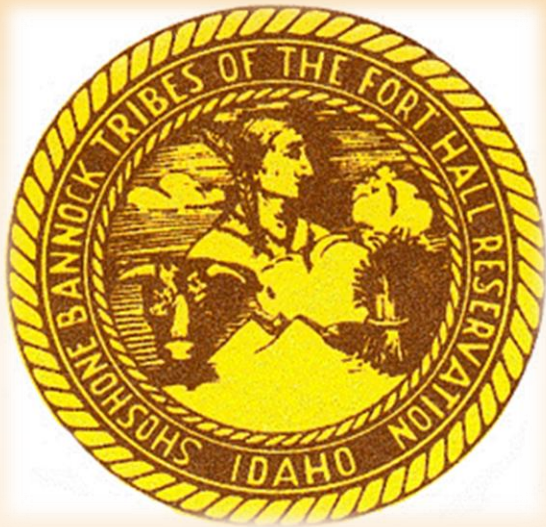


Idaho High School Mascots and American Indians



*Presented by Shoshone-Bannock Tribes
Randy'L Teton & Yvette Tuell*

Council on Indian Affairs
October 3, 2019
Boise, Idaho



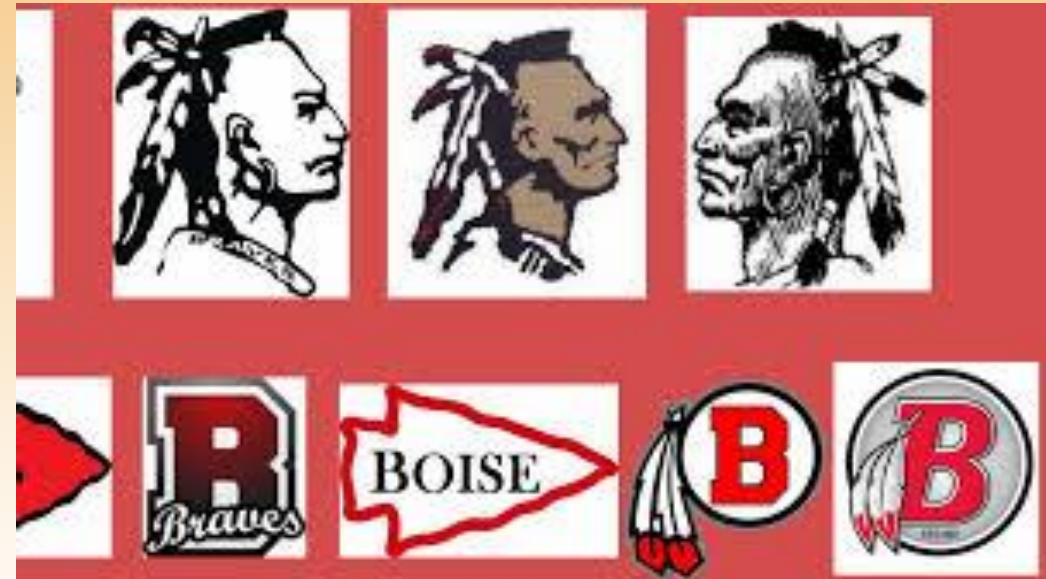
Mascots in Idaho



Two local schools engage in internal debates on changing mascot names
Teton High School “Redskins” in Driggs, Idaho



Boise High School “Braves” in Boise, Idaho



Teton School District

2013 effort to change mascot name

Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and Nez Perce Tribes offered letter of support to Teton to change name

- NOT SUCCESSFUL

2019 – Student initiated change in mascot

- Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and Nez Perce Tribes offered letter of support to Teton to change name
- Native American Guardian Association participate in community & social media debates
- SBT Position Paper: to IIEC, ISBE, Governor's Office
- Tribal leadership, staff and members attend various school board meetings in Driggs, Idaho
- School Board voted 4-1 to retire



Native American Guardian Association

NAGA Mission Statement



Our mission is to Preserve and Honor Native American Indian Pride and Dignity... To **Aggressively** Network with Native American and U.S. Historians to Educate, Enlighten, Support and Honor those With an Interest or Investment in Reviving the **Declining** Cultural Value of Native Americans and their Cherished National Contributions.

We Will Engage Those Who Would Actively Impugn, Degrade or Remove These Valuable American Keepsakes from the Public's View.



Native American Guardian Association

- Supported Teton's efforts to RETAIN the "Redskins" name
- Inaccurate statements against local tribes
- Lead contact claimed to be American Indian, but instead lied about tribal membership
- Incited Teton Community against local American Indian Tribes
- Claimed that Indian Mascot names are necessary to prevent 'Indians' from becoming "invisible in "the future"
- Fort Hall Business Council sent an official letter to NAGA stating:

Our experiences at Teton High School with your representatives in Driggs, Idaho and with Boise High School in Boise Idaho, have only added to confusion, misleading and inaccurate interpretations of local tribal history, government and cultural beliefs. Please refrain from conducting any further advocacy work in Idaho on Native American themed mascots, names and images.

Boise High School



Timeline

2019 – internal school and community debates

- BHS Principal attended 2019 Idaho Indian Education Summit – learned about SBT position paper;
- SBT reached out to Boise High school principal, provided a Tribal letter and position paper to Boise High school Board.
- SBT staff meetings with BHS principal and staff;
- Boise School Board unanimous decision to change the name from “Braves” to “To Be Brave”
- Tribes thank the Boise High school staff and school board for the fast process of changing the mascot! 😊

Aftermath...

- July to September 2019- Teton Valley community divided
- Filed civil rights grievance against School Board, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and Randy'L Teton
- Dismissal of Grievance
- September 2019- School Board sets mascot policy, voted 3-2



Mascots, names and imagery



Shoshone-Bannock Tribes Position Statement opposing the use of racial misappropriation of terms referring to Native Americans as a part of any school mascots, names or images.

“Indians” “Redskins” “Braves” “Savages” “Warriors” versus Sho-Ban High Chiefs

Inaccurate depictions of tribes, tribal history, interactions with whites and non-Indians

- Frontier mentality – overcoming wilderness
- Ignores the removal and displacement of Indians

Non-Indian rationale of public schools and communities using mascot names is “honoring” American Indians

- Non-Indian ideology created this system of “honoring” without consideration or input of local tribes
- SBT has not asked for these names
 - Pocatello High School

Impacts to our Tribal People



Direct impacts to Tribal membership

- School labels and images teach harmful attitudes and perceptions about Indians
- Past, current and future misperceptions
- Social media reinforces the lack of understanding
 - “Keyboard warriors”

Unauthorized or inappropriate use of Tribal sacred or religious items to promote school institutions, such as:

- Head dress/war bonnets

Tribal Government concerns



National debate` of bullying and harassment to American Indian students in public schools.

The Shoshone-Bannock Tribe is responsible for health, welfare and safety of our tribal members -

- Physical threats include pulling our young men with long hair
- Verbal threats – girls and women name calling “Squaw”
- High school athletes, games, away games - “go back to the reservation”

Open communication, education, improved community race relations:

- Misconceptions of our views
- Shared regard for our regional and local communities
- Emphasize safe communities in the school system

Mascots, names and imagery

Shoshone-Bannock Tribal Government: Duty to protect health, welfare, safety of membership

Away from School/Athletics
Physical & Verbal threats

Community/Race relations

*Away from
School/Athletics
Verbal taunting*

School District
Name/mascot/image:
school identity

EDUCATION is KEY



Helpful suggestions:

- More education to high schools on comparative governments, including tribal governments
- Diversity training to students, high school faculty and administrators
- Appreciate the diversity of Idaho's citizenry – cultures, tribes, communities
- State school system – local school control with limited historical tribal input
- Ongoing impacts of Indian removal and displacement from aboriginal lands
- Public schools located within aboriginal lands now “honor” those displaced Indians, with names, mascots, images

Paradigm Shift



Mascots, names and imagery

- Create a respectful paradigm in Idaho public schools
- Encourage honest and open discourse based on accurate history from all Idaho historical players
- Discourage systemic bullying in Idaho public schools

Thank you

Oose (thank you)

We appreciate this time to share with you this important topic and hope you can help us create positive changes for our future generations.

