



OREGON DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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SB 215: Mascots
Senate Education & Workforce Development Committee
Jan McComb
April 3, 2013

Chair Hass & Members of the Committee,

Some statements were made at the first hearing of SB 215 that should be clarified.

1. The State Board prohibited artwork or historical artifacts pertaining to Native American cultures from schools.

The board's administratively rule (included in my written testimony) expressly permits such items: "Nothing in this rule shall be construed to prohibit a public school from displaying art work, historical exhibits or other cultural educational exhibits or conducting educational programs related to Native Americans as long as the display or program is not associated with a Native American mascot."

2. The State Board did not use the Government-to-Government process to vet the idea of a mascot ban.

The 2006 work group invited the Oregon Indian Youth Association, Oregon Indian Education Association, State-Tribal Government-to-Government Education Cluster, Confederated Tribes of Oregon – Government-to-Government Cultural Cluster, Oregon Indian Education Council, Oregon Indian Coalition on Post-Secondary Education, and the Commission on Indian Services, among others. My understanding is that this topic was raised at many Government-to-Government meetings at least informally. Then-chair Brenda Frank recalls that the issue was stalled in the Tribal Education Committees (below the Tribal Council). Both the Superintendent and the Board were hoping for a unified response from the tribes. In 2007, Supt. Castillo issued a letter to the nine federally-recognized tribes and affected school districts asking for input; four of the nine tribes responded, two for the ban, and two against. By 2011, there was still no consensus among the tribes and the board decided to bring the topic back for discussion. It is also my understanding that Supt. Castillo reached out to the tribes via phone before the board took up the matter, but I do not know the substance of those conversations.

3. What about the Siletz Charter School? Were their requests ignored?

This issue gave the board and our legal consultant great pause, and different options were discussed to try to accommodate the tribe. However, in the end, the board decided that the issue was a civil rights issue and a matter of discrimination and could not be allowed in a school funded with public dollars.

4. The State Board of Education chose not to hire a full-time Indian Education Specialist.

ODE staffing decisions have been left to the Superintendent or Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction. ODE is seeking to fund this position this session.