

Mascot Committee Meeting
February 27, 2017
BOE Community Room
6:30pm

Committee Members in Attendance: Don Bratton, Sean Crittendon, Ginny Donaldson, Bryon Hanson, Kari Kephart, Sarah Lee, Diane Liebsch, Les Moore, Susan Myers, Andrew Purdy, Lee Supple, Chris Taylor, Kris Wabski, Tim Wolfe, Olivia Wabski, Henry Ramsey

Committee Members Unable to Attend: Chad Bilderback, Dave Butler, Tony Carter, Charles Wilburn, Mya Lacey, Ben Horvatic

Introductions

Superintendent Susan Myers welcomed committee members. Committee members introduced themselves.

Review of January 30m 2017 Minutes

Committee members reviewed the minutes. No changes to the minutes were made.

Presentation – American Indian Mascots: Practical Considerations for Educators - Presenter: Alex Red Corn

Susan reminded the committee, from the last meeting, that it was suggested to have a presenter (presentation) that would have a perspective on mascots related to Native Americans Indians. Susan shared that both her and Bryon Hanson had the opportunity to listen to our presenter, Alex Red Corn, at the Indigenous People Conference, at Kansas State University, last fall. Susan welcomed and introduced Alex Red Corn. Alex is a member of the Osage Nation, education leadership doctoral student, co-chair of Kansas State University Indigenous Alliance, and the Special Coordinator for Indigenous Partnerships at Kansas State University.

Alex began his presentation with citing several sources that have the perspective that mascots, related to the Native American Indian, are harmful. A source that is seen as an authority is the American Psychological Association. The Association has indicated that those exposed to Indian mascots have a higher likelihood to stereotype Native Americans along with stereotyping other ethnic groups and the mascots (stereotyping) play a role in the Native American Indian mental health issue paradigm.

Alex's opening to his presentation asked a couple of questions about how the American Indian may be perceived. American Indian culture studies are not a well-covered topic in most curriculums. This is a systemic issue in educational systems and crosses over to mainstream media. Names (Redskin, Chiefs, Red Men, etc. were discussed). Alex asked a critical

thinking question: "Would your students get in trouble in class if they called someone a Redskin, Redman, or Savage?"

Discussion was held looking past the "honor." Many organizations and institutions representing American Indians have denounced mascots.

Discussion was held as to what is politically correct. Alex referred to the "Kill the Indian. Save the Man" policies of the past and suicide and mental health issues in the present.

Alex's presentation featured eight practical considerations for professional educational terms:

1. The primary K-12 curriculum-What do students learn about American Indians?
 - Curriculum sources were cited.
 - Images of African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans were presented from a Google search. The Native American images all had headdress (past images), where the other ethnic searches showed modern day images.
 - 567 federally recognized native nations in the United States
 - 4 native nations in Kansas (Sac & Fox, Kansas Kickapoo, Prairie Band Nation, Iowans).
2. Mascots as a hidden curriculum (in plain sight).
 - What are students learning?
 - What does the mascot curriculum teach you about Indians?
 - What does the mascot curriculum teach you about Indian identity and Indigenous people heritage? Whose claim to tradition and identity is it?
 - Whose tradition is it?
3. The mascot curriculum implicates other schools.
 - Sporting events prompt racism throughout the façade of school spirit – "Let's scalp the Redskins," "Send 'em Back to the Trail of Tears."
 - Recent events in Lawrence (and Shawnee Mission) were discussed.
4. How far would you take it?
 - Would you show up to a Pow-Wow, dance, or cultural event as an Indian mascot super fan? Would you do the tomahawk chop? Would you sing Indian songs at a traditional event? Would you claim to be an Indian/Brave/Chief/Redskin/Redman? Would you mock traditional songs and dress?

5. Ethical dilemmas for education leaders.
 - Truth versus loyalty (research on mascots versus Community passion for mascot transition).
 - Indians are usually a small minority in most communities where mascots are used.
 - Consider short-term effects versus long-term effects.

6. Who qualifies as a representative? Who should have a voice?
 - Students.
 - People with Indian heritage.
 - Enrolled members of a tribal nation.
 - Community members.
 - Others?

7. Leadership and change.
 - What are we teaching our kids in curriculum? At the same time, consider the modern-day Indian.

8. Public relations and school-community relationships.
 - What message does the mascot send to others?
 - Consider recent events in Lawrence/Shawnee Mission and Manhattan.
 - What type of relationship do we have with native nations in NE Kansas?
 - How can changing the mascot be a learning experience for the community and simultaneously an opening for improved efforts in diversity, inclusion, culture responsiveness, multiculturalism, etc.

Discussion included:

- Mascot transition model (Portland).
- If mascot is retired, find ways to shrine it.
- Give opportunity to express how you respect diversity in your community.
- Rebranding yourself as a community.

Comments & Suggestions:

- Consider "googling" American Indian to see what images are presented.
- Trying to wrap head around why the Native Americans would not be honored by Indian referenced mascots.