

OKEMOS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MASCOT
STUDY COMMITTEE
REPORT

May 1, 2021

In this document, the references to Native American and Indigenous Peoples are used interchangeably. Both refer to people who originally inhabited a land.

Overview:

In 2004, a committee was established to review the use of the Native American silhouette as the school logo and Chiefs and Chieftains as the mascot. Based on their findings, the Board of Education committed to phasing out the use of the Native American silhouette as the logo for the Okemos Chiefs. In 2011, the Board adopted a resolution to reaffirm its support and determination to eliminate use of the Native American silhouette, human imagery and other stereotypical symbols; to promote curricula that are fair, appropriate and accurate in depicting the cultures and histories of all people; and to teach respect for all cultures. More specifically, the 2011 resolution included a commitment to “phase out use of the Native American silhouette as the district’s logo and to predominantly utilize the nickname ‘Chiefs’.” By 2013, the district adopted the new standardized “O” logo with the word “Chiefs” written through it.

In the spring of 2020, there was a renewed and intense focus on systemic racism and social justice across the country and within the Okemos community. As a result, meaningful, courageous, challenging and ongoing conversations were initiated within the Okemos Public Schools with the intent of moving Okemos towards becoming a more equitable institution that perpetuates systems of social justice for all. As part of the feedback, community members asked the district to re-evaluate the use of the “Chiefs” mascot. The Board of Education charged the superintendent with further evaluation of the use of “Chiefs” as the district’s mascot.

A mascot study committee was established by the superintendent to develop a recommendation to the superintendent and to present to the Board of Education for consideration and decision with respect to maintaining or changing the “Chiefs” mascot.

Committee Membership:

In November, 2020 the Superintendent of schools formed a committee of staff and community members, as well as Okemos Public Schools alumni, with diverse experiences and perspectives to develop a recommendation with respect to the continued use of the “Chiefs” mascot.

Committee members included:

High School Administrator:	Lamanzer Williams
Athletic Director:	Brian Fuller
CMS Administrator/Athletic Director:	Andre’ Ridley
Students:	Mario Migaldi* and Vibha Mahesha*
OHS Staff:	Diane Dockus and Hedlun Walton
Coaches:	Chrissy Schoonover and Brian Guggemos*
Alumni:	Audrey Matusz and Adanya Gilmore
Parent/Guardians:	Jose Quintero and Leslie D. Gonzales
MSU Faculty:	Mark Largent
Native Americans:	Mary Calcaterra and Matthew Wesaw
Facilitator:	John Hood, Superintendent

*Many committee members had dual perspectives as parents, alumni, coaches, community members and staff - with multiple lenses on the conversation. *Note: Served on committee for majority of process; feedback until time of exit included.*

Committee Meetings and Process:

January 6, 2021

- Reviewed previous actions and district's historical journey (Appendix A)
- Developed criteria as a lens to evaluate the two (2) options:
Maintain Chief mascot OR
Eliminate/change Chief mascot

February 4, 2021

- Prioritized and finalized criteria for recommendation
- Identified additional information needed to inform recommendation

March 3, 2021

- Discussed impact of terms: Chief/Chieftain
- Developed positives/negatives/neutrals of both options
- Developed questions for consideration

March 24, 2021

- Finalized positives/negatives/neutrals of both options (Appendix B)
- Finalized questions for consideration (Appendix C)
- Developed initial recommendation to Superintendent Hood.

April 21, 2021

- Reviewed feedback from Community Information Meetings (April 14 and 15)
- Finalized recommendation to the superintendent

Community Information Meetings and Process

April 14 and 15, 2021 (same agenda and format)

- Reviewed the history of the mascot issue in Okemos
- Shared why the mascot is being revisited again
- Provided an overview of the mascot/nickname study committee's work
- Shared the committee's initial recommendation
- Provided supporting rationale

Community members in attendance had the opportunity to:

- Ask questions of the panel for clarity
- Submit written feedback regarding benefits, drawbacks or "I wonders" for consideration

Panel consisted of:

- John Hood, Superintendent

- Audrey Matusz (Class of 2014, Okemos Public Schools), member of committee
- Adanya Gilmore (Class of 2017, Okemos Public Schools), member of committee
- Matthew Wesaw, Tribal Chairperson, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, member of committee
- Aaron Payment, EdD, EdS, MEd, MPA, Tribal Chairperson, Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians

Criteria and Guiding Questions for the Recommendation:

The criteria and guiding questions were utilized to focus the work and the discussions. These criteria were developed through discussions at the committee level. The committee analyzed both options while considering and evaluating against the following criteria:

Values/respects/builds relations with indigenous people

1. Does this option value and respect indigenous people?
2. Does this option build positive relations with indigenous people?

Social/emotional impact on students/learning/environment

3. Will this option have a positive social/emotional impact on Indigenous students?
4. Will this option have a positive social/emotional impact on all students?
5. Will this option have a positive impact on the learning environment of Indigenous students?
6. Will this option have a positive impact on the learning environment of all students?

District's equity focus (promotes pride for all/eliminates or reduces controversy/curricular responsibility)

7. Will this option promote pride for all?
8. Will this option eliminate or reduce controversy?
9. Can/will this option address curricular aspects of history and marginalized groups?

Financial impact/commitment (ties to academic impact)

10. Will this option have a financial impact (beyond the current budget)?

Committee Recommendation

Eliminate/change/retire the "Chiefs" mascot/nickname

The recommendation going forth to the superintendent and the Board of Education on May 10, 2021 was developed by the Mascot Study Committee at some level (tepid to full support) by the majority of the committee. The final recommendation was based on an analysis of the two options and consideration of various perspectives.

It is the committee's hope that the district's reputation will be positively impacted as result of this work.

Next Steps if Approved:

- Identify and pursue additional funding sources to support elimination of "Chiefs" references in district facilities and materials
 - Native American Heritage Fund application due June 11

- Develop and implement an inclusive process and timeline to identify and implement new mascot inclusive of a new nickname and district wide logo
- Collaborate with other districts who have made this change to inform process
- Transition to new mascot (September, 2023?)

Appendices:

Appendix A:

- Historical Journey

Appendix B:

- Positives/Negatives/Neutrals of maintaining Chief mascot/nickname
- Positives/Negatives/Neutrals of changing/eliminating/retiring Chief mascot/nickname
- “I wonders” - questions generated for consideration

Appendix C:

- Additional remarks and feedback received from community informational meetings

Appendix D:

- Cost Estimates

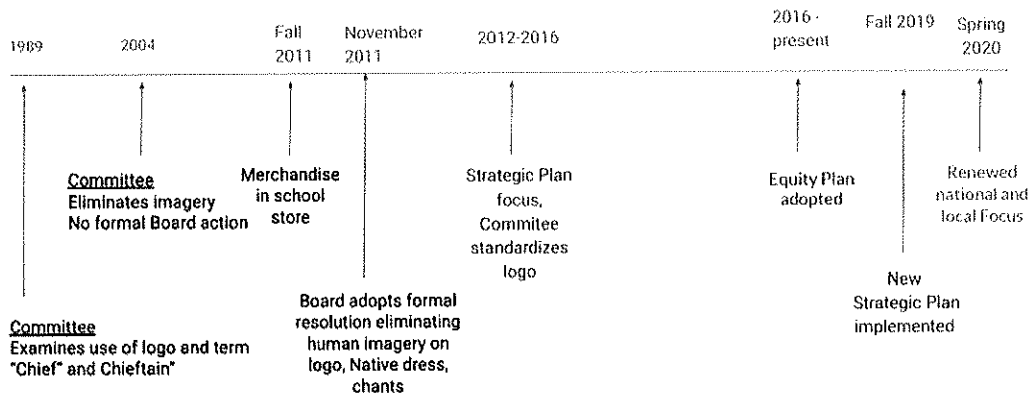
Appendix E: Supporting Rationale/Documents

- Community Presentation, OPS Mascot Review Committee (April 2021)
 - Honor Native Students by Being on the Right Side of History, Dr. Aaron A. Payment, Chairperson Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indian (Presentation embedded)
- Laurel R. Davis-Delano , Joseph P. Gone & Stephanie A. Fryberg (2020): The psychosocial effects of Native American mascots: a comprehensive review of empirical research findings, Race Ethnicity and Education
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2020.1772221>

Appendix A - Historical Journey

Note: Our approach over time to a “mascot” review has encompassed physical incarnation (aka “Sparty”), logo and the nickname for our district.

Timeline



1989

- Committee charged with examining use of Indian profile logo and the words “Chief” and “Chieftain”
- Final report includes majority and minority recommendations
 - Majority report recommends nicknames of “chief” and “Chieftains” be gradually phased out.
 - Minority report recommended retaining logo and nicknames.
- Superintendent recommends that Board of Education defer judgment and further study the issue

2004

- Committee with diverse perspectives reviewed use of Native American silhouette as logo, as well as mascot
- Board committed to phasing out logo and predominantly utilize the “Chief” mascot; expectation, but no formal action
- OHS incorporated Native American literature into curriculum

2004 - Fall 2011

- Good faith effort to phase out human imagery
- Board’s expectation was “widely understood and communicated”
- School store purchased merchandise with Native American silhouette

November 2011

- Board adopted a formal resolution to reaffirm and document district’s commitment

- o Eliminate all instances of Native American silhouette as logo
- o Eliminate use of all Native American symbols; dress; chants etc. . .
- o Promote curricula that is fair, appropriate and accurate in depicting the cultures and histories of ALL people
- o Predominantly utilize the nickname “Chiefs”

2012-2016, Strategic Plan

- Superintendent establishes committee to look at educational components/curriculum related to Okemos’s Native American heritage; looked for gaps and initiated curriculum revisions and focus; consistency
- Superintendent establishes committee to standardize logo

Winter 2013

- Lawsuit at Federal level targeting Michigan school districts
- Okemos was not named; instead was recognized for efforts
- Lawsuit dismissed in Summer, 2013

Spring 2013

- Board adopted a standardized logo (current logo).
- “O” logo with the word “Chiefs” written through it

2016-present, Equity Plan

- “As a district enhanced by diversity, Okemos Public Schools is dedicated to an ongoing process of creating and sustaining an inclusive and safe culture for students, families and staff. “
- Areas of Focus: Authentic Selves and Relationships, Cultural Competence, Instruction/Curriculum/Assessments, Policies/Practices/Procedures

Fall 2020, Strategic Plan

- Strategic plan identified equity as critical issue
- District core values of equity, relationships, culture and integrity identified
- Mission statement updated to reflect each learner
 - o “Together... educating with excellence, inspiring *each* learner for life.”
- Vision statement of “Leading in Educational Equity”

Spring 2020

- Renewed and intense focus on systemic racism at the national and local level Community feedback - re-evaluate the use of the mascot/nickname Chief

Winter 2020

- Superintendent establishes Mascot Study Committee

Appendix B

- Positives/Negatives/Neutrals of maintaining Chief mascot/nickname
- Positives/Negatives/Neutrals of changing/eliminating/retiring Chief mascot/nickname
- Questions generated for consideration

Option 1: Positives/Negatives/Neutrals of maintaining Chief mascot/nickname

Positives	Negatives	Neutrals
Reaffirms that district intends keep the term Chief	Strong likelihood this issue will resurface in the future	Change is hard. Accepting the status quo is hard.
No additional cost to maintain nickname	Avoids engagement with equity issues, justice arguments. May contradict our stated values.	For some people the mascot is a non issue; not impacted either way
Reduces/eliminates potential impact on current indigenous students who might be “blamed” for change	Stating to those who wish to change the name that their case has been weighed and decided against.	Either outcome will result in people being unhappy
For some, the term is not problematic; no reason to change	For some, the term is problematic and needs to be changed	To many, chiefs is not so clearly offensive than other Native names that districts/other entities have abandoned. (The use may be.)
Maintains/honors/respects the time/input of past committees and leadership who have implemented revisions to name/logo	Keeping Chiefs perpetuates a sport-centric culture in the district over a DEI values culture	
Chief is a European title or term for head of a body of persons or an organization; Chief reflects, represent leader- Okemos is a leader in academics, athletics, extracurriculars	In Okemos, people will automatically associate Chiefs with an Native American lens; Ignores Federal treaties designed for mutual responsibility between US and indigenous territories	
Maintains current “school” identity for students, community	Perpetuates stereotype that chiefs and chieftain are accurate representations of indigenous cultures	
Sense of pride, tradition amongst some alumni, coaches, staff and community related to their mascot	Continues to de-emphasize private narratives and lived experiences of indigenous words	

School spirit, unity	Could negatively impact school spirit, unity	
	Native people are not a part of the present, links to past, does not recognize continued impact on this community in the present (invisible)	
	If name is maintained, no opportunity to have a physical manifestation of mascot (ie. Sparty)	
	Context for use of term chief in Okemos cannot be separated from leader of an Native tribe	
	Does not model for students to circumvent issue, racial issues	

Option 2: Positives/Negatives/Neutrals of changing/eliminating/retiring Chief mascot/nickname

Positives	Negatives	Neutrals
If students are supportive of this change, it will be positive and uplifting during these challenging times	A big change for our students/staff and community who have been through so much already in this window of time (2020-21)	Dollar cost and values are difficult to reconcile
Potentially improve feelings/perceptions among indigenous students at OPS, indigenous community towards OPS	Some students/alumni/community members feel strong affiliation to the term(s) Chief and leaving it will be painful; sense of loss	
Potential for grant money to address cost of changing the nickname	Unpacking and educating why the term is problematic will require a great deal of difficult work	
May expand view of "self;" a group of people and indigenous individuals being characterized by others	Some may argue this is about political correctness	
Hopefully closure on this topic	Significant amount of resources required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Funding ● Time to acquire funding sources (grants, fundraising etc. . .) ● Time/Funding for rebranding and marketing 	
Supports equity plan and reflects district's focus	Additional student/family expenses could create equity issues <i>Example: athlete bought a team jacket to wear for their 4 years may now need to buy a new jacket with new logo/mascot.</i>	
Offers opportunity to improve relations with Native American community/students who felt offended/harassed, recognizable action/acknowledgement	Enforcing the change/requirements means heightened focus, commitment, consistency across the district; could create tension and ongoing "confrontations"	
Could attract positive publicity	Could attract negative publicity	
New identity		

New logos/uniforms/facilities		
<p>Reflects our responsibility as an educational institution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Does not perpetuate false stereotypes ● Centers and honors voices of those in our history who have been and continue to be marginalized ● Approach is inclusive of their voices and perspective 		
Reinforces that voices of indigenous people matter and perhaps matter most		
Upholds our reputation as a leader of education		
Reflects and honors the previous advice given to OPS by local indigenous people		
Shows that the pain of historically oppressed people is acknowledged and valued as equal to a dominant culture who lacks understanding of historical context		
Prepares students for relevant and difficult conversations about American history		
Action taken by district, more than words or talking		

Questions generated for consideration

I wonder:

- Can we collect data, analyze findings?
- What will this actually cost? If a grant does cover much of the cost, what is left, who pays that?
- If the committee had a larger sample size, would the discourse be different?
- Do our Native American members of this committee speak for all indigenous people? Have we talked to others? Do other Native Americans have a different perspective?
- Based on our equity plan, can you defend either option?

Outside Scope of Committee's Charge

- Maybe moving on to changing the city name? The names of the schools, etc.
- If we drop Chief, would we need to consider changing the names of schools? The district? (and move away from the name "Okemos").

Appendix C

Additional Remarks & Feedback Received from Community Informational Meetings

What additional opportunities or benefits should be considered with the recommendation to change (eliminate/retire) the mascot/nickname?

Opportunity for our young people of today to choose their future and embrace a new icon of positivity that isn't disrespectful to our fellow humans.

There are a variety of clubs and organizations at Okemos High School that would be willing to aid in fundraisers, student involvement, and community outreach during this process. Adjusting and aiding in the transition in regards to community and student concerns would not have to be solely up to administration.

I would be really excited to wear a shirt supporting my child's school without feeling like I'm promoting racism. This change is long overdue; I only wish that it had happened sooner. I hope that the change can be implemented as soon as possible. My senior student will likely be disappointed that the change isn't scheduled until after she graduates.

Humans are not mascots.

Okemos is a leader in the state. This is an opportunity to lead even more and work to repair the damage that has been done for so many years.

New equipment can be purchased for our children. The opportunity to bring our facilities "up to par" with other communities in our area and state through necessary remodeling to remove "Chief/Chieftain" content.

Assuming there's going to be a change, that's the easy part. We need to focus on how we will honor Chief Okemos and indigenous people respectfully? Mr. Payment started to answer this on Wednesday. Are there other ideas? Want to make sure there is not a missed opportunity to honor Chief Okemos the right way and that we don't become a community that loses sight of its history and Chief Okemos.

The chance to show our young community members how exciting it would be to CREATE a new legacy/nickname/mascot for generations to come.

New clothing to sell, possible mascot costume, fun ways to show happenings around the school, no more boring ol' letter 'o' being used to represent this great school.

I'm not sure there are any more benefits. The mascot is already retired. I can see getting rid of chieftain, not even sure where that nickname came from. Honestly, I don't fully understand this question.

Education of students and the public in general of the how and why names and images are inappropriate (hurtful).

Community attractiveness: we moved here less than a year ago and were surprised and disheartened by the mascot. I feel much better about the committee to know it will dismantle the mascot.

The opportunity to connect this decision to a 21st century skillset and mindset that will serve Okemos graduates well. Not just valuing diversity and inclusivity but, fundamentally, to understand colonialism and our racist history. This is an opportunity to understand that we--whomever 'we' are--do not get to decide what others experience as offensive. The educational opportunities that go along with this are many.,

There are not very many detailed histories written about the indigenous people of our area and there is an opportunity to start a charitable fund to support efforts to write these histories in partnership with the Nokomis Learning Center of Okemos. Maybe through the OEF.

It would be great if a video record and a transcript of tonight's dialog could be archived in the Okemos Public Schools' website as a source of learning and cultural awareness.

Dr. Payment's insight in the struggle of culture sensitivity and how many common responses to the calls for change requires education in our society about the impact of stereotypes...and what the native cultures' real meaning of the warrior spirit was about as well as the history about the term redskin and why they refer to it as a cultural slur.

I can't say it as well as he did, but what he said was powerful and something that all the students in our school district would benefit from, creating awareness for generations to come.

This decision will demonstrate to our children and community how leaders can be culturally sensitive and inclusive. It will show how you live out the district's mission and values. It will model how you do hard things to be on the right side of history. It will be an example of how power can represent the voices and perspectives of minority and underrepresented people, especially when those people are the children we are meant to be educating. It will acknowledge a critical national moment and movement that is asking each individual and institution to examine how they contribute to systemic racism and show how OPS is doing its part to rid itself of racist and insulting stereotypes that damage Native Americans and perpetuate ignorance. It will give us all something to be proud of as a community that will uplift our spirits in these difficult times, provide a hopeful opportunity to select a name and mascot that we can embrace without belittling others, and signal that the self-worth and dignity of every student is at the center of every decision made by our educational leaders.

Since the clear point was made that the logo of a "native person" was offensive and they are not interested in being honored by a logo, let's compromise and retire the personal logo and retain the name "Chief". The other clear point made was that the word "Chief" is not a native name, so if that is correct then we are not offending the native people if not used in the same context with a logo of an Indian. Retain the honor for the Okemos School District as Chiefs-meaning leaders (Old French).

A key benefit is not only ensuring the success of indigenous students through non-stereotyping and non-native students through education, but also benefiting non-native students and their families who find the use of the "chief" nickname profoundly offensive. I have had two children in the Okemos school district from K through 12th grade; my youngest is graduating this year, so I have followed this issue over a period of 17 years. My oldest daughter played sports, including at the varsity level. I was very happy when the image was removed in place of an O logo, as I would have been disgusted to have my daughter have to play with this image on a ball (as I saw once in a youth basketball setting) or her other equipment and clothing. I did not want to display the "Home of a Chief" sign in my yard as I found it racist, which caused intense discussion in our family as my oldest daughter wanted to be honored, but my husband and I did not want to do this at the expense of dishonoring indigenous people. Many non-native parents and families find this imagery and terminology highly offensive and it can cause division in our families, although we may not be as vocal as those who support the use of racist mascots.

Since the clear point was made that the logo of a "native person" was offensive and they are not interested in being honored by a logo, let's compromise and retire the personal logo and retain the name "Chief". The other clear point made was that the word "Chief" is not a native name, so if that is correct then we are not offending the native people if not used in the same context with a logo of an Indian. Retain the honor for the Okemos School District as Chiefs-meaning leaders (Old French).

I think this is an excellent opportunity to educate alumni about white privilege. The grievance associated with 'taking away the glory days of high school sports' pales in comparison to the systematic denigration of a whole people. If some alumni feel some pain associated with that change, that is likely a good lesson.

It'll be treating Native American people with the respect they deserve instead of treating them like a costume, which is how our mascot is currently treating them.

After listening to such a detailed, well-supported presentation I don't think Okemos Schools could claim equity as a value and retain this mascot/nickname. It's vital.

You continue to act like this decision has no context. The name of our community, many of its subdivisions, its street names, some school building names, all HONOR our roots-- and acknowledge that there were people here before Columbus (1492) "discovered" this country or Jamestown (1607) or Plymouth (1620) were settled.

This is your opportunity to do the right thing and build support of the founding land owners and keep the honor and name. Don't knuckle under to a roving "pot stirrer" who gains notoriety from his false narrative. He cannot pick and choose which Indian or native American epitaphs people use if he in turn uses many of the same. If "Ogiman" means Chief, then where is the error? In doing research on the word "tribe" it is seen as offensive in some circles, but yet Mr. Parent used it quite freely. Take this opportunity to rise above his misguided efforts.

None, it's time.

What additional challenges or drawbacks should be considered with the recommendation to change (eliminate/retire) the mascot/nickname?

Challenge to keep alumni feeling connected with the positive experiences they had despite some of their history being retired, even if for positive reasons.

I don't see the disadvantages. I think my children will feel better about the school if the change is made. The committee and presentation covered costs well.

It has not happened soon enough. This change should happen immediately.

Change is hard, and there is always going to be pushback from those who what to "whatabout" and insist that their way of seeing the world is the "right way." But Mr. Payment was so clear: pushback is coming from the white perspective. And Okemos is so much more than that.

A majority of this burden will fall on athletics. Athletics currently has facilities that are not up to par with other "like" districts in our area as well as our state. Additionally, there is no money budgeted for essential items that the athletic program needs to operate (such as a uniform budget). The gym floor has not been repainted since we last rebranded the district in 2012. Strong concerns that this will not be done properly, but instead "Band-Aids" will be placed all around the district instead of purchasing new equipment. Will appropriate finances be set aside for our athletic program to burden this change, when historically this has not been the case?

As Chief Okemos was a Saginaw Chippewa Chief, have we gotten the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe perspective and support before making a final decision? Have / can / should we engage with them as well in finding a suitable replacement that appropriately honors Chief Okemos?

\$\$\$\$\$\$...it will be expensive!!! And may be disappointing in the short term for our current high school students to feel a lack of a school mascot for their tenure since this will be a drawn out process to implement every physical change necessary (uniforms, halls, scoreboards, t-shirts, etc.). Also... for those of us with apparel

with current logos, etc., there could be a perception of lack of support if the "old" apparel is still worn. Perhaps a new, affordable "merchandise" drive could accompany this change to encourage the new mascot

Old people being cranky about the change, could be hard to stop selling old apparel, we'd also have to change the fight song probably.

I've only lived here 2 years. I am not tied to the name, but to me getting rid of Chiefs is like taking the identity of Okemos away. The city is named after a great Chief. I think this will be hard for the town to disassociate itself from the chief who the town is named after. It's good to be talking about this, but the biggest step was already done. The new logo is respectful, so I am not sure why any further action is taken. What seems to me is the tribes are trying to wipe out terms that can be negatively associated with Indigenous people. They don't like the derogatory terms. The only derogatory term I saw was the R word. The others are attributes or titles (Braves, warriors, chiefs). Even though I empathize with the tribes, I think they are trying to eliminate and control the thoughts/ actions of people and if they get rid of these terms then people will never think negatively about indigenous people. If you teach honest and provoking history people are gonna have opinions. Honestly, this is the perfect time for Okemos to show how to appropriately honor Chief Okemos and demonstrate how you can still be called Chiefs and be respectful by acknowledging the beauty of what the indigenous people bring to our community. What does need to happen is get rid of the nickname Chieftain and get it off the turf field scoreboard immediately. Leave Chiefs - get rid of Chieftain

Educate/enlighten those that are not aware of negativity of using people as mascots

None

Continuing the dialog to help our community appreciate and understand the culture of the native indigenous peoples of this region, including ways to support the Nokomis Center.

No significant drawbacks--this change is LONG overdue and NECESSARY.

A challenge and drawback lies in the succumbing to the narrative of canceling whatever someone makes up as offensive. What next? I am offended because we use the word Superintendent? This means "bishop or minister". What if that offends those who are not in favor of religion or god like verbiage in our schools? Don't go down this slippery slope.

A challenge and drawback lies in the succumbing to the narrative of canceling whatever someone makes up as offensive. What next? I am offended because we use the word Superintendent? This means "bishop or minister". What if that offends those who are not in favor of religion or god like verbiage in our schools? Don't go down this slippery slope.

I don't see any drawbacks from changing our mascot.

I am confused, I completely agree with Dr. Payment and his assessment of schools using a mascot. Dr. Fryberg also stated these "Mascots" are harmful. However, as Dr. Hood mentioned, we have a nickname not a Mascot honoring a Chief of our city's name. After listening 3 times to the video, Dr. Payment did not have a problem honoring this great person as we see some schools honoring a president. We just need to keep eliminating the use of a mascot and all symbols that would discriminate against.

The financial cost is real but it sounds like there are available funding streams to help us accomplish the change.

I hate to have us get caught up in thinking that changing the mascot name is going to "fix" something, in the effort to be "politically correct." I'd leave well enough alone--and stress our HISTORY in HONORING the PAST.

It appears you are asking us to change history. This seems to be the wave of the misguided in an effort to vilify the 75% of Caucasian citizens living in this community. As an Okemos High School graduate (1980), never did I hear anything like a chant, warrior sounds, or "tomahawk chop" being said. We were enamored by the bronze plaque on the corner of Central Elementary School that told us the history of Chief John Okemos and honored him.

None, it's time.

What additional "I wonders" do you have regarding the recommendation to change (eliminate/retire) the mascot/nickname?

I wonder if there is a way to show alumni and past associates of Okemos Public Schools that their experiences still deserve to be remembered and celebrated, and we aren't trying to rewrite history, but move forward with intention and positivity.

1. If, as Dr. Payment just said, use "chief" to honor Chief Okemos is not a problem, why do we need to bother to change it?
2. If Dr. Payment's logic is correct, how about "Spartan"?
3. Dr. Payment's try to compare "Chief" with "Redskin", which is not correct.

This is not an I Wonder, but just a bit of feedback. I really was enlightened when Dr. Payment suggested the consideration of using other ethnic groups as mascots. I think it is hard for alumni to think in these terms, but as someone who did not attend OPS it made sense how the word Chief trivialized the Native American culture. Could you imagine teams being called names such as the Perry Polish or the Ann Arbor Africans?

The presentation clearly answered any questions that I had and provided the history well. I only wonder how many resources would have been saved had the change been made sooner, but we can only move forward so that's a moot point.

I wonder why we are even discussing this change? It is offensive to have a human as a mascot. It needs to be changed to something else as soon as possible.

I wonder how we can not only make this positive change, but also be a model of change in our state and even our country. Although this change is the right thing to do and we shouldn't "toot our own horn" because we were brave enough to finally run away from a problematic nickname, we CAN --through positive relationship building and conscious, deliberate actions-- be leaders for change.

I still have to wonder about the funding, and will we have top level gear and facilities, or will the district go cheap on everything? Just walking around our buildings right now is kind of an embarrassment compared to similar districts. If we haven't had the money to properly maintain the facilities we have, how in the world will we be able to afford refurbishing them, even with the hypothetical grants Dr. Payment refers to? There is so much that needs attention. Even looking at the new football field, the goal posts are not where they are supposed to be, which impacts the placement of soccer goals. How do we explain all the corner-cutting if we are somehow going to afford redoing our larger facilities?

I wonder how the district will appropriate money to successfully "rebrand" the district if grants are not awarded, or are not sufficient to cover the cost? I wonder how much more of a burden can be placed upon athletics (parents) when the participation fee is one of the highest in the state? I wonder how our disadvantaged kids will feel when they cannot afford all new Okemos gear, and don't feel comfortable wearing old gear? If we are a district focused on equity, how is this change equitable for our families that cannot afford new items for their children? Will there be funds set aside to help them offset these costs? What about our staff and coaches who

have invested hundreds (some thousands) of dollars into apparel to support our district? Will there be funds set aside to help them purchase new items?

Are we envisioning eliminating / retiring "Chiefs" first, then starting a long process of finding a new mascot or way of honoring Chief Okemos? I hope we can find a suitable replacement and just transition to a new more appropriate recognition that appropriately honors Chief Okemos.

When we know better, we do better. I fully support the recommendation to change our mascot in a timely manner.

I wonder if we'll become the Okemos Octos (short for octopus)?

I wonder if the school board and school is going to refund parents for all the spirit wear they have bought with the new Chiefs Logo. I wonder when the school is going to get back to educating and not social justice. I wonder if any of the tribes are doing this because it is more about them not liking the "white man" using anything associated with indigenous people, given how indigenous people were treated in our American history.

How do we balance new mascot/nickname with community understanding of keeping the name Okemos (in the same light as Washington, Lincoln, MLK, etc.)? Do we want to convey strength, understanding, inclusiveness, and other assets with something tangible or something abstract?

None - retiring the mascot is the right decision. And it's past time for action.

I wonder about the generational divide regarding perspectives on "Chiefs"...

I wonder what kind of people would value using a mascot that denigrates native people? They are not the kind of people we want leading and making decisions in our community. It takes a deep seated state of white supremacist arrogance to be on the side of keeping this mascot. It's time to leave their ignorance to the dustbins of history. This needs to be done decisively and quickly. We have plenty of money in our community to remove the name from uniforms etc. quickly and effectively. There is no need to stretch this out over time. (If I'm not mistaken you OPS just asked me to cough up 6k for a choir field trip). Without getting into how messed up that is, it clearly points to the fact that there is plenty of money here. All it takes is the will. it's either offensive and hurtful to native populations or it's not. Clearly we know that it is. To keep using it after we have acknowledged this as a community is untenable. Please do the right thing and do it with quickness and finality. I'm certain many of our residents would happily donate to this cause.

What can be done to facilitate the stages of grief that will come, as described in the book "On Death and Dying" by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross? Help students and alumni understand these stages and the importance of going through them to achieve acceptance.

I wonder if some districtwide fundraising could be organized to assist with whatever financial costs will be incurred to change the name/mascot, in addition to seeking out grants. Could OEF help or do fundraising specifically for this goal?

What will change or be demanded to be changed next? Do we do away with labeling classes of students? No seniors, juniors, sophomores, and freshman? Is freshman offensive to women? This could be never ending. Focus on your purpose education, not political correctness and cancel culture control.

I wonder how much current students care about this issue. I asked my youngest daughter and she thought it had already been changed. She regularly attended football games before last year and thought that our team was called the Okemos Os. Although, unlike my oldest, she does not play sports. I think our students in general are much less concerned about this than older alums ... and our student needs are foremost.

What will change or be demanded to be changed next? Do we do away with labeling classes of students? No seniors, juniors, sophomores, and freshman? Is freshman offensive to women? This could be never ending. Focus on your purpose education, not political correctness and cancel culture control.

I wonder if we could completely fund the cost of the change through alumni donation and other crowdfunding efforts. It seems strange to ask the Pokagon to pay for the school district to rebrand what we are agreeing is an offensive mascot/nickname.

I don't have any questions.

Honestly I have never felt a profound connection to any mascot, just to the community that the mascot represents. Perhaps that means I can't fully appreciate the drive to resist this change. I don't have any additional "I wonders," I just think that when a group of people tells us the name hurts them, we should listen and adjust. I also wanted to express my appreciation for all of the people on the panel for the presentation. It was very well done.

Having served as a member of this School Board (1975-1980) and as President (1979) and having chaired the so-called "Santa Claus Committee" in the early 1980s, I am quite familiar with the Board's role in having to deal with "hot button issues." Charles A. Blackman. Ph.D.,

Many of us wonder after your scripted community meetings (where the community was not allowed to speak), if Mr. Parent is simply going from community to community and state to state to force a narrative of racism and divisiveness when the majority (which is how our democracy is built) has no issues or concerns with the honoring of our founders. I wonder how many people will remove their children from this school system so they are not forced by the indoctrination of this false narrative and canceling of history.

I wonder what we do between retiring the mascot and selecting a new mascot.

Appendix D - Cost Estimates

Financial Impact by Area

	Signage & Scoreboards	Equipment & Supplies	Fields & Courts	School Store	Uniforms	Total
Baseball/Softball	350	450	0	0	8,000	8,800
Basketball	0	2,225	0	0	20,600	22,825
Cross County	3,000	6,000	0	0	7,500	16,500
Football	0	0	0	0	18,500	18,500
Golf	0	7,000	0	0	3,000	10,000
Hockey	0	0	0	0	7,500	7,500
Lacrosse	0	0	0	0	7,518	7,518
Skiing	0	200	0	0	8,000	8,200
Soccer	2,000	2,600	0	0	15,700	20,300
Swim	0	1,200	0	0	0	1,200
Track	0	10,000	0	0	8,750	18,750
Volleyball	0	10,980	0	0	10,500	21,480
Wrestling	0	0	0	0	5,000	5,000
Water Polo	0	3,700	0	0	1,600	5,300
OHS School Store	0	0	0	12,000	0	12,000
Marching Band Banner	0	2,000	0	0	0	2,000
Hall of Fame Plaques	2,500	0	0	0	0	2,500
Band Trailer	0	3,000	0	0	0	3,000
	7,850	49,355	0	12,000	120,168	189,373
Christman List	62,263	2,776	172,915	0	0	237,954
	\$70,113	\$52,131	\$172,915	\$12,000	\$120,168	\$427,327

Appendix D - Cost Estimates



Facility and Description of Work	Total
High School	\$ 203,942
HS Cafeteria Servery Signage	\$ 1,388
HS Competition Gym Wall Pads	\$ 4,165
HS Competition Gym Score Board Sign	\$ 1,388
HS Competition Gym Floor Paint	\$ 12,078
HS Competition Gym Misc. Seating Signs	\$ 833
HS Competition Gym Track & Field Record Board	\$ 2,082
HS Pool Record Board	\$ 1,041
HS Pool Score Board Sign	\$ 694
HS Weight Room Sign	\$ 694
HS Trainers/Coaches Room Wall Paint	\$ 6,247
HS Competition Gym Entrance Banners	\$ 3,124
HS Student Entrance Masonry Wall	\$ 6,941
HS Baseball Stadium Outfield Banner	\$ 3,471
HS Football Stadium Press Box Banner	\$ 1,388
HS Football Stadium Turf Field Center Logo	\$ 104,120
HS Football Stadium Turf Field End Zone	\$ 41,648
HS Football Stadium Score Board Sign	\$ 4,165
HS Football Stadium Team Room Paint	\$ 2,575
HS Soccer Field Score Board Sign	\$ 1,041
HS Soccer Field Player Shelters	\$ 2,082
HS Softball Field Score Board Sign	\$ 694
HS Baseball Stadium Score Board Sign	\$ 2,082
Chippewa	\$ 22,212
Chippewa MS Gym Entrance Sign	\$ 694
Chippewa MS Hallway Safety Sign	\$ 694
Chippewa MS Hallway Sports Sign	\$ 4,859
Chippewa MS Hallway Logo Sign	\$ 5,553
Chippewa MS Gym Wall Pads	\$ 1,388
Chippewa MS Hallway Wayfinding Signs	\$ 4,165
Chippewa MS Office Storefront Signs	\$ 3,471
Chippewa MS Hallway Entrance Signs	\$ 1,388
Kinawa	\$ 11,800
Kinawa MS Gym Scoreboard Signs	\$ 1,388
Kinawa MS Gym Wall Pads	\$ 1,388
Kinawa MS Hallway Room Signs	\$ 8,330
Kinawa MS Welcome Sign	\$ 694
Grand Total	\$ 237,955

Appendix E - Supporting Rationale/Documents
Community Presentation, OPS Mascot Review Committee (April 2021)

**Okemos Public
Schools
Community
Meetings**
...
Initial Mascot/Nickname
Recommendation

April 14 and 15th, 2021
7-8:30 pm

Tonight's Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions - John Hood, (5 minutes)
- History in Okemos and "Why now?" - John Hood, (10 minutes)
- Overview of Process - Audrey Matusz, Adanya Gilmore (10 minutes)
 - Committee process
 - Options considered
 - Criteria
- Initial Committee Recommendation - Audrey Matusz, Adanya Gilmore (5 min)
- Supporting Rationale- Dr. Aaron Payment, (10 minutes)
- Community Clarity and Feedback - Panel, Community, (up to 55 minutes)
 - Questions seeking clarity from community
 - Additional positives, negatives, neutrals for consideration?
 - Additional "I wonders" to add?
- Gratitude & Next Steps - John Hood, (5 minutes)

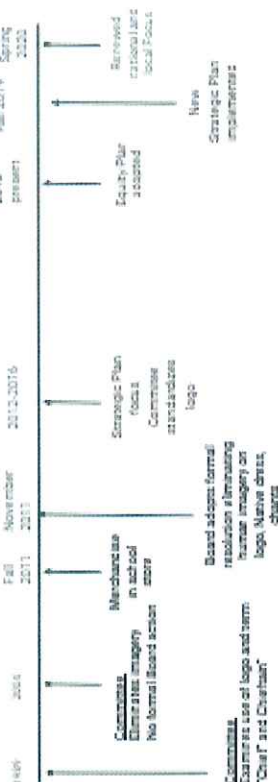
Our Panel:

- Dr. Aaron Payment
 - Tribal Chairperson, Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians
- Audrey Matusz
 - Class of 2014, Okemos Public Schools
- Adanya Gilmore
 - Class of 2017, Okemos Public Schools
- John J. Hood
 - Superintendent, Okemos Public Schools

Moderators: Stacy Bailey and Matt Ottinger

Historical Journey
in Okemos
and "why now?"

Our Historical Journey - A Timeline



Historical Journey

- 1989**
- Committee charged with examining use of Indian profile logo and the words "Chief" and "Chieftain"
 - Final report includes majority and minority recommendations
 - Majority report recommends nicknames of "Chief" and "Chieftains" be gradually phased out. Minority report recommended retaining logo and nicknames.
 - Superintendent recommends that Board of Education defer judgment and further study the issue
- 2004**
- Committee with diverse perspectives reviews use of Native American silhouette as logo, as well as nickname
 - Board commits to phasing out logo and predominantly utilizes the nickname "Chief"; expectations, but no formal action
 - DHS incorporates Native American literature into curriculum
- 2004 - Fall 2011**
- Good faith effort to phase out human imagery
 - Thought it was "vindicty underhanded and constrained"
 - School store purchases merchandise with Native American silhouette

Historical journey continued...

- November 2011**
- Board adopts a formal resolution to reaffirm and document district's commitment
 - Eliminate all instances of Native American symbols, dress, charts etc....
 - Promote curricula that is fair, appropriate and accurate in depicting the cultures and histories of ALL people
 - Predominantly utilize the nickname "Chiefs"
- 2012-2016, Strategic Plan**
- District establishes committee to look at educational components/curriculum related to Okemos' Native American heritage, looked for "gaps" and initiated curriculum revisions and focus consistency
 - District establishes committee to standardize logo

Historical journey continued...

- Winter 2013**
- Lawsuit at Federal level targeting Michigan school districts
 - Okemos was not named; recognized for efforts
 - Lawsuit dismissed in Summer, 2013
- Spring 2013**
- Board adopts a standardized logo (current logo)
 - "D" logo with the word "Chiefs" written through it
- 2016 present, Equity Plan**
- "As a district enhanced by diversity, Okemos Public Schools is dedicated to an ongoing process of creating and sustaining an inclusive and safe culture for students, families and staff"
 - Areas of Focus: Authentic Selves and Relationships, Cultural Competence, Instruction/Curriculum/Assessments, Policies/Practices/Procedures

Historical Journey continued . . .

Fall 2020, Strategic Plan

- Strategic Plan identifies equity as critical issue
- District core values of equity, relationships, culture and integrity defined
- Mission statement update to reflect each learner
- "Together...educating with excellence, inspiring each learner for life."
- Vision statements of "Leading in Educational Equity"

Spring 2020

- Renewed and intense focus on systemic racism at the national and local levels (George Floyd)
- Community feedback - re-evaluate/eliminate the use of the mascot/nickname "Chief"

Winter 2020

- Superintendent establishes study committee

Overview of the Process

Study Committee Membership

Representation/Perspectives

High School Administrator:

Athletic Director:

CMS Administrator/Athletic Director:

Students:

QHS Staff:

Coaches:

Alumni:

Parents/Guardians:

MSJ Faculty:

Native Americans:

Lamarzew-Williams

Brian Fuller

André Ridley

Mario Rigaldi and Vibha Mahesha

Diane Decker and Hedden Walton

Christy Schoonover and Brian Gugliemio

Audrey Marusz and Adanya Gilmore

Jose Quintero and Leslie Gonzales

Mark Langert

Mary Calcaterra and Matthew Weszaw

Facilitator: John J. Hood

*Served on committee for majority of process, feedback and exit included

Process: January to Now

- Reviewed district's historical journey
- Identified/considered two (2) options:
 - Maintain chief nickname/mascot
 - Eliminate/change chief nickname/mascot
- Developed criteria to analyze options, analyzed the options:
 - Identified impact of "chief" terminology (positive, negative, neutral)
 - Applied criteria to identify additional positive, negative or neutral impacts
 - Identified "wonders" (additional related topics for discussion)
- Formulated initial recommendation to superintendent
- Seeking community feedback (initial recommendation) tonight

Criteria for Consideration of Options

Values/respects/builds relations with Indigenous people

1. Does this option value and respect Indigenous people?
 2. Does this option build positive relations with Indigenous people?
- ### Social/remedial impact on students/learning/environment
3. Will this option have a positive social/emotional impact on Indigenous students?
 4. Will this option have a positive social/remedial impact on all students?
 5. Will this option have a positive impact on the learning environment of Indigenous students?
 6. Will this option have a positive impact on the learning environment of all students?

District's equity focus (promotes pride for all/eliminates or reduces controversy/cultural responsibility)

7. Will this option promote pride for all?
8. Will this option eliminate or reduce controversy?
9. Can/will this option address curricular aspects of history and marginalized groups?

Financial impact/commitment (ties to academic impact)

10. Will this option have a financial impact (beyond the current budget)?

Share Initial Committee Recommendation

Initial Committee Recommendation

The initial recommendation of the mascot committee is to eliminate/change/retire the "chiefs" nickname/mascot.

Our Hope: District's reputation impacted positively as result of the work!

Recommendation: Considerations Identified by Committee

Positives:

- Meets our responsibility and obligation as an educational institution to our current/future students:
- Eliminates source that perpetuates stereotypes of indigenous people, unintended student and organizational outcomes
- Centers and honors voices of those in our history who have been and continue to be marginalized
- Improves educational environment for indigenous students and all students
- Places well being of all students at forefront of district approach; fair and respectful treatment of all student's cultures
- Values and respects Indigenous people; offers opportunity to improve relationships with community that nickname negatively impacts; recognizable action/acknowledgement
- Supports districts stated values of equity, relationships, culture and integrity
- Addresses critical/goal areas in strategic and equity plans, with clear action and outcome
- Opportunity for a new mascot/nickname that may bring community together over time; closure on recurring topic of division

Recommendation: Considerations Identified by Committee

Negatives:

- For those that feel strong affiliation to the term "Chief" and leaving it will be painful; a loss
- For some, term is not problematic; no reason to change besides political correctness
- Some believe it honors Native Americans, our local history
- Financial impacts may be significant
 - Costs to families/students for district related gear, uniforms, etc.
 - Costs to district to rebrand; overall impact on school funding (may require grants, fundraising)
- Additional change for our students/staff and community during a year of change
- May result in additional division, tensions within community
- Potential for current Indigenous students/community and others to be "blamed" for change

Recommendation: Considerations Identified by Committee

I wonder (Other related topics of discussion)

- Can we collect data, analyze findings?
- What will this actually cost? If a grant does cover much of the cost, what is left, who pays that?
- If the committee had a larger sample size, would the discourse be different?
- Do our Native American members of this committee speak for all Indigenous people? Have we talked to others? Do other Native Americans have a different perspective?
- Based on our equity plan, can you defend either option?

Outside Scope of Committee's Charge

- If we drop 'Chief' would we need to consider changing the names of schools? The district? (and move away from the name of Okemos?)



Honor Native Students by Being on the Right Side of History

Dr. Aaron A. Payment, Chairperson
Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians

Supporting
Rationale

- **Ahneen, Boozho ~ ST Chairperson**
- **HS Drop Out at 15 (racism); Took the GED at 16**
- **Entered College at 17 ~ BS, MPA, MED, EdS, EdD**
- **Former School Board President**
- **National Advisory Council on Indian Education**
- **Former Executive Director of Nokomis Learning Center**
- **Offer of Assistance to Coordinate Native Count Title VI \$**
- **Volunteer to Assist in Writing Grants to Change the Name**



Culturally Appropriate School Climate:

School Leaders at the K-12 level used to follow the ISLLC ~ Inter-State School Leader Licensure Consortium for ensuring,

"A Culturally Appropriate Environment for all students to learn".

Education Professional Standard for School Climate:

Now, the National Policy Board for Education Administration provides professional standards for Education leaders (2015)

Under **Standard 1**, the National Policy Board describes that Effective Educational Leaders:

Develop an educational mission for the school to promote the academic success and well-being of each student. [S1.a]

...promote a vision for the school on the successful learning and development of each child and on instructional and organizational practices that promote such success. [S1. b]

...advocate and cultivate core values that define the school's culture including...child-centered education, equity, inclusiveness, social justice, openness, caring, and trust. [S1. c]

Education Professional Standard for School Climate:

Further, **Standard 2 "Ethics and Professional Norms"** calls for:

...placing children at the center of education and accept responsibility for each student's academic success and well-being. [52, c]

Safeguard and promote the values of ...equity, social justice...and diversity. [52, d] &

Lead with...an understanding of all students' ...backgrounds and cultures. [52, e]

Education Professional Standard for School Climate:

Standard 3, "Equity and Cultural Responsiveness" identifies that effective educational leaders:

Ensure each student is treated fairly, respectfully, and with an understanding of each student's culture and context. [53, a]

Recognize, respect, and employ each student's strengths, diversity, and culture as assets for teaching and learning. [53, b].

Confront and alter institutional biases of student marginalization...and low expectations associated with race, class, culture and language.... [53, e].

Promote the preparation of students to live productively in and contribute to the diverse cultural contexts. [53, f]



So, an Important Question is....

How do we know that the use of mascot for the American Indian Race ~ *and Only Our Race* ~ is inconsistent with the Professional and Ethical Standards Educational and School Leaders are bound by?

Educational Professional Response

In 2005 the American Psychological Association (APA) called for the immediate retirement of all American Indian mascots, symbols, images and personalities by schools, colleges, universities, athletic teams and organizations.

The APA's position is based on a growing body of social science literature that shows the harmful effects of racial stereotyping and inaccurate racial portrayals, including the particularly harmful effects of American Indian sports mascots on the social identity development and self-esteem of Native young people.

Educational Professional Response

Continued use of these mascots, symbols, images, and personalities has a negative effect on not only American Indians students but on all students by:

- Undermining the educational experiences of members of all communities-especially those who have had little or no contact with Indigenous peoples.
- Establishes an unwelcome and often times hostile learning environment for Native students that affirms negative images/stereotypes that are promoted in mainstream society

Academic Research Says

According to Dr. Stephanie Fryberg, University of Arizona:

"American Indian mascots are harmful not only because they are often negative, but because they remind American Indians of the limited ways in which others see them. This in turn restricts the number of ways American Indians can see themselves."

Further, Indian Mascots:

- Undermine the ability of American Indian Nations to portray accurate and respectful images of their culture, spirituality, and traditions.
- Presents stereotypical images of American Indians. Such mascots are a contemporary example of prejudice by the dominant culture against racial and ethnic minority groups
- Is a form of discrimination against American Indian Nations.

APA Resolution Describes:

"The use of American Indian mascots as symbols in schools and university athletic programs is particularly troubling because schools are places of learning. These mascots are teaching stereotypical, misleading and too often, insulting images of American Indians. These negative lessons are not just affecting American Indian students; they are sending the wrong message to all students."

- Former AQA President Ronald F. Levant, Esq.

Another Question is.....

If the use of these mascots is to "honor" American Indians, why don't school districts honor other races by using an....

African American mascot for a Basketball Team?

What would that look like? What would be acceptable?

What about a Latina Sports Team?

What caricature would a district use then?

How about an Asian Pacific American Mascot?

What perceived aspect of their culture would be exploited?

Common sense shows how absurd this would be. So, why is it tolerated for American Indians and not other races?

The answer is in the objectification of American Indians as relics of the past or uncivilized humans in need of salvation.

Afterall, American Indians were the last to be granted citizenship with the right to vote in 1924 but not protected until 1965.

Another Question is.....

What curriculum do districts administer to counter this? I'm guessing a unit in 3rd grade and one in Middle School Social Science to align with State Standards. Having worked as Nokomis' Executive, I can attest that Okemos was one of the early districts to implement this curriculum.

What contemporary lessons?

Anything about the origin of American Democracy?

An affirmative approach would be to fully infuse culturally appropriate curriculum ~ across curriculum.

Finally, as a School District, School Board or Community charged with Professional Ethics as an Educator...

...What is **your** duty to provide a safe and culturally appropriate environment for all students to learn?

NCAI "Ending Indian" Mascots" Initiative
NATIONAL SCHOOL MASCOT TRACKING DATABASE:
THE CURRENT NUMBERS

Online link: <http://bit.ly/2schoolmascotdatabase>

SCHOOLS WITH NATIVE "THEMED" MASCOTS: THE CURRENT NUMBERS (Last updated: April 11, 2021)
Current overall numbers and numbers of the most common mascots featured below:

OVERALL	
Total Schools	1,995
Total School Districts	1,018

"DISKANS"	
Total Schools	54
Total School Districts	43

"INDIANS"	
Total Schools	790
Total School Districts	346

"BRAVES"	
Total Schools	206
Total School Districts	124

"CHIEFS"	
Total Schools	313
Total School Districts	96

"WARRIORS"	
Total Schools	417
Total School Districts	247

RECENT SCHOOL MASCOT CHANGES - NOVEMBER 2020-MARCH 2021 (Last updated: April 11, 2021)
Total school mascot changes in calendar year 2020: 20 / 16 most recent school mascot changes listed below:

SCHOOL NAME (STATE)	MASCOT	REASON	DATE
Garfield HS (VA)	"INDIANS"	School announced change in letter (link)	03/13/21
Cheyenne Mountain HS (CO)	"INDIANS"	School board voted to retire mascot (link)	03/13/21
Camden HS (IA)	"INDIANS"	School board voted to retire mascot (link)	03/13/21
Wichita North HS (KS)	"DISKANS"	School board voted to retire mascot (link)	02/08/21
Shawnee Mission North HS (KS)	"INDIANS"	School board voted to retire mascot (link)	01/25/21
Waterloo HS (CT)	"INDIANS"	School board voted to retire mascot (link)	01/25/21
North Attlefield HS (MA)	"INDIANS"	School committee voted to retire mascot (link)	12/21/20
John Burroughs HS (CA)	"INDIANS"	Student body voted to retire mascot (link)	12/11/20
Caladonia-Mumford HS (WV)	"RED RAIDERS"	School board voted to retire mascot (link)	12/09/20
Farmington HS (CT)	"INDIANS"	School board voted to retire mascot (link)	12/09/20
Pease HS (CA)	"WARRIORS"	School board voted to retire mascot (link)	12/09/20
Snell HS (NM)	"DISKANS"	School board voted to retire mascot (link)	12/04/20
Bonifant HS (UT)	"BRAVES"	Principal announced change in video (link)	11/19/20
Wichem High Regional HS (WI)	"WARRIORS"	School board voted to retire mascot (link)	11/18/20
Union HS (MI)	"DISKANS"	School board voted to retire mascot (link)	11/09/20
Kaukaui HS (HI)	"RED RAIDERS"	State Civil Rights Compliance Branch recommended change (link)	11/06/20

*Note: The database currently is a comprehensive inventory of all public K-12 schools, and also includes private schools over 500 in size, managed in America through organizations such as Catholic Education and others. For more information on the database, please visit www.ncaimascot.com or contact the National School Mascot Tracking Database, The Current Numbers, Washington DC, April 11, 2021.

Let's Honor Native Students by
Being on the Right Side of History

Change the Mascot



Thank You from Our Next Generations

Reference:

National History Day from www.nationalhistoryday.org administered by the National History Day Foundation, 2011. Licensed via Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International license. <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Content, images, and information is subject to change without notice.

Seeking Clarity
...
Questions
for our
panel members

Directions

1. Use the chat feature on Zoom to submit a question. Be sure your chat message is directed to our moderator.
2. Questions that seek clarity regarding the recommendation will be shared with our panel.
3. Questions seeking clarity that cannot be addressed in the time allotted for the evening will have responses posted on our website.
4. Specific feedback regarding the recommendation will be collected later in the presentation.

**To submit a question
seeking clarity
on the initial
recommendation**

Providing
Feedback
...
Providing
additional
thoughts for
consideration

Directions

To provide written input regarding the opportunities, challenges and “I wonders” regarding the initial recommendation

1. The link below will be posted into the zoom chat feature by our moderators.
2. [Initial Recommendation Feedback](#)
3. The form will be open through Friday, April 14th for feedback.

Thank you for participating!

Next Steps

Study Committee Review (April)

- Reviews feedback and finalizes recommendation to superintendent

Board Presentation (May 10th- 7pm)

- Superintendent presents final recommendation to Board of Education
- Public comment to Board of Education

Board Action (May 24th - 7pm)

- **if approved:**
 - Develop and implement inclusive process to identify new nickname
 - Identify and pursue additional funding sources
 - Transition from current to new mascot/nickname (September, 2023?)

Appendix E - Supporting Rationale/Documents

Laurel R. Davis-Delano , Joseph P. Gone & Stephanie A. Fryberg (2020): The psychosocial effects of Native American mascots: a comprehensive review of empirical research findings, *Race Ethnicity and Education* <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2020.1772221>

For the full article visit: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2020.1772221> The abstract, introduction and conclusion have been included below:

The psychosocial effects of Native American mascots: a comprehensive review of empirical research findings

Laurel R. Davis-Delano, Joseph P. Gone, and Stephanie A. Fryberg

aSociology, Springfield College, Springfield, MA, USA; bAnthropology, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA; cPsychology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA; dGlobal Health and Social Medicine, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA, USA

Abstract

Approximately 2,000 teams in the U.S. utilize Native American mascots, the majority of which are associated with schools. Across the nation there continue to be many intense conflicts over these mascots. Most conflicts focus on differences in opinion, rather than on the effects of these mascots. The purpose of this article is to provide educational decision-makers with a comprehensive review of research on the psychosocial effects of Native American mascots. This body of research suggests that these mascots generate undesirable effects. First, they are psychologically detrimental to Native American students. Second, for non-Native persons, they are associated with negative stereotypes of Native Americans. Third, these mascots undermine intergroup relations by increasing negative stereotyping of Native Americans. Lastly, supporters of these mascots are more apt to believe prejudicial ideas. We discuss these findings relative to broader societal contexts.

In the U.S., for more than half a century, local, regional, and national conflicts have persisted over Native American nicknames, logos, and mascots in sport (hereinafter 'mascots,' except when using these terms more precisely). On both sides of this conflict, emotions run high. While many schools have eliminated Native American mascots, many other schools (and professional teams) have not followed suit. Activists continue to call for elimination of these mascots, while many non-Native people continue to be baffled by such calls, as they believe that these mascots convey positive ideas about Native American people.

Most of the discussion and debate regarding these mascots focuses on attitudes and opinion. On one side, mascot supporters argue that these mascots represent important traditions and honor Native Americans. On the other side, mascot opponents contend that these mascots reflect and reinforce stereotypes, involve offensive appropriation and mimicry, and harm Native American people (e.g., Davis 1993; Gone 2002; Steinfeldt et al. 2010). Often missing from this discussion are published research findings. In fact, research evidence enables us to determine the accuracy of common statements made by both mascot supporters and opponents, such as: (a) 'These mascots honor Native Americans,' (b) 'These mascots convey positive ideas about Native Americans,' (c)

'These mascots reinforce stereotypes of Native Americans,' and (d) 'These mascots harm Native Americans.' The goal of this article is to provide educators, educational administrators, school board members, legislators, and other associated decision-makers (hereinafter educational decision-makers'), as well as other community members involved in struggles over Native American mascots, with a comprehensive review of research findings on the effects of these mascots. There are two reasons why it is critical for educational decision-makers to understand these findings.

First, research findings shed light on the effects of Native American mascots in the context of considerably higher rates of a wide range of social problems and the significant obstacles Native people face when engaged in efforts to reduce these problems. For example, compared to the overall U.S. population, Native Americans experience higher rates of poverty, health inequities, and educational disadvantage (e.g., de Brey et al. 2019; United States Census Bureau 2016; United States Department of Health & Human Services 2015). With respect to education, Native Americans report relatively high secondary education dropout rates (11% versus 5.8% overall) and relatively low college graduation rates (15% hold a bachelor's degree compared to 31% overall) (de Brey et al. 2019). Furthermore, Native Americans experience considerable discrimination in the U.S. education system (e.g., Johnston-Goodstar and Roholt 2017; Makomenaw 2012; Walters et al. 2019). More specifically, qualitative studies reveal various forms of injustice that Native American students face in schools, including: racial slurs, stereotyping, microassaults, and culturally insensitive, delegitimizing, and assimilative school policies and practices (e.g., discrimination in disciplinary practices; problematic academic labeling and tracking that assumes Native families and students are deficient; and a curriculum that largely excludes, romanticizes, and stereotypes Native peoples and sanitizes history) (e.g., Cech, Smith, and Metz 2019; Freng, Freng, and Moore 2007; Johnston-Goodstar and Roholt 2017). In order to alleviate these forms of injustice, educational decision-makers in U.S. society need to understand the causes of Native American educational problems, including (but certainly not limited to) how representations of Native Americans – such as those in fictional media, news media, education curriculum, consumer products and mascots – may impact these problems. Unless there is an accurate understanding of the causes of these problems derived from research, we cannot work in effective ways to reduce these problems or, at the very least, avoid contributing to them.

The second reason educational decision-makers need to understand research findings on the effects of Native American mascots is that the vast majority of these mascots are associated with educational institutions. In 2014, Munguia (2014) searched the MascotDB website, which covers over 47,000 team nicknames in the U.S. (<http://mascotdb.com/>) and found that 2,129 nicknames were associated with Native Americans, including 780 Warriors, 493 Indians, 343 Raiders, 147 Braves, 123 Chiefs/Chieftains, 118 specific tribal names, and 75 Redskins.² Ninety-two percent of these nicknames were associated with high schools, which constitutes 8.2% of high schools. Thus, many students play for and against teams with Native American mascots, and many others who are sport fans watch teams that feature these mascots. Further, students who are neither athletes nor sport fans are also exposed to these mascots (e.g., in media, on clothing). Given the presence of these mascots in educational settings and the important principle that educational decision-makers rely on research when making decisions that shape policies and practices in their schools, in this article we offer decision-makers tools that will better enable them to focus on research findings, rather than public opinion, when determining whether to support or tolerate these mascots.

Summary of the research findings

The findings from academic research on the effects of Native American mascots suggest that regardless of the stated intent of those who support Native mascots (i.e., to 'honor' Native Americans) and regardless of opinions about them, these mascots induce or correlate with negative psychosocial outcomes. More specifically, three studies demonstrated that Native mascots generate negative psychological effects for Native students, in particular lower self-esteem, lower community worth, less capacity to generate achievement-related possible selves, and greater levels of negative affect. These findings make sense in the context of other studies that revealed negative psychosocial effects of Native mascots on non-Native persons. In particular, this research reveals that Native mascots are associated with negative thoughts and stereotypes about Native Americans and that exposure to Native mascots increases negative stereotyping. Studies have also revealed that some mascot supporters hold stereotypical and prejudicial attitudes toward Native Americans and that supporters are more apt to hold these attitudes than mascot opponents. Two studies even suggested that Native mascots are associated with a tendency to discriminate against Native Americans. There was no evidence from any study that Native American mascots foster positive or beneficial psychosocial effects for Native Americans.

Conclusion

Given the documented educational inequities for Native Americans in comparison to U.S. averages, it is crucial that educational institutions take immediate actions to facilitate the success of Native American students. Although most people in the U.S. do not perceive Native American mascots as problematic, all of the academic studies undertaken to study the psychosocial effects of these mascots demonstrate either direct negative effects on Native Americans or that these mascots activate, reflect, and/or reinforce stereotyping and prejudice among non-Native persons. Based on this concise, but consistent, body of research evidence, we conclude that it is past time to eliminate Native American mascots in educational (and other) settings throughout the United States.