

On March 10th of 2021, West Sonoma County Union High School's board approved the vote of consolidation between the El Molino and Analy high schools. After a full year of unknowns through a pandemic and a new learning experience for students attending each school, the decision of consolidation from the school board was rushed and inconsiderate of how the students and their representatives felt. After the decision was made, it was decided that the Analy campus would be used for the consolidated school. Of course because of this decision, many of the far West Sonoma County residents felt like the board of trustees were not representing their community. In order to ensure that the new consolidated school was inclusive of both student bodies, the board of trustees decided to start a rebranding committee. The members of this committee, which included randomly selected students (who opted in), would work together to come up with a new school name, colors, and mascot. The board of trustees promised the student body a new school and a new name. Shortly after this committee was formed, the board of trustees decided to put it on hold due to time constraints and decided to name the new school West County High School.

As students came back from summer break and into the new school year, they had to adapt to the new school culture and brand. The rebranding committee would never be brought up again.

Students who were once rivals started to form a new community within the walls of the now West County campus. Since the first day of school, the leadership class made sure to be energetic and positive during orientation week, sports games, and rallies in order to create a new sense of school spirit. Hard work paid off. In a single semester, the students at West County formed strong bonds with each other and what was once considered to be a campus for El Molino and Analy students was now a campus for West County students.

Sport games and dances had a much greater student attendance than any El Molino or Analy games and dances before. Students from both schools shared that they noticed this year had been the most spirited in their high school career regardless of the consolidation; thus, proving that a united community exists within the West County campus. Sports games were filled with highly spirited students cheering for their school team and wearing West County merch. Students were showing a sense of pride and maturity that surpassed that of the adults in the community. Contrasting the student section during sport games was the parent section. Analy and El Molino alumni sat wearing their old school merch instead of supporting the students in the formation of a new school identity.

As foreshadowed by the parent section in the bleachers at sports games, alumni would pose to be a threat to the West County identity. The Analy Alumni Association threatened the board of trustees to pull funds and donations from the school boosters if they did not revert the name back to Analy High School. Shortly after this, the board of trustees voted 4-1 to revert the name back to Analy High School, valid starting the 2022-2023 school year. The most common argument

presented by some board members and Analy alumni was the history of Analy. They argued that Analy was essential to their community and that West County erased Analy's identity and history. They argued this while completely neglecting the fact that El Molino High School had completely disappeared. West County High School is a symbol of unity between Analy and El Molino students. The board of trustees voted reflecting their biases and did not represent the entire school community like their positions call them to.

As expected, the board's decision to revert the name back to Analy completely destabilized the newly formed West County identity and pride shared by both former Analy and El Molino students.

On Thursday December 2nd, in protest of the school board's decision to change the name back to Analy High School, at least 462 West County Students walked out of their 4th period class. After the walkout, the newly founded West County Activism Club sent a mass letter to the school board asking to meet with the student body and put the rebranding of the school back on their next January 19th meeting agenda. After a few short responses from the school board, the two members, President Kellie Noe, and Julie Aiello came to speak with the leadership class and address our concerns. Emotions were high and the passive aggressive tone towards the students created a tense atmosphere. Still not acknowledging the students request to agendize the rebranding, the West County Activism Club decided to get the attention of the school board by walking out yet again. On Friday January 14th at 10:30am, West County High School students with the support from community members, will walkout to downtown Sebastopol to protest the unjust rebranding decision from West County High School.

Sincerely,
West County Activism Club