

news leader.

LOCAL

Petition started to fire VSDB superintendent



Patrick Hite

Staunton News Leader

Published 10:27 p.m. ET June 13, 2023 | Updated 1:23 p.m. ET June 14, 2023

STAUNTON — A petition on change.org started June 9 to oust Pat Trice as superintendent of the Virginia School for The Deaf and The Blind has 152 signatures as of late Tuesday.

Trice has been superintendent at the Staunton school since 2015. She was interim superintendent a year before that.

"Pat Trice has not shown satisfactory performance with her duties as Superintendent of VSDB," the petition reads. It goes on to give reasons, accusing her of "oppression" and "control."

In March, Trice caused an uproar among some in the school community when it was announced that VSDB would be naming a new mascot while doing away with the two mascots it currently has — Cardinals for the deaf school and Chiefs for the blind school. The idea, per Trice, is to make one unified mascots for all students.

At the time of the announcement a petition was created asking VSDB to save the Cardinals mascot. That petition now has more than 1,500 signatures.

"Ever since Pat Trice was appointed as Superintendent of VSDB, there has been a lot of chaos and unnecessary changes that do not represent VSDB students, parents, faculty members, and Alumni of VSDB," Robert Bolling wrote on the newest petition asking to Trice's removal. "She has attempted to take total and complete control of what students and others can or cannot say, not even allowing the expression of their opinions on certain issues."

Ivy Bennett also signed the petition, saying Trice's methods have turned the school into a

"dictatorship" and that the superintendent doesn't respect the wishes of students or alumni.

"It's time for a superintendent that actually listens to students and pursue better education options for the school," Bennett wrote.

Trice, who has been on vacation, was reached Tuesday afternoon by text. The News Leader asked her for a response to the reasons given in the petition.

"I do not have time to read social media at all," she responded. "So I have no comment."

While not mentioned in the petition, several people have posted on Facebook that a rally to support firing Trice will be held in Staunton June 23 and 24. David Tester posted that there will be a "parade with picketing signs to protest against VSDB superintendent Pat Trice for her failed leadership in the city of Staunton, Va."

He said more plans will be coming soon, but "anybody who is in support of our cause are welcome to join us."

More: Nexus owners skip court, lose \$1.1 million in lawsuit

More: The [Endurance] Digest: 5 weeks of music, 6 hours of running, dozens of evocative songs

— *Patrick Hite is a reporter at The News Leader. Story ideas and tips always welcome. Contact Patrick (he/him/his) at phite@newsleader.com and follow him on Twitter @Patrick_Hite. Subscribe to us at newsleader.com.*