

VSDB alumni, students protest in downtown Staunton to oust Pat Trice





STAUNTON — Ivy Bennett stands on the corner of Beverley and Augusta streets in downtown Staunton. Bennett helped to organize a protest with students and alumni on Saturday, June 24, outside their community center in downtown Staunton to remove Pat Trice as superintendent at the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind.

Inside the community center, students create picketing signs for protesters to carry with them as they walk up and down Beverley Street while the streets are closed for the weekend.

Interpreters stand by to help communicate to people walking by what is happening and why.

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 mascot for all students.

"We need someone to be superintendent who represents our community well, our wishes, our culture," said Bennett through an interpreter. "The superintendent right now is lying and she's not doing the right thing. She is representing herself, not us."

Trice has been superintendent at the Staunton school since 2015. She was interim superintendent a year before that. A [petition](#) on change.org started June 9 to oust Pat Trice accusing her of "oppression" and "control."

"She wanted to remove our mascot and change it into something different," said Bennett. "The students said no. The staff said no. The alumni said no. But she forced [the change](#) anyway against the students' wishes."

Bennett said things have gotten out of hand and the students are really struggling.

"Students are really upset with the mascot," said Bennett. "It upset the deaf community as well. We feel like there's no support. She's not being an ally to us at all and she needs to go."

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