



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nashoba Regional School Committee Votes to Replace High School Native American Team Names, School Symbols

Bolton, Mass. (July 1, 2020) – The Nashoba Regional School Committee, at its July 1, 2020 meeting, has voted unanimously to replace the “Chieftains” team name and any related symbols and iconography used by Nashoba Regional High School (NRHS) athletic teams and the school more broadly, effective January 1, 2021. A new team name will be developed by a committee established by Superintendent Brooke Clenchy.

The move to replace the NRHS moniker comes after the School Committee passed a [resolution](#) at its June 17, 2020 meeting mandating that the district eradicate racist practices and guarantees that diversity, equity and inclusion is embedded and practiced for students, families, faculty and staff.

“Today’s vote to retire the Nashoba Regional High School team name was long overdue and better aligns us with the district’s core values,” said Kathy Codianne, Nashoba Regional School Committee Chair. “As we seek ways to right the wrongs that our society has inflicted on people of color, we could not look past the high school teams’ name and related iconography and the calls from our students, community and the Nipmuc Nation to retire symbols that are offensive to Native American students, families and community members. This action is not symbolic, but will be a substantive move to ensure that all students feel safe and appreciated in our schools.”

The use of Native American culture and symbols as mascots and team names has long been viewed as offensive, and many organizations including the American Psychological Association, the National Congress of American Indians, and The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, have noted the [detrimental impact on all students](#) and the general public. On multiple occasions, the Nipmuc Nation Tribal Council, which represents the Native Americans that have called the Nashoba Valley their home, has voiced its opposition to Native American mascots and has called them demeaning.

The process to update NRHS branding and select a new team name will begin this summer, and the implementation of the new team name will coincide with the 60th anniversary of the completion of the NRHS building in 1961. The complete branding update that will replace signage and other collateral material may take up to one year.

“We’re looking forward to an incredible opportunity to engage our students and the broader District community in what will be an inclusive and exciting process to select a new team name,” said Elaine Sanfilippo, School Committee Vice Chair. “We recognize the passion for the Chieftain name that many people have demonstrated through emails, calls, and discussions, and we hope that it can be channeled into this opportunity to create a new tradition that will make all our students and the entire community proud.

Mike Horesh – Bolton Representative
Amy Cohen – Bolton Representative
Brett Collins – Lancaster Representative
Leah Vivirito – Stow Representative
Rich Eckel – Stow Representative

Dr. Mary McCarthy – Bolton Representative
Joseph Gleason – Lancaster Representative
Sharon Poch – Lancaster Representative
Stephen Rubinstein – Stow Representative