

June 25, 2020

Dear Board of Education Members:

The demonstrations, protests, and rallies that have taken place in communities across the U.S. have brought to the fore the need for a national dialogue on several issues related to race, criminal justice, and equality. These are sensitive topics for sure, but ones that require our fullest attention, with our words being followed by meaningful change.

Unfortunately, as has been the case too many times before, some elected officials have rejected real conversations for knee-jerk reactions. Perhaps this is a symptom of the 24-hour news cycle we find ourselves in, or what has become an almost insatiable need by some to score points on social media.

We believe such responses, including the one your body recently took to change the names of the high school mascots in the district, do nothing to further the cause that the vast majority believe in. In fact, in some ways, they cloud the issue and will limit our ability to bring about the transformation so many of us hope to see.

At a time when we should be teaching our community, including our youngest residents, that good government acts in a way that is consistent with the views of those they serve, your body made this decision with very little, if any, public input.

To that end, we are imploring you to act at the next possible opportunity to rescind your resolution, and replace it with a commitment to engage students, alum, educators, and, of course, taxpayers. Perhaps after going through the appropriate process the same decision will be made, but, at least, it will be one that you can say we all made together.

This is what our Democracy is about, and is an ideal we hope you will uphold.

Sincerely,

Carlos Rendo
Mayor
Boro of Woodcliff Lake

Michael Ghassali
Mayor
Borough of Montvale

John Ruocco
Mayor
Borough of Hillsdale

Glen J. Jasionowski
Mayor
River Vale Township