



GREAT LAKES INTER-TRIBAL COUNCIL, INC.

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Dear School District Administrator:

I am writing to affirm the letter recently sent by Elizabeth Burmaster, Superintendent of Public Instruction, concerning the use of Native American nicknames, logos and mascots. Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council is an organization of eleven Native American tribes located in Wisconsin and Michigan. The elected tribal leaders of the member tribes serve as the board of directors, and the organization is therefore uniquely placed to act as a conduit for tribal government opinion.

In several resolutions over the past years, Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council has affirmed its position opposing the use of Native American imagery as a symbol of team or athletic spirit by professional teams and by collegiate, secondary and elementary school levels. The organization's most recent affirmation comes following the adoption of a similar resolution adopted by the American Psychological Association. That resolution follows a growing body of research and opinion condemning the use of Native American imagery as discriminatory and destructive for young people, whether Native American or not.

Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council applauds Ms. Burmaster's recent encouragement to those school districts which still maintain use of American Indian imagery to re-examine the practice. Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council continues to support the legislation pending before the Wisconsin Legislature concerning use of Native American nicknames, logos, and mascots. We therefore hope that in the course of athletic conferences and other inter-scholastic activities, you will recognize and freely discuss the adverse impacts of singling out an ethnic minority for stereotyping, cartooning, and misrepresentation.

Native American tribes and people are and always have been complex societies. Claiming to honor them by featuring a momentary aspect of their history or culture makes no more sense than claiming to honor some other institution by reference to a single historic characteristic or practice. If schools in your district engage make use of Native American nicknames, logos, or mascots, I hope you will make serious efforts to end the usage. If schools in your district engage in interscholastic activities with schools that make use of such imagery, I hope you can be a voice of probity in working with the tribes to end a practice that diminishes all of our people.

Sincerely yours,

Michael W. Allen, Sr.
Executive Director

Encl: GLITC Resolution