



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

August 2, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Michael P. Flanagan, Chairman 

SUBJECT: Reaffirmation of State Board of Education Resolution Regarding Use of American Indian Mascots, Nicknames, and Logos

In June 2003, the State Board of Education adopted a resolution regarding the Use of American Indian Mascots, Nicknames, and Logos (attached).

The State Board of Education and Michigan Department of Education recognize that some local districts have taken the steps necessary to establish new mascots, nicknames, and logos; however, concern continues to be raised about the number of school districts and buildings that still have American Indian mascots and logos.

The Board's Legislative Committee has discussed and will continue to discuss this matter and make recommendations to the Board in the future, including possible legislation. For now, the Committee recommends that the State Board reaffirm its resolution adopted June 26, 2003.

It is recommended that the State Board of Education (1) reaffirm the Board's resolution adopted June 26, 2003, regarding the Use of American Indian Mascots, Nicknames, and Logos; and (2) transmit the resolution to local school districts encouraging the elimination of American Indian mascots, nicknames, and logos fight songs, insignias, antics, and team descriptors by all Michigan schools.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

KATHLEEN N. STRAUS – PRESIDENT • JOHN C. AUSTIN – VICE PRESIDENT
CAROLYN L. CURTIN – SECRETARY • MARIANNE YARED MCGUIRE – TREASURER
NANCY DANHOF – NASBE DELEGATE • ELIZABETH W. BAUER
REGINALD M. TURNER • CASANDRA E. ULBRICH

608 WEST ALLEGAN STREET • P.O. BOX 30008 • LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909
www.michigan.gov/mde • (517) 373-3324

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