

WALPOLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

William J. Buckley, Jr., Walpole School Committee Chairperson
Bridget Gough, Ed.D., Superintendent of Walpole Schools

We are releasing this statement in light of recent inquiries about a citizens' petition in favor of changing the Walpole Schools' athletic teams' name, the "Rebels." In 1994, the Walpole School Committee voted to ban the Confederate Flag as a symbol for its athletic teams because of that symbol's divisiveness and connection to certain hate groups. At that time, the Confederate Flag, and not the term "Rebels," was the catalyst for the change.

Given recent events, the community has raised increasing concerns over the name "Rebels." We are committed to listening carefully to our community and our students on this matter. One of our most important goals is to maintain a school culture that supports all students.

With all of this in mind, the School Committee and Administration are scheduling a virtual community forum meeting for next Tuesday, June 16, at 6:00 p.m. Community members will be welcome to speak at this forum. Additionally, we are creating a portal to take written comments, which will be available on the District's website soon. Details on the forum will be available shortly. After receiving and thinking about all sides of the issue, the School Committee currently plans to hold a vote on the matter during its meeting on Thursday, June 18.

Thank you for your attention, and please understand that we will have no further comment at this time.