

Oregon State Board of Education Resolution

WHEREAS the Oregon State Board of Education's mission is to ensure that every Oregon public school student has equal access to high quality educational services that promote lifelong learning and prepare students for their next steps following high school graduation, including college, work and citizenship; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, the Board formally adopted rules and a resolution banning Native American Mascots; and

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education reaffirms its commitment to encouraging local school districts to remove biased, derogatory, or inflammatory mascots, logos, names, and symbols from their schools; and

WHEREAS, although some Oregon public schools have changed their mascots, several public schools in Oregon continue to have Native American mascots and these mascots often do not present culturally accurate images of Native Americans; and

WHEREAS, the American Psychological Association and American Sociological Association have found the use of Native American mascots and symbols and their stereotypical imaging of American Indians within our public schools to be offensive and harmful to all students; and

WHEREAS, symbolizing a complex and varied race with a single narrow representation of a male warrior distorts and misrepresents that race to both Native Americans and non-Native Americans and communicates an inaccurate portrayal of American Indian heritage; and

WHEREAS, school mascots that represent a people use an ethnic subset of a race, and "Indians" represent the only race-based mascots; and

WHEREAS, the continued use of Native American mascots establishes an unwelcome and often times hostile learning environment for American Indian students in all school and not just in those schools with Native American mascots, particularly during sports competitions; and

WHEREAS, all heritages, cultures, races and religions have the right to be treated with dignity and respect; and

WHEREAS, it is important to be culturally sensitive and to educate everyone working within the Oregon public education system, that no matter how well meaning or their intentions, that their actions may be offensive and harmful to some and therefore, need to be eliminated; and

WHEREAS, all public schools are required to align instruction to the social sciences academic content standards which include historically accurate descriptions of Native Americans in Oregon; and

WHEREAS, more than 100 organizations across the nation have endorsed the discontinuation of Native American mascots, including the National Indian Education Association, Oregon Indian Education Association, the Society of Indian Psychologists, the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, and the US Commission of Civil Rights, have all endorsed the elimination of the use of Indian sports mascots; and

WHEREAS, student achievement data reveals that the achievement gap for Native Americans is widening; and

WHEREAS, inflammatory mascots are countercurrent to the Board's vision for an excellent and equitable education for all students; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Oregon State Board of Education:

- (1) Recognizes its leadership role with issues negatively affecting students and school environments;
- (2) Believes that American Indian/Alaska Native history and culture should be included in the curriculum of Oregon public schools;
- (3) Based on research and best practice finds that Native American mascots are harmful to student development;
- (4) Believes all students, including Native American students, have a right to a safe, inclusive, and equitable school environment free from institutionalized racism and general disrespect for human rights;
- (5) Strongly endorses the Native American mascot ban adopted by the State Board of Education in 2012; and
- (6) Calls for discontinuing the use of Native American mascots in all Oregon public schools.