

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

Members in Attendance: Chad Bilderback, Sean Crittendon, Ginny Donaldson, Wayne Donaldson, Bryon Hanson, Sarah Lee, Diane Liebsch, Les Moore, Susan Myers, Andrew Purdy, Chris Taylor, Kris Wabski, Mya Lacey, Olivia Wabski

Members Absent: Don Bratton, Dave Butler, Tony Carter, Kari Kephart, Lee Supple, Charles Wilburn, Tim Wolfe, Ben Horvatic, Henry Ramsey

Review of February 27, 2017 Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the February 27, 2017, meeting was reviewed. No changes were made to the minutes.

Audio – YouTube Clip

A video clip and YouTube clip were listened to and viewed. The audio clip was a sports commentator's clip depicting different ethnic groups as mascots. The YouTube clip was of students sharing how Native American referenced mascots make them feel.

Curriculum Project – Bryon Hanson

Bryon's presentation provided an overview of how the district plans to introduce different historical events and ethnic groups' history in social studies from AES through AHS, using the Kansas Department of Education curriculum template and making some modifications within the district. The plan is to finalize the curriculum project by the end of this school year, introduce the new curriculums to students at the beginning of the next school year, and get feedback from staff at the end of the next school year as to how to improve the curriculum.

Discussion followed. The general consensus of the committee is the district's curriculum project is a good start. It was suggested that the "Who Was" series is a great series of books and easy read for AES and possibly AMS to learn a brief overview of different historical events and people.

*Follow up:* The "Who Was" series tells stories about trailblazers, legends, innovators, and creators.

Discuss Alex Red corn's Presentation (last meeting)

An observation made during the presentation is that a considerable amount of information was provided at the beginning of his presentation on research and mental health – psychological aspect of the Native American mascot imaginary. Sometimes decisions are made based on research. Another observation made was that his presentation was comparable to a college course.

Alex's YouTube clip about growing up was referred to and it was mentioned that his brother is a member of the 1491 comedy group.

Alex is setting on the Manhattan and Shawnee Mission North mascot committees.

## Next Steps

Susan reminded the committee that the Board of Education had received feedback and communications over time regarding the Redmen mascot. The BOE has been grappling with the feedback/communications. The BOE asked that a balanced committee/workgroup be formalized, to include two school board members, to review and discuss the Redmen mascot. We have tried to give the committee relevant information and heard from a Native American speaker. We are at a crossroad as to what our next steps are. Ultimately, the BOE wants feedback and advice from this committee. Susan thanked the committee for being patient as we have looked at the mascot issue

Diane shared that as a BOE member, the involvement in this committee has brought an awareness that she didn't know, didn't realize. She shared that some of the viewpoints are new to her and her eyes have been opened. She has asked her BOE colleagues to stay informed too. The BOE members have received the information, as the committee has been receiving the information, along with the mascot committee meeting minutes. The BOE is looking for information and guidance from this committee and Sean and Diane share the information at the BOE meetings.

Susan shared that our BOE has never been a knee-jerk BOE. The BOE is group of open-minded people who thoughtfully and patiently look at an issue. There is no timeline set on the mascot issue; the mascot is a recent topic and with the communications/feedback the Board has received over the years, the BOE asked that a committee be formalized to look at the information on the Native American mascot imagery. Susan asked the committee to recall integration of schools. Atchison started the process of desegregating the schools before the implementation in Topeka. This BOE has always been in tune to the bigger picture. Susan also reminded the committee, that over time, Reid's men (year 1920) morphed to the Redmen and then the Indian head was attached to Redmen (year 1950). This all has taken place over time. It is now 2017 and we need to consider what is taking place. Diane also used corporal punishment as an example of change. Corporal punishment is no longer acceptable in schools, this has happened over time.

We are not alone in this right now; two other districts are actively going through a similar process at this time, Manhattan and Shawnee Mission North.

Diane advised that she would like to give feedback to the BOE on how the committee members are feeling. She suggested a possible ranking system of 0-10 with 10 ranking as we need change, 5 ranking as "I don't care," and 1 ranking as no change is needed. Diane ranked her feelings at 6-8 with the information she has been presented and heard.

Members made the following comments:

- The Redmen mascot has always been a large part of my life, I went to school here and returned here to teach, we may have become desensitized to this issue, the Redmen will always be a part of my history, but there is reason to reevaluate the mascot.
- There has never meant to be a negative condensation to the Redmen mascot, with the information provided and my own research, I go back and forth, do we or don't we, I haven't decided yet. There have been valid points made to switch away from the Redmen mascot.
- The mascot isn't my thing. No matter what you do, some people are going to be upset. You're not going to win; my eyes have been opened. I have more interest

in the students learning the greatness of America. "Ride with the Devil" movie directed by Ang Lee was mentioned. The event portrayed in the movie met nothing in its time, but you see it on Netflix.

- I see a lot of value in the curriculum aspect presented.
- Research presented shows that the mascot is a problem and we continue to stereotype. The message we receive is to treat all equally, if we continue using the mascot/symbol, we aren't doing that, treating all equally.
- We have inherited this and we have to address. Would we even think about this mascot in modern text? We're not removing the name from history; it's always going to be there. If it is decided that we make a change, we can move slowly and use the curriculum as a positive impact.
- We need to look at the mission for the students today, not those of the past. We need to move forward with the thought of the students today and into the future.
- It has been good learning about other tribes, not just the two that I'm familiar with. I'm against racial slurs; it's a good feeling that people are supporting you.
- I haven't thought about it being a big deal, but it's a big deal. I'm amazed how brilliant our kids are. Kids don't get bogged down, it's important that we don't get bogged down.
- The kids should be involved; it will help make it more acceptable to family and peers.

Discussion was held on how minimize/transition away from the Redmen mascot over time. Some could be accomplished with regular maintenance.

A member of the Class of 1965 has been attending the meetings. He advised that he is here to make sure that when the time comes to make a decision, he will stand up and challenge. He advised that he will point out things the Class of 1965 has done and he will fight like the devil. He pointed out that the Class of 1965 donated the Indian head that hangs in the hallway at AHS (southeast stairwell). This means as much to those that want a change. He advised that one of his best friends was a Native American gentleman, and these things remind him of his friend. The cost of the Indian head in the stairwell was over \$3,000.00. He advised that the Class of 1965 have given a number of other things including the scoreboard at the football field. He advised that the Class of 1965 has passion about these things.

It was suggested, that if a change is made in mascots, current imagery things, such as the Indian head at AHS, not necessarily need to be removed, they can be interpreted by a plaque etc. and put into meaningful context. This could be an education tool.

Any time change occurs, you have to be careful and strategic. Strategically we knew this conversation would come up, and as we were resurfacing the gym floor, we didn't put the Redmen mascot in the floor, we put the "A."

Bryon advised that while there were at an event at Wyandotte High School, they were given a tour of the museum that the high school established for preserving the history of their school. They used a classroom for the museum.

A suggestion was made to make a museum of history for Atchison High School, its history, relevancy, and its important.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.