

#NotYourMascot: Be an Ally in Creating Meaningful Change in Your School Culture and Curriculum.

Slide 2

So, you may have noticed that using Native American representations as mascots has been in the news even more than normal this year. After many years of public pressure, the Washington Football team has finally dropped their offensive name - but only when corporate sponsors objected. The Cleveland baseball team is dropping Chief Wahoo, and in Canada this summer, the CFL team I grew up with, the Edmonton Eskimos, have become EE until they find a suitable replacement. These are positive changes after years of protest and many schools are also making the switch.

<https://www.aspeninstitute.org/blog-posts/why-the-washington-redskins-are-not-your-mascot/>

<https://www.indianz.com/News/2020/08/19/norma-dunning-may-my-grandchildren-never.asp>

Slide 3

Here is a breakdown of what we'll talk about today. Our discussion is not JUST about mascots but also how you can be an active Indigenous ally for your school through

- 1) Physical Representation and
 - 2) Curricular Representation
- And resources to help you

Slide 4

But let's start with Physical Representation. Many schools still have Native American mascots and yes, this matters. It has its roots in the forced Indian Boarding Schools, known as Residential schools in Canada. It reduces a living people to stereotypes and tokens and has been demonstrated to mentally harm Indigenous students in these communities.

What do you do if this is present in your school or community? In 2005, the NCAA told teams with Native American mascots to change them or risk not being allowed in tournaments. They did grant waivers to teams who reached out to and worked with local tribes and got their approval, which is why mascots like Florida State University Seminoles.

Oregon, where I live, passed a mandate in 2016 that banned Native American mascots for public schools but they did provide an exception for those “that enter into written agreements with an Oregon federally recognized Native American Tribe and integrate more tribal history into the curriculum.”

Washington State on the other hand, asked for voluntary compliance and still needed pressure from local people. When Kalama High School hired a new Principal and Superintendent on 2018, they found decades of requests for a change in Charlie Chinook - a logo you see here which originally held a scalp in his hand - from the Chinook Tribe. A Chinook artist was hired to create a new logo and the change was made.

So if your school has a mascot or name you are concerned about, an important step you can take is talking to and working with the local tribe for changes.

<https://www.changethemascot.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/ChangeTheMascotFactSheet2016.pdf>

<https://www.opb.org/article/2020/09/18/new-momentum-to-retire-native-themed-mascots-at-washington-state-schools/>

<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=16516865>

<https://www.oregon.gov/ode/about-us/stateboard/Documents/January%202016%20Board%20Documents/5.a-native-american-mascots-as-amended--adopted-by-board.pdf>

https://tdn.com/news/local/kalama-high-chinook-mascot-gets-a-new-look/article_95f82c28-257e-5bfe-8205-61fd796f843d.html

Slide 5

But physical representation in school goes beyond mascots. I want to share with you the story of Ballenas High School in SD69 on Vancouver Island, BC, Canada. Heather Deering, a teacher at the school, shared this story with my teacher group at our 2019 Summer Institute. In light of the Canadian National Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action - which we'll talk more about soon - the school and school districts looked at their environment and committed to changing their school from the outside in.

Slide 6

They changed their logo by working with a local Native artist.

Slide 7

They adapted these changes to their sports uniforms.

Slide 8

They added an Indigenous pictorial timeline - and all of this was of course in consult with their local nation.

Slide 9

They added welcoming/farewell paddles at the door and many schools are adding signage in local Indigenous languages. The local school district adopted a Reconciliation Framework that they specified can only “be fully appreciated by first understanding and recognizing the relationship between the land, language and culture.” and making sure it is present in the school physically.

<https://www.ladysmithchronicle.com/news/nanaimo-ladysmith-school-district-adopts-reconciliation-policy/>

Slide 10

Another way many schools are acknowledging the importance of Indigenous history is through territory or land acknowledgements. Colleges and institutions in the US are starting to say land acknowledgements at public events but Toronto DSB, the biggest school district in North America, the students recite their land acknowledgement every morning after singing the national anthem.

<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/Indigenous-Education/Resources/Land-Acknowledgement>

If you don't where to find or start finding your local tribal lands, you can use the tool: Nativeland.ca which is showing here on the map and they also have an excellent guide to territory acknowledgements on their site that I highly recommend.

Slide 11

But all of this physical representation can appear to be performative, so it definitely needs to be backed up in your curriculum.

Curricular Representation

NCSS put out a position paper in 2018 that powerfully affirms the need to to improve your curriculum:

They reference studies and examples that quote “demonstrate how social studies education is complicit in the erasure of Indigenous peoples. Further, these narrow Eurocentric narratives presented in American textbooks, state standards, and teacher resources have a real impact on the way people understand and interact with Indigenous Peoples”

If you are encountering any resistance in making changes to your Indigenous curriculum or resources at your school, I would highly recommend this position paper to back up your arguments.

https://www.socialstudies.org/system/files/publications/articles/se_8203167_0.pdf

Slide 12

Several states also have mandates for every school to meaningfully and thoroughly include Indigenous curriculum:

Washington has Since Time Immemorial mandate which was developed with all Federally Recognized tribes in WA(website)

Oregon SB 13 mandates -----

Montana and Wisconsin all also have some form of these curriculum

https://www.ncai.org/policy-research-center/research-data/prc-publications/NCAI-Becoming_Visible_Report-Digital_FINAL_10_2019.pdf

<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/articles/2019-11-29/states-move-to-add-native-american-history-to-education-curriculum>

https://www.ncai.org/policy-research-center/research-data/prc-publications/NCAI-Becoming_Visible_Report-Digital_FINAL_10_2019.pdf

<https://www.postcrescent.com/in-depth/news/2020/01/30/wisconsin-native-american-history-culture-education-teaching-act-31-students/4241102002/>

<https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/equity/NativeAmericanEducation/Pages/Senate-Bill-13-Tribal-HistoryShared-History.aspx>

<https://www.postcrescent.com/in-depth/news/2020/01/30/wisconsin-native-american-history-culture-education-teaching-act-31-students/4241102002/>

I'm linking to all these mandates and curriculum for you to look at where you teach.

But even with these mandates, many teachers are still uncertain how best to implement them - and of course many states have none at all.

Slide 13

What does it take to change? In Canada, real change began happening when the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was formed in 2007 and continued through 2015. The main goal of the "The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) provided those directly or indirectly affected by the legacy of the [Indian Residential Schools](#) system with an opportunity to share their stories and experiences." But it led to 94 specific Calls to Action, in Law, Health, Language

and Education, among other things. And these Calls to Action helped all levels of Government prioritize training and fund change in schools and curriculum.

<https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1450124405592/1529106060525>

http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/memos/nov2017/responding_trc_calls_en.pdf

Slide 14

In British Columbia, you can find some of the strongest education and curriculum that came out of these changes because of organizations like FNEESC - First Nation Education Steering Committee - who create and help implement curriculum in all subjects - Science, Math, Literature with Indigenous Way of Knowing at the Center. All is available for free on their website, I recommend checking them out. School Districts also have Indigenous Coordinators with funding and training available to help teachers.

<http://www.fnesc.ca/>

Slide 15

It may take some time to get to those levels nationally or in every state here in the US without our own version of the TRC. But an easy step you can take to be an ally in your own classroom and school is making sure you have Own Voices and authentic Indigenous texts.

With the calls to action and prioritized funding, there has been an explosion of high-quality Indigenous children's literature and texts.

FNEESC has resources, the online bookstore Strong Nations, even if you don't order from them, you can look up who wrote a text, what tribe, etc. I will link to some great booklists and sites to help you find authentic Indigenous texts in the handout. And look local! The Indigenous experience is not a pan-Indigenous one - find local tribal resources specific to the land you teach on. In other words, reading one Navajo tale when you are teaching on Cree Territory is simply not enough.

<https://www.strongnations.com/>

<https://ncte.org/blog/2018/11/can-better-rethinking-native-stories-classrooms/>

Slide 16

To sum up, you can be an ally in your school, state and country - but it has to start with your classroom.

I'll leave it now for questions but I did want to say, I send out Quarterly newsletters with resources, books, podcasts, films etc to help in your classroom so if you're interested in receiving it, just pop your email in the chat or I have a link to sign-up here:

Thank you so much, I'll begin with the questions.