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**From:** Robert Russo

**Sent:** Wednesday, January 17, 2024 9:46:49 AM

**To:** Rutland Senior Secondary School <RutlandSeniorSecondary.School@sd23.bc.ca>

**Cc:** Hugh Alexander <Hugh.Alexander@sd23.bc.ca>; Julia Fraser <Julia.Fraser@sd23.bc.ca>

**Subject:** school name change

Hello,

I just wanted to express my position on the potential name change of RSS.

I have been a resident of Rutland all my life, I graduated in 87, my siblings and father all went to RSS/RMS. I can profoundly say I am a proud Rutland community member.

The Voodoo logo is my history, my culture, and my past good memories. I would hate to see it go. It was a mascot that was unique and represented a cool attitude. I am very confident that most alumni would be very disappointed to see it go.

On the Kelowna now report, it referenced the mascot as being culturally insensitive. I'm sorry but I never perceived it to be that way, so I googled the word. From the little bit of research I did, it is described as a spiritual religion that originated from west Africa. The slave trade brought and introduced the religion and name to the Americas. The word "voodoo" has many different related names: Vodou/Hoodoo/Vodun where Voodoo was the American reference.

Misconceptions About Voodoo:

Popular culture has strongly associated Vodou with devil worship, torture, cannibalism, and malevolent magical workings. This is largely the product of Hollywood coupled with historical misrepresentations and misunderstandings of the faith.

As for the "Voodoo aircraft", I don't see any negative connotations there? From my understanding it is simply a name of a Canadian Jet Fighter. You could argue that the name or religion provides more cultural diversity.

If you make this change originating from a group of students, then I must ask: will this occur every 10 years and will this happen with every school? And what is the cost to the taxpayer?

I strongly feel this is not money well spent. I would suspect all these potential changes will cost the taxpayer hundreds of thousand of dollars.

Unless I am missing something that is profoundly negative about these names/mascots??

If its simply argued that it is time for a change, well then I hope you pick a good one!

References:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haitian\\_Vodou](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haitian_Vodou)

<https://www.learnreligions.com/vodou-an-introduction-for-beginners-95712>

Respectfully,

**Robert Russo**