occurred in the hallways of Eastlake, and the students never faced any consequences for their actions (as far as I'm aware).

In addition to the racism at Eastlake, I have also witnessed extreme homophobia and transphobia. I have heard friends say they didn't want to join Pride Club because they were afraid they would be targeted and didn't feel safe being out - that Eastlake didn't protect them. I understand this fear, as Pride club has been attacked numerous times, from posters being vandalized to slurs being used against club members. When I first heard about a poster being torn down, I was shocked and went to the adviser of Pride Club. She said that such a response was normal for Eastlake and that it happened all the time. No one ever got in trouble because it somehow always occurred out of the sight of the cameras. I cried that day because my friends were right, a place I thought was safe for them would in fact paint a target on their back.

I hope that hearing my story and the stories of others will urge you to take action on such issues.

- **Mickey Stuart, mickeyspr@hotmail.com**

When looking at the Policies up for discussion at tonight's LWSD Board Meeting I was struck by the wording in Policy 6970, the goal of which is to eliminate discriminatory and derogatory names, memorials and symbols districtwide. The new policy removes the decision-making from the Board and puts it solely into the hands of the Superintendent.

However, in a secondary reference to the Superintendent the pronoun "he/she" is used. "He/she", with the male coming first and coming out on top?

If the district is truly committed to the Equity priority as stated, increasing "equitable outcomes by addressing barriers to engagement and success" then it is time to put these words in action. Use of the pronoun "s/he" is an auditory and visual reminder to all out students and (overwhelmingly female) staff that women can ably fill the role of CEO, a rarity in our country and around the world.

In this case, gender equity begins with a single pronoun.

I look forward to days when the district acts on it's principles and enforces all codified non-discriminatory statements.

Juanita High School Mascot

- **Ian Shuler**, ianshuler@gmail.com

Hello, my name is Ian Shuler and I graduated from Juanita High School in 2000.

I am writing this letter on Juneteenth because it is time to remove the “Rebels” mascot.

The reason is simple: It upholds a history of racism. The fact that it’s subtle and seen as controversial vs. overtly racist should only be examined as a sign of our privilege to take what we want from history and not listen to the experiences of others.

Even 20 years ago, I didn’t feel like we were being honest about the mascot and its history. The mascot and crest had been modified, but students still flew Confederate flags on their cars and in official pep rallies. If you haven’t see it yourself, you’ve heard the stories. And that stuff doesn’t just go away unaddressed.

I heard last year that students voted to keep the mascot, but it shouldn’t be their responsibility to decide to remove a racist mascot. Yes, let students pick the new mascot! But the administration is ultimately accountable. The rules, whatever they may be, can be changed. Do the right thing.

We need to talk about race in our high school curriculum, and this would be an excellent way to openly own our history and move forward.

Thank you for your time.

- **David Jennings**, Juanita H.S. Class of 1982, Culpeper, VA, jennnteam@gmail.com

As a Juanita High School graduate who now resides near many Civil War battlefields, I am writing to ask that the board/superintendent not change the name of Juanita High School’s mascot the “Rebels” for these reasons:

1. Changing the name of a school or its mascot is expensive. I would rather see those funds used for education.
2. Juanita High School and the Rebels mascot have no connection with the C.S.A. (Confederate States of America). It should be simple and straightforward to communicate that, as well as the broader, positive meanings of the word “Rebel.”
3. It should be relatively easy to prevent and correct any misguided or confused individual who says or does anything to portray such a link -- for example by wearing a gray civil war uniform to a game, or by designing a yearbook cover that connotes the C.S.A. battle flag (which happened 30 years ago).
4. Changing the mascot because of the word “Rebel” is not a logical response to complaints of racism. The word “Rebel” is embedded throughout our language and culture, from Star Wars to rock and roll. If anyone tries to connect Juanita Rebels to the C.S.A., school leadership, teachers, parents and students should address that directly. Communication and teaching can also prevent mistaken associations with the Civil War.
5. Many mascots and logos around the country have the potential to be misconstrued. Some should be changed. Other just need to be clarified. It is the responsibility of each

organization's leadership to communicate the meaning and history of their symbols and images.

6. The Juanita H.S. "crest" or logo could be tweaked or updated to help clarify that there is no link to the C.S.A. For example, by updating the swords, as the University of Virginia recently did.
7. Changing the mascot would teach a harmful lesson: that merely getting signatures on an online petition can trigger expensive changes, with the costs borne by others.
8. When students report racist behavior, that should be addressed immediately and directly. The school should have clear policies and processes for dealing with that problem. Changing the mascot will not help that situation.

It is understandable that some students want to challenge the status quo, to question authority, and to cause change as they transition to adulthood. You might even call them rebels.

- **Natalie Ferrara**, 2020-21 Juanita ASB Co-President, s-NFERRARA@lwsd.org / {letter attached} Greetings, members of the school board. In this letter, we wish to address the policy for changing a school mascot.

We understand that in light of recent events, the policy to change the mascot could be amended. If this were to happen, we have a few requests/ideas in mind from your Juanita High School ASB Team, which includes:

- Only our Juanita community can vote (this excludes any other Lake Washington School District schools and their respective feeder schools).
 - Only students get to vote/decide upon the changing of the mascot (excludes influence from the community including but not limited to parents and alumni).
- Incorporating and allowing younger students to vote (KaMS and FHMS students since they are the feeder schools and this will directly affect their future).
- A process in which everyone can mutually agree upon the outcome based on the fairness and equality of said process.
- Inform and educate students on both perspectives of changing the mascot *before* voting begins.
- In the current voting process, a non-decisive vote counts as a vote against changing the mascot. We would like to see that the decision will be based upon the majority of those who vote, not the majority of student body as a whole.
- In the making of the petition, require the options of which the mascot will be changed to instead of a blanket statement that the mascot will be changed. OR decide what the new mascot will be or narrow a list of options before the old one is voted out. When we last took our mascot to a vote in 2018, our students were unsure of voting at all because they did not know what the mascot would be changed to.
- Incorporate a student voice to prevent any confusion regarding the wording of the ballot. In 2018, our students were confused if voting 'yes' meant yes to change the mascot or yes to keep the mascot.

We cannot thank you enough for your time, and we hope you take our considerations into account for the policy.

- **Jennifer Parkinson, lilywhite_66@yahoo.com**

Please keep our school name Juanita Rebels. I'm sure you know how our name came about and what it stands for, Not the confederacy. By changing the name Rebel it's like saying everyone who went to the school before the name change must have been racist. In 20 years the original school name won't even be referenced I truly believe the Rebel history will be lost. I don't understand it's been voted on by the student body to keep it. I heard the same person keeps bringing this up. Yes Times are crazy right now. It just doesn't make sense to me to get rid of our school name. People were after the Vikings name during the woman's movement because vikings raped and pillaged, glad they are still the Vikings. You could change kamiakin cougars because suddenly older women dating younger men are called that. Some older woman might not like that. We can't get rid of every word because a person says it's offensive because it now means this, or a hundred years ago they used it this way. The meaning of a Rebel.. is not a confederate. Please keep our name Rebel. I grew up in a neighborhood in the 70's (Highwoodlands) my next door neighbors were gay, we had a Korean family next to them, farther down the street a black family, another around the corner, across the street someone who was handicapped and another kid in a wheel chair. We all got along fine. maybe it's the internment why people get all excited and bent out of shape so easy. Yes a lot of racism going on but the Juanita Rebel name is not. I believe in keeping it and fighting what it stands for. Not what people think. Too many conspiracy theory's. Once again please keep our name

I am proud to be a Juanita Rebel class of 83.



Dear Board of Directors of LWSD,

The Family Alliance of Black Student Excellence Lake Washington, appeals to you on behalf of LWSD Black, Brown and African-American students, both present and future, impacted by the racial trauma and systemic oppression that exists within the Lake Washington School District.

Under this Board's leadership, The Lake Washington School District's commitment, as stated on the district website, is that "Each student will graduate, prepared to lead a rewarding and responsible life as a contributing member of our community and greater society."

As parents of Black, Brown and African American students, we believe that this commitment should include Black, Brown, and African-American students. If that commitment was upheld for Black students, we would not be speaking before you today on this issue, as so many have done in recent past. We do not see, hear or believe that there is a sense of urgency to implement to fully support, staff and fund the racial equity work required to dismantle the inequities forced upon Black students in Lake Washington.

The Lake Washington School District maintains a ranking of 2nd in the state while thousands of it's students matriculate through the district never having had at least one Black classroom teacher or educator. This is a harmful practice not just to Black and Brown students but it also puts White and other races of students at risk of knowingly and unknowingly adopting racist attitudes and behaviors.

While all of our students and their families have been adversely impacted by COVID-19 in one way or another, the trauma, terror and isolation of LWSD's Black students is compounded by the visceral killing of Mr. George Floyd, but not to forget Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Aubrey and all of the citizens who lost their lives at the hands of members of our society who matriculated through districts mirroring this one.

Black students have appealed before this Board in the past, relieving their racial trauma, in hopes that their stories would be heard and acted upon with measurable outcomes.

We will no longer subject our Black children to the trauma of appealing to this Board. On their behalf, we demand that you uphold your commitment to serve ALL students and immediately:

- Hire Black school counselors at the Elementary, Middle and High School before the Fall of 2020
- LWSD has employed over 2,000 certificated staff members including classroom teachers. Less than 20 of them are Black and/or African-American. Hire Black educators in proportion to the number of schools and students in the district
- Demonstrate how the ongoing feedback, surveys and responses the district continues to draw from the parents of Black & African-American students translates to measurable outcomes
- Transparency: Share the hiring, promotion and retention practices of the district's current Black staff members.
- Approve an equity budget that the Department of Equity, Opportunity and Inclusion requires to support training and staffing needs.

- Partner with the LWEA and establish required racial equity, anti-bias, and ethnic/racially responsive teaching practices.
- Update the curricula and reconstruct the deficit based instruction of Black history.

Greetings members of the schoolboard. In this letter, we wish to address the policy for changing a school mascot.

We understand that in light of recent events, the policy to change the mascot could be amended. If this were to happen, we have a few requests/ideas in mind from your Juanita High School ASB Team, which includes:

- Only our Juanita community can vote (this excludes any other Lake Washington School District schools and their respective feeder schools).
 - Only students get to vote/decide upon the changing of the mascot (excludes influence from the community including but not limited to parents and alumni).
- Incorporating and allowing younger students to vote (KaMS and FHMS students since they are the feeder schools and this will directly affect their future).
- A process in which everyone can mutually agree upon the outcome based on the fairness and equality of said process.
- Inform and educate students on both perspectives of changing the mascot *before* voting begins.
- In the current voting process, a non-decisive vote counts as a vote against changing the mascot. We would like to see that the decision will be based upon the majority of those who vote, not the majority of student body as a whole.
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- Incorporate a student voice to prevent any confusion regarding the wording of the ballot. In 2018, our students were confused if voting 'yes' meant yes to change the mascot or yes to keep the mascot.

We cannot thank you enough for your time, and we hope you take our considerations into account for the policy.

Respectfully,
Your 2020-21 Juanita High School ASB Team

- **Jana Mansour** / Screenshots from @mind.fullyresilient on Instagram

Two-thirds of American high school students attend a school with a police officer (Also known as- Resource Officer)

Data shows that schools with police:

- are more likely to refer children to law enforcement
- are likely to refer students to law enforcement for non-serious violent behaviors
- Black students are more likely to be arrested while at school
- leads to the adultification of Black & brown children

@MIND.FULLYRESILIENT

Horrific acts of police violence in schools:

Captured on body cameras 2019:
Officer in Florida put a 6-year-old girl in handcuffs as she sobbed
New Mexico an officer shoved an 11-year-old girl against a wall
Both students were Black.

There are dozens of documented incidents in the past decade where a resource officer tasered, pepper sprayed, injured or otherwise used force on a student.

The presence of police in schools is the dehumanization of children of color.

@MIND.FULLYRESILIENT

In majority white & affluent schools police are more likely to think of their job as protecting the school from outside threats, such as shootings.

In schools that are lower-income & majority students of color, police instead look at the students themselves as threats. This fuels the school to prison pipeline.

@MIND.FULLYRESILIENT

School resource officer programs began in the 1950s in Flint, Mich

In the 1990s amid fear about school shootings. The U.S. Department of Justice has funded school police by tens of millions of dollars

Funding was expanded in support after the Parkland, Fla., school shooting in 2018.

Federal data shows millions of students, especially students of color, attend schools that have police officers, but no nurse or school psychologist.

@MIND.FULLYRESILIENT

Analysis of nearly 200 incidents of gun violence at school showed only 2 times a school resource officer successfully intervened in a shooting

Evidence-based Alternatives Include:

- restorative justice programs
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports programs
- mental health counselors
- hiring social workers & nurses
- having other support staff available when students are acting out

@MIND.FULLYRESILIENT

Research by the U.S. Secret Service shows interventions — designed to build trust between students and adults — can prevent gun violence and mass shootings by making "bystander" students more likely to speak up if a classmate is making threats to others, or is suicidal.

@MIND.FULLYRESILIENT

SOURCES:

Time: The Kalief Browder Story
Documentary

School shootings have fueled a \$2.7 billion school
safety industry. What makes kids safer?
Washington Post, Article

Why There's A Push To Get Police Out Of Schools
NPR, Radio

[https://www.aclu.org/issues/juvenile-justice/school
-prison-pipeline/cops-and-no-counselors](https://www.aclu.org/issues/juvenile-justice/school-prison-pipeline/cops-and-no-counselors)
ACLU

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