

Okemos Public Schools, Ingham County, Michigan

**Use of Native American Logo
School Board Resolution**

A regular meeting of the Board of Education of the Okemos Public Schools was held in the Community Conference Room on the 12th day of December, 2011, at 7:00 o'clock p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m., by President Crites.

Present: 6 Members Deborah Baughman, Amy Crites, Melanie Lynn, Jeff Theuer, Peter Trezise and Steve Vagnozzi

Absent: 1 Members Ron Styka

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Member Peter Trezise and supported by Member Melanie Lynn:

WHEREAS, people of all cultures, races, and religions have a right to be treated with dignity and respect; and

WHEREAS, the Okemos Public Schools Board of Education believes it is important that all students learn about the cultural aspects of various communities so that they will understand cultural norms, develop tolerance, respect differences, and become good citizens and productive adults; and

WHEREAS, some Native American tribes, organizations, state and local officials, and private citizens find the use of American Indian mascots, nicknames, logo, and symbols within our public schools to be offensive, and further find that their use has detrimental effect on the educational achievement of Native American students; and

WHEREAS, the State of Michigan Board of Education, by resolution dated June 26, 2003 supported and strongly recommended the elimination of Native American mascots, nicknames, logos, fight songs, insignias, antics and team descriptors by all Michigan schools; and

WHEREAS, the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, by resolution dated May 20, 2002, “encourages all school districts to ensure that instructional materials, course work, policies, and procedures are respectful of cultural differences and enhance cultural competency, and are void of stereotypic language and representations”; and

WHEREAS, the United States Commission on Civil Rights, by resolution dated April 13, 2001, called for an end to the use of Native American images and team names by schools: *“Schools should not use their influence to perpetuate misrepresentations of any culture of people. Stereotypes of American Indians teach all students that the stereotyping of minority groups is acceptable, a dangerous lesson in such a diverse society”*; and

WHEREAS, educators have a responsibility to model behavior that celebrates and respects the diverse traditions and beliefs of all citizens; and

WHEREAS, in 2004 the Okemos Public Schools Board of Education communicated their commitment to phase out the use of the Native American silhouette as the district's logo and to predominantly utilize the nickname "Chiefs"; and

WHEREAS, the Native American head logo has been eliminated from many aspects of Okemos Public Schools, including official uniforms for athletic teams, the yearbook, school newspaper, facilities etc.: and

WHEREAS, in December of 2011 there was a significant amount of apparel and merchandise in the spirit store at Okemos High School, as well as other athletic apparel displaying the Native American silhouette; be it

RESOLVED, that the Okemos Public Schools Board of Education reaffirms the promotion of curricula that is fair, appropriate and accurate in depicting the cultures and histories of all people; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Okemos Public Schools Board of Education reaffirms its recommendation that educators teach all students to be aware of and respectful of various cultures present in society; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Okemos Public Schools Board of Education reaffirms its support and determination to eliminate the utilization of the Native American silhouette, human imagery, and other stereotypical symbols as the logo for the Okemos Chiefs; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Okemos Public Schools will no longer purchase, sell or distribute merchandise that displays the Native American silhouette, human imagery and other stereotypical symbols as the logo.

The above resolution is adopted this 12th day of December, 2011.

Ayes: Members

Nays: Members

Resolution declared adopted.

Secretary, Board of Education

The undersigned, duly qualified and acting Secretary of the Board of Education of the Okemos Public Schools, Ingham County, Michigan, hereby certifies that the foregoing constitutes a true and complete copy of a resolution adopted by said Board of Education at a regular meeting held on December 12, 2011, the original of which is part of the Board's minutes. The undersigned further certifies that notice of the meeting was given to the public pursuant to the provisions of the "Open Meetings Act" (Act 267, PA 1976, as amended).

Secretary, Board of Education