



Virginia School for the Deaf Alumni Association (VSDAA)



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March 8, 2023

Board of Visitors
Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind
Staunton, VA 24401

Secretary

Rhonda Jennings-Arey
Vsdaasecretary@gmail.com

Dear Senator John J. Bell, The Board of Visitors, and Superintendent Patricia Trice,

Treasurer

Rusty L. Thompson
VSDAATreasurer@gmail.com

We, the alumni of Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind (VSDB), are writing to express our concerns about a recent decision regarding our school's future. We want to bring your attention to this matter.

We recognize our alumni's desire that VSDB maintains the Cardinal Mascot and we endorse their letter which is as follows:

Boards at Large Members:

Janet W. Wright
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Richard Goode
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Darin Gillis
Razell6610@gmail.com

To: Superintendent Pat Trice, Board of Visitors, Alumni of Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind, Visitors, and Friends

Re: Preserving the Cardinal Mascot

Good afternoon,

We are speaking on behalf of the Deaf alumni of this great school; several of whom are here today. We, the alumni, are aware that the Superintendent, Pat Trice, is proposing to make changes to demonstrate the Deaf and the Blind department as an Unified VSDB. These changes include the removal of both mascots and designing a new one that would reflect both departments. While Superintendent Trice may have good intentions with this plan, we ask that you consider the ramifications of the Superintendent's intentions as this affects the Deaf community as a whole. Let us explain.

For over 50 years, the Deaf Department of VSDB has thought of this School, our home, as the "Home of the Cardinals," just as our National Anthem proclaims that America is the "Home of the Brave". The Cardinal, which replaced the Red Raiders in 1965, became much more than just a mascot, it became an identity for many Deaf students who enrolled at VSDB. Regardless of how many years these students stayed at VSDB, each Deaf student came in and left as a Cardinal. The Cardinal represents the pride, the self-awareness, and the unity that is this school.

We ask that you not diminish the values that we carry with the Cardinal but help us preserve our legacy. We ask that you reject the intention to remove the mascot. The Cardinal reminds us that we can fly, and will.

We would also like to address Superintendent Trice directly, please. You say it is not the intent to merge two departments into one, but to keep the two departments as they are. However removing the Cardinal mascot will contradict that message. We are not asking that the Cardinal represent the whole school but we are respectfully asking that the Cardinal remain as the mascot of the Deaf Department.