

July 27th 2021

PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENT

Good morning everyone. My name is Marely Ramirez. I am a member of the InclusioNado steering committee. We thank you for being here with us today.

InclusioNado is a community initiative that works to make the Coronado Unified Schools safe places for all students, including Black, Indigenous, Student of Color, LGBTQ, students with disabilities, and disenfranchised students of any sort from bullying and/or racial harassment.

We are not experts in restorative processes, but we do know when another person feels pain from our actions, it is important to self-reflect and apologize. We are here to do that.

Last month, the Southern California Boys Basketball division 4-A Regional Championship Finals ended with a win for Coronado, but also with a disrespectful and unsportsmanlike exchange culminating in the now-infamous tortilla-throwing act towards the Escondido team.

Since then, many impactful actions - and reactions - have taken place, including the firing of head basketball coach JD Laaperi, the removal of the CHS 2021 Regional Championship title by the CA Interscholastic Federation (CIF), an appeal from the CUSD School Board to the CIF, and the initiation of no fewer than 3 separate investigations.

There has also been polarization among the community as to the cause, intent, and significance of the event. While the debate goes on, one thing is clear - regardless of the intent or cause - the event was an embarrassment to our community and hurtful to the Escondido community.

While the formal investigations continue, school and community officials ponder their formal response to the Escondido community. InclusioNado believes it is time to start the process of reconciliation by saying: We are sorry.

Today, we are representing the people who acknowledge that the disrespectful behaviors that took place on June 19th after the basketball game caused hurt to Escondido, especially the Latino community.

"Escondido" is a Spanish word meaning "hidden," yet for InclusioNado, you are not hidden, to us you are very visible, and the disrespect to your community has been very visible. Therefore, InclusioNado and its supporters, are here to say it loud and clear to the Escondido community: We are deeply sorry for the disparaging remarks and tortilla-throwing to the Orange Glen High School basketball players.



**STRONGER
TOGETHER**

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We are deeply sorry for the lack of cultural sensitivity towards the Latino community in Escondido and around the world.

Escondido, we are deeply sorry for the disrespect shown.

Please forgive us.

We see you; we hear you; we stand by you, Escondido, we would like to embrace the opportunity to build a bridge of respect between Coronado and Escondido.

We represent the voices of people in Coronado that care about our relationship with you. Our commitment is to continue our ongoing work to hold ourselves to a higher level of respect for all people.

And because actions speak louder than words, we look forward to visiting you in Escondido to solidify our commitment, to demonstrate that we value you as a neighbor, and to emphasize that we are Stronger Together!

The InclusioNado Steering Committee