

NIEA Resolution 09-05: Elimination of Race-Based Indian Logos, Mascots, and Names

WHEREAS, the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) was established in 1970 for the purpose of advocating, planning, and promoting the unique and special educational needs of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; and

WHEREAS, NIEA as the largest national Indian organization of American Indians, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian educators, administrators, parents, and students in the United States, provides a forum to discuss and act upon issues affecting the education of Indian and Native people; and

WHEREAS, through its unique relationship with Indian nations and tribes, the federal government has established programs and resources to meet the educational needs of American Indians, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiians, residing on and off their reserved or non-reserved homelands; and

WHEREAS, self-representational use of American Indian logos, mascots and names remains a cherished tradition in many American Indian communities; and

WHEREAS, NIEA has advocated for the elimination of Indian logos, mascots and names in educational settings by providing workshops, presentation of professional papers, adopting resolutions, providing legal briefs, and forums organizing networks of Indian educators as advocates; and

WHEREAS, years of advocacy on this issue has resulted in the elimination of Indian logo, mascot, and name symbolism from hundreds of educational facilities across the nation; and

WHEREAS, educational institutions choosing to use race-based Indian logos, mascots, and names harm children, exposing graduating class after graduating class to these stereotypes, and indoctrinating them with the idea that it is acceptable to stereotype an entire race of people; and

WHEREAS, institutions choosing to retain such imagery negatively impact students, faculty, and parents from other schools by exposing them to race-based imagery in interscholastic competitions; and

WHEREAS, the limited and sparse representations of American Indians in media and popular culture comprise a significant portion of what children learn about American Indian people and thereby impact the identity formation of Native students while reinforcing stereotypes about American Indian cultures, past and present; and

WHEREAS, there is a growing base of support calling for the elimination of Indian logos, mascots and names as evidenced by endorsements from professional organizations, for example the American Psychological Association; educational advocacy organizations, such as the National Education Association; human rights organizations, like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; and sports regulatory agencies, i.e. the National Collegiate Athletic Association; and

WHEREAS, research conducted by Stephanie A. Fryberg finds:

- Exposure to race-based Indian stereotypes harms American Indian Students,
- Attractive stereotypes cause as much harm as cartoon caricatures,
- American Indian students who approve the use of Indian logos, mascots and names experience more harm than do American Indian students who oppose the use of such imagery,
- Euro-Americans experience a boost to self-esteem when exposed to the same race-based Indian stereotypes; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Fryberg's research has been expanded upon and replicated in the social psychological arena and the research base has grown in other academic fields; and

WHEREAS, educational institutions should not be the vehicles of institutionalized racism.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the National Indian Education Association calls for the immediate elimination of race-based Indian logos, mascots, and names from educational institutions throughout the Nation;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the National Indian Education Association supports the creation and dissemination of resources and research, and commits its members to assist educational institutions in the elimination of these stereotypes.