



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
LANSING



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN  
SUPERINTENDENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

July 11, 2006

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** LEA and ISD Superintendents, and Public School Academy Directors

**FROM:** Kathleen N. Straus, President, State Board of Education  
Mike Flanagan, Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT:** Resolution on Use of American Indian Mascots, Nicknames, and Logos

In June 2003 the State Board of Education adopted a Resolution on the Use of American Indian Mascots, Nicknames, and Logos (copy enclosed). The resolution urges school districts to promote curricula that is fair, appropriate, and accurate in depicting the cultures and histories of all people; recommends that educators teach all students to be aware of and respectful of various cultures present in society; and supports and strongly recommends the elimination of American Indian/Native American mascots, nicknames, logos, fight songs, insignias, antics, and team descriptors by all Michigan schools.

As you begin the process of preparing for the new school year, we would like to take this opportunity to remind you that many American Indian/Native American tribes and organizations find the use of American Indian/Native American mascots, nicknames and logos within our public schools to be deeply offensive. The State Board has listened to consistent testimony of students and parents who believe this has had a detrimental effect on the education of American Indian/Native American students.

The Board recognizes that this is a local decision. However, in the interest of promoting fair, appropriate, and accurate depictions of the cultures and histories of all people, we urge you to share the attached resolution with your board of education and others, as you deem appropriate.

The Department of Civil Rights is available to provide outreach and educational materials on this issue. You may contact Donna Budnick, American Indian Affairs Specialist, at (517) 335-3168 for assistance.

Attachment

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State of Michigan  
State Board of Education

RESOLUTION

USE OF AMERICAN INDIAN MASCOTS  
NICKNAMES, AND LOGOS

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

WHEREAS, the Michigan State 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 American Indian\* tribes, organizations, state and local officials, and private citizens find the use of American Indian mascots, nicknames, logos, and symbols within our public schools to be offensive, and further find that their use has a detrimental effect on the educational achievement of American Indian students; 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 American Indian 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, the Michigan State Board of Education has adopted *Policies for Creating Effective Learning Environments, Policies on Bullying, and Policies on Safe Schools*, and encourages school districts to work to promote positive learning atmospheres that foster learning for all Michigan's children; and

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

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education recognizes that this matter should be addressed at the local level of each separate school district; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Michigan State Board of Education promotes curricula that is fair, appropriate, and accurate in depicting the cultures and histories of all people; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Michigan State Board of Education recommends that educators teach all students to be aware of and respectful of various cultures present in society; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Michigan State Board of Education supports and strongly recommends the elimination of American Indian mascots, nicknames, logos, fight songs, insignias, antics, and team descriptors by all Michigan schools.

\* *The State Board of Education is aware that some individuals prefer the term Native American. According to the 1995 United States Census Bureau survey, 49 percent of the persons asked preferred American Indian and 37 percent preferred Native American. American Indian is also the term used by the Michigan Civil Rights Commission.*

  
Kathleen N. Straus, President

  
Thomas D. Watkins, Jr., Chairman



Adopted June 26, 2003