



North Haven Public Schools
North Haven, Connecticut 06473

North Haven Public School
Board of Education Meeting
Special Meeting/Agenda
Thursday, August 6, 2020
6 p.m.

To view Board Meeting via Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/North-Haven-Public-Schools-2113929748699089/?ref=bookmarks>

To participate in public comment:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/92138108063?pwd=UU9zVk9rbVVabE5HUUVJVHVYZ2JGUT09>

Meeting ID: 921 3810 8063

Passcode: 560580

To Dial in to listen to the meeting or participate in public comment:

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 921 3810 8063

Passcode: 560580

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|--|-----------------|
| 1. Board of Education Discussion and stakeholder input regarding the North Haven Public School mascot. | Discussion Item |
| 1. Public Comments | |
| 2. Adjournment | Action Item |

Please see attached links and emails for more information regarding the mascot.

Native American Mascot Recommendation Page:

<https://www.akomawt.org/nativemascotresources.html>

Study showing the psychological effects of Native American Mascots by youth:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13613324.2020.1772221>

American Psychological Association's "Resolution Recommending Retirement of American Indian Mascots"

<https://www.apa.org/pi/oema/resources/indian-mascots>

National Congress of American Indians Statement on Indian Mascot Harm:

<http://www.ncai.org/proudtobe>

Illuminative project to increase visibility of non-stereotypical depictions of Native Americans:

<https://illuminatives.org/>

NYT piece on the Florida Seminoles and support from the tribe

<https://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/24/sports/florida-state-can-keep-its-seminoles.html#:~:text=T here%20was%20never%20any%20doubt,on%20Florida%20State%20University's%20nickname .&text=removed%20Florida%20State%20from%20the,and%20nicknames%20during%20postseason%20play>.

Retirement of Washington Redskins logo

https://406mtsports.com/406mtsports/wetzel-family-sad-to-see-washington-redskins-logo-changed/article_236fe4d0-4902-538d-99cd-d2ffd932e384.html

<https://sports.yahoo.com/family-of-walter-wetzel-native-american-who-created-redskins-logo-mixed-on-its-retirement-221811054.html>

Community and tribes working together

https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/colleges/florida-states-unusual-bond-with-seminole-tribe-puts-mascot-debate-in-a-different-light/2014/12/29/5386841a-8eea-11e4-ba53-a477d66580ed_story.html

Resources from other districts:

News article about the Mohegan Tribe's decision to cease support for Indian mascots:

<https://www.gametime.com/mohegan-tribe-says-it-no-longer-supports-schools-indian-mascots/>

Guilford Human Rights Commission statement on the use of the Indian mascot:

<http://www.ci.guilford.ct.us/guilford-human-rights-commission-takes-a-stand-on-ghs-mascot-issue/>

Video created by children from a San Francisco school district

<https://youtu.be/Wv0XUTZM4fs>



NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Tuesday, July 14, 2020

Superintendent of Schools Patrick Stirk
& North Haven Board of Education

North Haven Public Schools

5 Linsley St, North Haven, CT 06473

Phone: (203) 239-2581

<http://www.north-haven.k12.ct.us/>

RE: *Change the name for the North Haven Public Schools Mascot and ALL AMBIGUITY supporting the use of the mascot*

Dear Superintendent of Schools Patrick Stirk and the North Haven Board of Education,

On behalf of the [National Indian Education Association](#) (NIEA), the oldest and largest organization serving American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students and educators, and the Native students, staff, and advocates from North Haven Public Schools and in support of the more than 2,000 community member signatures for [Change North Haven's Mascot](#), I write to reiterate NIEA's position since 2015 against the use of the racist depictions of Indigenous people by NHPS and ALL AMBIGUITY supporting the use of NHPS's racist mascot "The Indian."

Indigenous cultures have endured for centuries across the Americas despite attempts to destroy our cultural and traditional thought and philosophy and assimilate us into European society. The current NHPS mascot and all related uses for sports, youth activities, booster clubs, and other depictions promote a racist, false, and dehumanizing image of Indigenous people, and has no place in the education system. The use of race-based mascots in your school not only detracts from the proud history, cultures, and traditions of Indigenous peoples and this land, and it is harmful to Native children and communities. Commodification of Native people, names, and culture can destroy the self-esteem of Native students, which can strain their ability to achieve academically. In addition, stereotypes have led to emotional and physical violence against Native students by non-Native students and adults.

Education and mental health leaders across the nation, including the American Psychological Association, the American Counseling Association, the American Sociological Association, the National Education Association, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Congress of American Indians, the National Collegiate Athletic Association, and the Global Board of Church and Society have publically acknowledged the harm that Native stereotypes cause indigenous children.



NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

As the Executive Director of NIEA, I urge the North Haven Board of Education to eliminate these harmful and racist images of the current mascot and support efforts to address the harmful and racist use of the term and images among your students by providing education from our organization and the above mentioned. NIEA supports the removal of the mascot in an effort to reduce further stereotypes, creating safer and supportive environments where all students are able to thrive academically and socially now and beyond the classroom.

Thank you for opening the dialogue and for providing our communities the opportunity to share our culture with the school and district. If you need any additional assistance, please contact Geneva Horsechief-Hamilton at 202.544.7290 or geneva@niea.org.

Sincerely,

Diana Cournoyer
Executive Director
National Indian Education Association



Amanda Gabriele <gabrielle.amanda@northhavenschools.org>

North Haven Mascot

Chris Newell <chris_newell@yahoo.com>

Fri, Jul 3, 2020 at 3:11 PM

To: Amanda Gabriele <gabrielle.amanda@northhavenschools.org>

Hi Amanda,

Thanks for reaching out. I apologize for the slow reply. I was on Zoom meetings pretty much the entire day yesterday and had internet issues today which I just resolved so I'm just now catching up on emails.

I do speak on this issue a lot and have personal experience with it so I'll give you the whole narrative. :)

I'm Passamaquoddy from a community called Motahkmikuhk (English name Indian Township) in eastern Maine. Our communities are fairly isolated and eastern Maine is extremely rural and fairly remote. Because of that our culture and language remain alive and we still live in our ancestral territory of over 11,000 years. Growing up in the 70's and 80's there was pretty much no Native representation on television. The only Native you would see in current shows was Buffy St. Marie who was a regular on Sesame Street at that time. That was it. So, when it came to media representation of contemporary Native people there was an almost complete vacuum. Growing up and seeing teams on tv like the Redskins, Chiefs, Indians, Braves etc was something I perceived as a good thing. While even as a kid I knew the representations were caricatures I was happy to have SOMETHING at least on tv so I honestly grew up believing the mantra that Native sports mascots were meant to honor Native people. That's not untrue by the way. Every Native sports mascot whether high school, college or professional was created with an intent of some sort of honor or pride in the symbology. The problem is two-fold however. The symbology created for the sports mascots was not created by Native people, but by non-Native interpretations of what we are...which are false and misleading. The other problem is that we're inserting this symbology of living cultures into sports matches. Whether football, baseball, basketball, wrestling...it does not matter. The atmosphere of a sports match leads fans to cheer for their teams and cheer (or jeer) against the other other team. If you're a Native fan in the stands or a student athlete on the field or court, it feels like it's personally aimed at you because of who you are.

What turned me around was doing the work I needed to get myself into the Ivy Leagues. I matriculated to Dartmouth College in the fall '91. Dartmouth previously had an unofficial "Indian" mascot that was already retired in the late 70's. However, a very strong conservative element and the alumni still kept the mascot alive at sports matches and on campus. Incoming freshmen were given free Dartmouth Indians t-shirts in the 90's and inundated with the idea that a tradition was stolen from them and they need to keep it alive. So it was everywhere in that environment. My first football game was where I experienced fandom of Native mascots first hand. This was also btw the first live football game, college or otherwise, and I was extremely excited. Wore my Dartmouth class of '96 shirt and my dormmates all went together. What I observed in the stands that day changed my perception on this forever. While the mascot was gone, fans (students and some alumni) showed up in Dartmouth Indians gear, some painted their faces to resemble war paint. During the game these fans shouted the old "Wah hoo wah" chant, did tomahawk chops, shouted "scalp 'em" and one female student attempted to lulu (the high pitched ululating cry you hear some plains tribes use). After all the work I'd done to get into Dartmouth and knowing that I was surrounded by people who would ascend to leadership positions in companies and politics. I came to the realization that I was naive about them. I thought there was no way people believed Native people actually behaved or looked the way they portrayed, but yet not only did they believe it...they reveled in it. It was shocking. This is what these future leaders (which some of them are) know about me and my culture. Draped under the umbrella term European concept of a singularized term of Indian, they would associated Passamaquoddy people with this same thing. This was literally all they knew. It was the last football game I went to. I eventually separated from the college and part of the reason was the pressure cooker atmosphere for a Native student having to deal with that image and behavior everywhere.

There are multiple studies that all conclude the same thing. Native stereotyping (whether 'positive' or 'negative') through sports mascots leads to psychological harm and lowered self-esteem for Native youth. That is exactly what happened to me. It bothered me so much I ended up in a career in education working to replace the stereotypical representation with real education from tribally sourced materials.

The APA, NCAI and over 50 plus national organizations have all submitted open letters demanding the end of the use of Native mascots because of the measurable harm to our students self esteem. 70% of Native people live off reservation. We're in towns and cities across the US and that includes your school. Native students engaging with the mascot environment (whether from your school or a school you're competing against) have been harmed over the years. That is a fact. They've come through your doors or interacted with your school or their fans and they've come away from it

shaken in some way.

NCAI came out against Native mascots in 1969. For those that ask "why now?", the answer is that this has been a Native-led movement to change these mascots that is now 51 years old and we are now 2nd and 3rd generation educators taking up this issue. Over 2/3's of Native mascots have been retired in that time. This has largely been a successful movement and the remaining mascots are literally the last holdouts. The question should be "what took so long?"

I invite you check out the resources we've compiled on our web page on this topic and how to have a productive dialog about it:

Native American Mascot Resource Page

Native American Mascot Resource Page

A resource page of Native voices on the issue of Native mascots

I'd also invite you to check out the latest research, published this year, of empirical data on the subject.

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

The psychosocial effects of Native American mascots: a comprehensive rev...

Laurel R. Davis-Delano

(2020). The psychosocial effects of Native American mascots: a comprehensive review of empirical research findin...

I continue to speak on the topic because I think of the generations coming behind me. People sadly really believe what they see on tv or at a sports match in the form of a Native mascot is real. It's a sad truth. It makes my job as a Native educator harder because I first have to unwind the bias's formed around the symbology and behavior associated with Native mascots so I can reframe to how Native peoples from different cultures view themselves. It does no service to your students to allow an environment where they get to "play Indian". When they get to the diverse environment of their

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first college campus, many of them will have the awkward moment of wearing their school gear and realizing that the rest of the campus has a different view on what they're doing. Students from schools with Native mascots often report back on situations where they felt completely embarrassed and that their high school let them down.

The more we can get rid of the distraction of mascots and start talking about the real truth of Native histories and contemporary issues the more we make Native people visible as human beings worthy of the same respect we give to all living cultures. The more we maintain fantasy, the more implicit bias's are fed information that is flat out wrong and will not serve any of your students or your community in the future.

Time for a change. Let me know if you have any questions.

Chris Newell
Director of Education
Akomawt Educational Initiative

[Quoted text hidden]



Amanda Gabriele <gabrielle.amanda@northhavenschools.org>

North Haven Mascot

shoran piper <jewel4198@yahoo.com>

Wed, Jul 8, 2020 at 3:41 PM

Reply-To: "jewel4198@yahoo.com" <jewel4198@yahoo.com>

To: "gabrielle.amanda@northhavenschools.org" <gabrielle.amanda@northhavenschools.org>

Good Afternoon

Thank you for reaching out. As you may know this has been a subject talked about for many years throughout the state and other states. Some would agree having a Indian mascot is showing that they still support or show that Indigenous people's are still here. Then you have some who are against it. Because for once the tribes should have and keep their own and not be made fun of as mockery. Everything keeps being taken away from tribes till today. We want to keep and have to hold onto our own symbols and seals not keep having it stolen or paraded around and of course tribes don't get credit.

Blessings

Clan Mother Piper

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

[Quoted text hidden]



Amanda Gabriele <amandakgabriele@gmail.com>

Responding to your voicemail message

Potter, Lori A <LPotter@mptn-nsn.gov>

Wed, Jul 15, 2020 at 11:50 AM

To: "amandakgabriele@gmail.com" <amandakgabriele@gmail.com>

Greetings, Amanda –

Thank you for your interest in the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation and for taking the time to contact us. We appreciate your interest in addressing the matter of Native American mascots.

As you may know, the owners of the Washington Redskins NFL team have recently decided to change the Team's name. We consider this a victory for Indian Country; a leap forward in educating the public on the harmful and dehumanizing effects of Native names and imagery in sports on Native people. The fight to recognize us as human beings and not mascots continues as hundreds of public schools around the country have not yet retired their Native mascots, including at least 16 in Connecticut. We therefore urge Connecticut public schools to follow suit and stop using Native images and names. Regardless of the intent to "honor" the history and culture of Native people, these mascots actually perpetuate racist stereotypes, encourage racist fan behavior, and have no place in learning environments.

Kindest regards,

Lori

Lori A. Potter | Public Affairs Director

MASHANTUCKET PEQUOT TRIBAL NATION

P.O. Box 3060 | Mashantucket CT 06338

O: 860-396-6381 | LPotter@mptn-nsn.gov