

Final 5/17/12

Oregon State Board of Education Resolution

WHEREAS, more than 100 organizations across the nation have endorsed the discontinuation of Native American mascots, including the National Indian Education Association, the Oregon Indian Education Association, the Society of Indian Psychologists, the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, and the US Commission of Civil Rights; 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, research has shown that Native American children exposed to Native American mascot images lowered self-esteem, reduced students' belief that their community has the power and resources to resolve problems (community efficacy), and reduced the number of achievement-related future goals that Native American students see for themselves; 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, although many 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 continued use of Native American mascots establishes an unwelcome and often times hostile learning environment for American Indian students in all schools 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 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, the Oregon Legislature has given the Oregon State Board of Education the responsibility in state statute to ensure that persons are not subjected to unlawful discrimination in our public schools on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status, age or disability; and

WHEREAS, the Oregon State Board of Education is committed to the creation of an Oregon Public Education System that is equitable for all students, where no student is subjected to unlawful discrimination and where no student experiences a hostile educational environment; and

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that:

1. The Oregon State Board of Education endorses the elimination of the use of Native American mascots by all Oregon public schools.
2. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall send a copy of this resolution with the administrative rule adopted by the State Board of Education to all school districts, education service districts and public charter schools in Oregon.