**The Enduring Legacy of Colonialism: Indian Mascots**

* By Norrine Smokey-Smith
* Grade: High School
* Duration: Five class periods
* Subject: History/Civics

**CURRICULUM DESIGNER’S LETTER AND STORY**

I was born at the beginning of the Civil Rights movement in a small rural community in Carson Valley, Nevada. Being raised in a small, close-knit tribal community I grew up with a strong cultural connection to my Washoe people. I was secure in my identity and proud to be a Washoe tribal member.

Until either junior high or high school all tribal kids attended the local public school in town about five miles away where we were the only students of color with the exception of a couple of Chinese and Japanese American kids. As teenagers a small percentage of Washoe kids chose to attend Stewart Indian School approximately fifteen miles north of our tribal colony. For nearly a century Native youth from the western part of the U.S. attended Stewart, a government boarding school that operated from 1890 to 1980. Stewart was the “Home of the Braves” and their logo was an Indian chief in a feathered headdress.

While the rest of my seven siblings chose to continue attending public school, my three elder brothers attended Stewart. There was great camaraderie among the Native students at Stewart who represented tribes as far north as Montana and the Dakotas and as far south as Arizona and New Mexico. My brothers were football players, and I would often attend their games with my parents.

When my best friend started attending Stewart, I also attended many basketball and football games the Braves played. I was in high school at the time and became more aware of the discrimination the Native students faced particularly when the Stewart teams played away games. I recall seeing banners reading “Kill the Indians” and “Scalp the Braves” on gym walls. The racism was palpable. I could feel the loathing, the hate, the bigotry from non-Native students and their communities when the Stewart Braves came to play. Although I felt fortunate I didn’t experience this level of racism at my own high school, it hurt deeply that I and especially the Stewart Native students had to tolerate this injustice incessantly. We were viewed as inferior, less than, unworthy. While we reveled in the Braves’ victories, the disdain by which we were treated lingers to this day.

I have spent my career as an educator advocating for equity for Native students. I know first-hand how devastating stereotypes and racist attitudes and actions can be to Native youth and how they contribute to the struggles Native people continue to endure to this day. Indian mascots perpetuate negative stereotypes in the American psyche, enabling discrimination, inequity, and continued injustices towards Native Americans. It is an archaic vestige of the legacy of colonization in the Americas that is akin to having a knee on our necks. Indian mascots have no place in the 21st century.

This curriculum will demonstrate how challenging it is to purge Indian mascots from our schools. It is my hope, however, that with knowledge gained from these lessons today’s students will take informed action to rid schools of these menacing symbols once and for all.

**CURRICULUM OVERVIEW**

Section 1. OVERVIEW

Formal review by the Oregon Department of Education of the issues surrounding the use of Indian mascots, names, and stereotypic images in Oregon public schools began in 2012. On May 17, 2012, the State Board of Education’s resolution stated it “is committed to the creation of an Oregon Public Education System that is equitable for all students, where no student is subjected to unlawful discrimination and where no student experiences a hostile educational environment.” This ruling endorsed the elimination of Native American mascots in Oregon’s public schools and gave a deadline for schools to comply or they would lose state funding. The following year, the Oregon State Legislature approved a bill to overturn the ban which was vetoed by the Governor. In 2013, in coordination with the Governor and Oregon tribes, the Oregon State Legislature passed another bill to allow schools with Indian mascots to work with the closest tribe in their area to develop a mutually beneficial agreement that would allow the continued use of an Indian mascot name and/or logo. Then in 2014 the State Board of Education adopted the Native American/Alaska Native Education State Plan which requires every Oregon school district to implement accurate, culturally embedded Native American/Alaska Native curriculum in Oregon schools. Three years later, Senate Bill 13, now known as Tribal History/Shared History was passed, requiring the teaching of accurate Native history and contemporary culture. Funds were provided to all nine Oregon tribes to also develop curriculum about their individual tribal history and culture. After five years of State legislation, Indian mascots remain in nearly all the Oregon schools the ban focused on.

It is important to note that Oregon was the first state in the U.S. to pass a ban on the use of Indian mascots in its public schools. In 2019, Maine instituted a ban on Indian mascots, and in 2020 the state of Illinois introduced a bill to ban Indian mascots as well.

The Enduring Legacy of Colonialism: Indian Mascots curriculum unit will explore the pros and cons of the Indian mascot controversy by examining what transpired in Oregon and will challenge students to confront their own biases while gaining understanding of the impact of attempted systematic destruction of the Indigenous people of the Americas. Students will come to their own conclusions whether or not the use of Indian mascots is an injustice to Native American; they will also explore ways to promote social justice as well as to confront social injustices.

Section 2. TERMINOLOGY USED

The terms “Indian”, “American Indian”, and “Native American”, “Native people”, and “Indigenous people” will be used interchangeably throughout this curriculum unit. Both Indian and American Indian are terms used in the Constitution of the United States, in treaties, and other federal documents for the past four centuries. And both terms are used to identify Native people as a collective by national organizations such as the National Indian Education Association, the National Congress of American Indians, the Association of American Indian Physicians, the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, etc. Older generations of Native people may refer to their race as either Indians or American Indians. Younger generations commonly identify their race as Native Americans, Natives or Indigenous. It is a personal choice. However, as individuals Natives identify themselves by the tribe(s) they are affiliated with. It is important to note that the Indigenous peoples of Alaska as a collective do not refer to themselves as Native American but rather as Alaska Natives. Non-Natives can be comfortable using the term Native American or Indigenous with Native individuals or when referring to the collective. Native American remains the politically correct term.

Section 3. LEGACY OF COLONIALISM

Indian mascots are a legacy of colonialism in America. The destruction of traditional tribal lifeways by European colonizers had a devastating effect on the Indigenous people of the Americas. For over two centuries Native Americans fought to resist all that was imposed upon them by these foreigners. Despite tremendous loss of life, homelands, culture and language, tribes continued to adapt and persist. Despite deliberate efforts by the non-Native colonizers and their government to eradicate the “Indian problem” through war, diseases, starvation, alcohol, religion, broken treaties, boarding schools, reservations, allotments, relocation, termination, and other unjust laws, Native Americans endured. In 1880, Congress established a series of offenses only Indians could commit. These “civilization regulations” outlawed certain cultural practices and ceremonies such as the Sun Dance; Indians were not allowed to speak their tribal languages, and they could not leave the reservation with permission. These regulations were in place until 1936 and were vigorously enforced.

Section 4. THE GENESIS OF INDIAN MASCOTS IN SPORTS

Indian mascots for sports teams emerged in the early 1900’s. The Boston Braves baseball team adopted their team name in 1912, and the Cleveland Indians took their team name in 1915. Numerous schools and colleges nationwide began assuming Indian-related team names in the 1920’s and 1930’s. While Native Americans were forbidden to perform traditional ceremonies or dances, pretend Indian mascots pranced along sidelines mocking Native rituals. Powerful forces were at work to deny Native Americans agency over their own identities. Native Americans were in no position to object. Kevin Gover (Pawnee), Director of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian, argues that “American Indian team names simply did not and could not connote respect in the age when they emerged.” Gover further asserts that during this time the majority culture “admired the idealized noble savage even as it despised what it saw as the bloody-minded ignoble one.”

Section 5. ATTEMPTED CULTURAL GENOCIDE

At the time that sports teams began adopting Indian names and images as mascots, other images about the “vanishing red man” were appearing. As a result of numerous federal assimilation policies that amounted to cultural genocide of indigenous people in this country, non-Natives were of the mindset that the end for Native Americans was imminent. The indigenous population in what is now the United States of America that was estimated between 7 to 10 million before Columbus had been reduced to roughly a quarter of a million by the beginning of the 20th century. During this era imaginary Indians felt more real to most Americans than actual Indians did. A number of companies adopted imaginary Indians to sell their products such as Land O’Lakes butter with the kneeling Indian maiden and Mutual of Omaha using an Indian head logo similar to the profile on the penny of the late 1800’s.

A year after Franklin Roosevelt’s “Indian New Deal” ended the “Civilization Regulations” in 1932, the owner of the Boston Braves NFL team, George Preston Marshall, renamed his team “Redskins” and relocated them to Washington, DC in 1937. Redskins is defined in the dictionary as a racial slur. It is rooted in the U.S. government’s bounty offerings in the 1800’s for the bloody scalps of Native Americans. The term was used interchangeably with the word “savage’, both a misleading and denigrating image of America’s indigenous people. In 1933 Marshall, a reputed segregationist and racist, was also a leader among NFL owners to impose a 13-year league ban on African Americans playing in the NFL. He refused to integrate his Washington NFL team for 30 years until he was forced to do so.

In the early 1970’s Walter “Blackie” Wetzel, a Blackfeet tribal Chairman and former President of NCAI, urged the Washington football team to replace their ”R” logo with the head of an Indian chief. Wetzel recommended using the profile of Blackfeet Chief “Two Guns” White Calf who was also the model for the U.S. Indian head nickel minted in 1913. A statement on the NCAI website states that while Walter Wetzell served as their President from 1960-1964, his reported actions with the Washington NFL team occurred years later and “were not taken on behalf of NCAI’s members”.

Section 6. CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

Indian mascots are a prime example of cultural appropriation. These “imaginary Indians” are being used as a symbol of national identity. Kevin Gover, former director of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian, believes that it conveys the idea that since non-Natives are the colonizers and dominate American society they can do anything with Native American imagery and their identity that they choose to. He states that dominant American society is “honoring their own notion of heritage, their own non-Indian version of history”. To most Native Americans there is no honor in Indian mascots as non-Natives do not honor the Native American truth—the true history that includes many acts of attempted genocide, betrayal and broken treaties as well as the generational trauma and ongoing racism Native Americans experience to this day.

Section 7. RESILIENCE

The Indigenous people of this country are still here in the 21st century. Their resilience is a testament to the strength of spirit and cultural connection that today’s generations continue to retain. Indian mascots do not honor their ancestors nor their struggle against ongoing racist federal policies. There are currently 574 federally-recognized tribes in the U.S. The number will increase as current unrecognized tribes are approved for federal recognition which gives them tribal sovereignty, affords them an opportunity to petition for or purchase a land base, and makes them eligible for health, education, and welfare support for their tribal members from the federal government.

Section 8. TRIBAL RESPONSE TO THE INDIAN MASCOT ISSUE

While a very small fraction of the federally-recognized tribes in the U.S. do not oppose the use of Indian mascots in schools or colleges, the National Congress of Americans (NCAI) has expressed opposition beginning in 1968 during the civil rights era. NCAI is the oldest, largest, and most representative Native advocacy organization in the nation representing over 1500 national Native organizations and advocates. In 1968 NCAI established a ban on Native imagery, names, mascots, terms, redface, arrows, feathers, and appropriation of Native culture in sports. Their stance reflects a consensus among most Native Americans that racist and derogatory Indian mascots at any level promotes harm and intolerance which have real and harmful consequences for Native people.

Section 9. ETHNIC STEREOTYPING

Negative racial stereotypes misrepresent America’s Indigenous people. The majority of Indian sports mascots typically are represented by an Indian chief in a feathered headdress which is representative only of Plains tribes and several others in the Pacific Northwest and Great Basin areas. Yet that enduring stereotypical image of Native peoples is misleading and minimizes the rich diversity among tribal bands and nations. The other typical Indian mascot image is a warlike caricature that is both demeaning and dehumanizing. The use of Indian mascots by non-Native sports teams is a form of ethnic stereotyping; it promotes misunderstanding and prejudice and contributes to other problems Native people face today. Negative stereotypes contribute not only to a disregard for Native Americans, but it incites violence and alarmingly high rates of hate crimes against them. Stereotypes exert power and control by the oppressor and maintain as well as justify the status quo.

Section 10. EFFECTS OF INDIAN MASCOTS ON NATIVE YOUTH

NACI cites studies that have found Indian team names and mascots create an unwelcome and even hostile learning environment for Native students. Indian mascots bolster the development of cultural biases and prejudices and directly contribute to lower self-esteem and mental health for Native youth. In addition to suffering poverty and extreme health disparities, Native youth between the ages of 15-24 have a suicide rate 2.5 times higher than the national average and is the second leading cause of death for their age group.

Section 11. CULTURAL DIVERSITY & SOVEREIGNTY

It is critical to understand that there is tremendous cultural diversity among Native American tribes and nations. While a tribe/nation has the sovereign power to speak for and make decisions on behalf of their tribal people, that does not mean all tribal members agree. And it is also important to know that over 50% of Native people live away from their tribal reservations or communities; therefore, the difference in opinions about Indian sports mascots varies based upon their individual experiences and level of exposure to the issues surrounding the Indian mascot controversy.

Five tribes have specifically given permission for their tribal names to be used by college teams. Tribes that made agreements are the Seminole with Florida State University (where the infamous “tomahawk chop” began), the Choctaw with Mississippi College, the Chippewas with Central Michigan University, the Utes with the University of Utah, and the Catawba with Catawba College in North Carolina. Partnerships with colleges can have long-term benefits for tribes. For tribes with casinos there is an economic benefit to encourage locals to frequent their business. Other benefits include the opportunity for cultural sharing, celebrating that tribe’s culture on campus, and for teaching accurate Indian history on campus. Agreements may also require colleges to teach incoming students about their tribe, offer summer programs to encourage tribal you to pursue their education, and even provide university scholarships.

Section 12. THE INDIAN MASCOT ISSUE IN OREGON

In 2006 Che Butler, a Taft High School student in Lincoln City, gave testimony at the Oregon Indian Education Association’s (OIEA) annual conference to end Indian mascots in Oregon high schools. He and his family had witnessed a half-time show at Molalla High where a bare-chested Indian mascot with a target painted on his skin was whooping and hopping around the basketball court. His family was embarrassed and traumatized by the spectacle. Che’s passion to right this wrong was deeply felt by Native educators in attendance. In April 2006 OIEA adopted a resolution to ban the use of Indian mascots for sports events which supported action already taken by the National Congress of American Indians. In December 2006 Che and his sister, Luhui Whitebear, both Siletz tribal members, testified before the State Board of Education. Che presented arguments in support of the OIEA resolution and described incidents he found disturbing concerning schools’ use of Indian mascots. The greater amount of disrespect often comes more from competing teams. Che pointed out that the only race of living people used as mascots in sports are Native Americans.

Superintendent Susan Castillo then formed an advisory committee that included Superintendents of schools with Indian mascots and representatives from the Oregon Civil Rights Commission, Oregon Schools Activities Association, OIEA, and individuals representing other Native American groups. In 2007 the advisory committee recommended that public schools eliminate Indian mascots and logos, educate all students about the negative effects of stereotyping Native Americans, and to use culturally accurate education materials and curriculum. In addition to reviewing all the issues outlined in the extensive Report to the State Board of Education (May 8, 2012), the Board heard extensive public testimony on both sides of the issue and voted to prohibit Oregon public schools from using Native American mascots (OAR 581-021-0047).

There was considerable backlash from predominantly non-Native community members of the schools with Indian mascots who believe their team names and/or logos honor Native people. They argued this long standing tradition brings pride to all its students and the community. Opponents of the ban also cited the substantial expense it would cost schools to change their team logo and/or name on uniforms, gym floors, building walls, etc. when school budgets were already tight. This prompted Senator Jeff Kruse to introduce Senate Bill 215 to reverse the ban in 2013 which was vetoed by Governor John Kitzhaber who upheld the decision of the State Board of Education. Then in 2014, Senator Kruse introduced Senate Bill 1509 which was passed by the Oregon Legislature. SB 1509 was a negotiated compromise between the Governor and proponents of the legislation who argued that tribes should have a more active role in the decision of whether a public school should be allowed to use a Native American mascot. SB 1509 did not overturn the existing State Board rule; however, it allows districts to enter into an agreement with an Oregon tribe to use an approved mascot that is associated with or significant to that particular tribe. The agreement must be approved by the State Board. SB 1509 also directs the State Board to adopt rules regarding the agreement and the approval process as well as to consult with Oregon tribes as part of the approval process.

Section 13. TRIBAL HISTORY/SHARED HISTORY CURRICULUM

In 2014 while Oregon legislators were working on Senate Bill 215 to reverse the ban on Indian mascots in Oregon, the State Board of Education adopted the Native American/Alaska Native Education State Plan. This Plan requires every Oregon school district to implement accurate, culturally embedded Native American/Alaska Native curriculum in Oregon schools. Since Native people lived in this state since time immemorial, teaching Oregon history should include the voice of Oregon’s tribal people both past and present. The Oregon Department of Education states that teaching the history of Oregon’s first people offers the “critical opportunity to fully leverage the strengths, assets, and contributions our Native American students bring to their communities. The lack of accurate and complete curricula may contribute to the persistent achievement and opportunity gaps between Native American and other students.”

In 2017 the Oregon legislature passed Senate Bill 13 now known as Tribal History/Shared History. The law directed the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to create a K-12 Native American curriculum for inclusion in all Oregon public schools. It also required ODE to provide professional development to educators and to provide funds to the nine Oregon tribes to create individual place-based curriculum. This plan called for the inclusion of both historically accurate information as well as current issues in contemporary Native life. This curriculum initiative supports ODE’s work towards equity for all students. ODE partnered with Oregon tribes and developed the Essential Understandings of Native Americans in Oregon. This curriculum addresses the Native American experience in Oregon, tribal history, sovereignty, culture, treaty rights, government, socioeconomic experiences, and current events. Teachers can choose two different subject areas to implement two lesson plans per school year to integrate into existing curriculum. A total of 45 lessons in five subject areas (English/Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Health/PE) for Grades 4, 8 and 10 that teachers may choose from is being developed by Education Northwest.

Section 14. SOCIAL JUSTICE

The idea of social justice is that everyone should have equal access to the resources and opportunities that are required to meet basic needs and to develop fully. It is justice in terms of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society. Social justice promotes fairness and equity across many aspects of society and is important to the safety and security of individuals and communities.

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950’s and 1960’s was a struggle for social justice for Black Americans to gain equal rights in the U.S. Through non-violent protests led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. American citizens actively fought for change for 14 years. The result of their efforts was passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. This law banned discrimination and segregation on the basis of race, religion, national origin and gender in schools, the workplace, in public accommodations, and in federally-assisted programs. Other people of color also benefited from this new law as well. Three major movements emerged in the 1960’s and continued into the 1970’s: the Chicano Movement, the Black Power Movement, and the American Indian Movement. Each battled structural racism in the U.S., rejected assimilation, expressed ethnic solidarity, and engendered a resurgence of cultural pride among their people.

Black Lives Matter movement is a prime example of citizens working together for social justice. This movement was founded in 2013 after the acquittal of the person who killed Trayvon Martin, a 17-year-old Black youth who was walking home from a convenience store in Sanford, Florida. Black Lives Matter is now a global organization in the U.S., the United Kingdom, and Canada dedicated to eradicating the ideology of “white supremacy” and building local power to bring justice, healing, and freedom to Black people worldwide. Their movement is working for a world where Black lives are no longer targeted for demise by the system. Like the Civil Rights movement a half century ago, Black Lives Matter has benefitted Latinos and Native Americans by raising public awareness of social injustices against BIPOC citizens that impede their ability to gain equitable access in all areas of society. (The acronym and hashtag BIPOC stands for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. See article in Resource list.) For example, the heightened awareness of injustice to people of color through protests and violence throughout the U.S., and the increased pressure from sponsors, the Washington NFL team dropped their racist team name and logo after 83 years. Once again, a movement for social justice with an initial focus on Black Americans broadened to include other marginalized ethnic groups in mainstream America.

**ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS** This curriculum addresses the following: #4 Individual Development & Identity, #5 Individuals, Groups & Institutions, #6 Power, Authority & Governance, #10 Civic Ideals & Practices

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS**

1. How did Indian mascots emerge as a phenomenon? What do they signify, and how have tribal nations responded over time?
2. How does the use of Indian mascots perpetuate negative stereotypes and unrealistic perceptions of Native Americans?
3. What impact, if any, do Indian mascots have on the individual development and identity of Native youth?
4. How have major external influences and legislation prevailed over significant attempts to eliminate the use of Indian mascots in Oregon public schools?
5. Does the use of Indian mascots deny Native people of the same rights and privileges as other U.S. citizens?

**COMMON CORE STANDARDS**

**Standards This Unit Meets:** [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/6/), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/7/), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/8/), [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/9/)

**LESSON OUTLINE – DAY 1 (50 Minutes)**

**Essential Questions:** How did Indian mascots become a phenomenon? What do they signify, and how have tribal nations responded over time?

**Materials:** • YouTube video ”Native American Mascot Controversy” (2012; 2:12 minutes) • Online pre-assessment (Teacher will have to enter the 18 questions listed at the end of this lesson into Google Forms in preparation.) • NCAI’s Executive Summary Ending the Legacy of Racism in Sports & the Era of Harmful “Indian” Sports Mascots (pages 2, 5-8) • Chart pad, marker, tape

**Staging the Question:** What is the Indian mascot controversy? When and how did the use of Indian mascots arise in the U.S.? How have tribes responded to the Indian mascot controversy?

1. Inform students that they will be learning about the Indian mascot controversy and learn how the controversy was handled in Oregon.
2. As a pre-assessment, have the students respond to the survey questions on Google Forms via laptop or cell phone.
3. Share background info with students about use of terms when referring to Native people.
4. Share a brief history of the origin of Indian mascots and legacy of racism & colonialism in the U.S. (Section 4. Of Curriculum Overview) Then show the short video, “Native American Mascot Controversy” (Conor

Eckert) which asks viewers to decide what they think.

1. Instruct students to draw a T-chart on a sheet of paper and take 5 minutes to write down a minimum of three pros and three cons about the use of Indian mascots; then have students share items from their list that the teacher records on separate sheets of chart paper labeled as PRO or CON as the student determines. Post the lists on the classroom wall for later reference.
2. Inform students the National Congress of American Indians is the oldest (founded in 1944) and largest American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) organization that represents the 574 federally-recognized tribes in the U.S.
3. Distribute selected pages from NCAI’s Executive Summary. Have students read the summary then list a minimum of ten major points NCAI delineated for opposing Indian mascots. Students can complete their lists as homework.

HOMEWORK: Students complete their lists of ten or more major reasons NCAI opposes Indian mascots.

**LESSON OUTLINE – Day 2 (50 Minutes)**

**Essential Question:** How does the use of Indian mascots perpetuate negative stereotypes and unrealistic perceptions of Native Americans?

**Materials:** • Handouts:Three sets of 10 Indian mascot cartoons • Lewis & Clark Trail Tribal Legacy Project (Clover Anaquod perspective; Audio recording 1:47 minutes) • Chart pad, marker, tape

**Staging the Question:** Is it fair to stereotype a whole race of people?

1. Ask the class to share their list of points NCAI made for opposing Indian mascots. Teachers will record responses on chart paper and post on the wall next to the others.
2. Play the recording of Clover Anaquod about stereotypes. Explain that one predominantly used image (the Indian chief in a headdress typical of Plains tribes) does not represent all Native Americans. It is a stereotype that lumps all Native people into one false image, distorting reality, and negatively affecting attitudes about a race of people. Stereotypic images are “inauthentic representations of Indigenous cultures” that demean and dehumanize, and paint Native Americans as ignorant, inferior, less than.
3. Distribute one of 10 cartoons with Indian mascot-related themes to each student. Students will examine the cartoon and write for ten minutes about the message it conveys to them. Teacher will display on the screen one cartoon at a time to the class and the students who wrote about that particular cartoon will share their perceptions of it.
4. Ask students if caricatures stereotyping a race of people can negatively affect people’s attitudes about that particular group of people.

HOMEWORK: View two short YouTube videos “Redskins is a Powerful Name” and “Native American Mascot Debate” (GHB News) and list reasons why some Native Americans are not offended by Indian mascots.

**LESSON OUTLINE – DAY 3 (50 Minutes)**

**Essential Question:** What impact, if any, do Indian mascots have on the individual development and identity of Native youth?

**Materials:** • Handouts: State Board of Education Resolution (p. 6-7) and 581-021-0047 Prohibits Public Schools from using Native American Mascots (p. 4-5), Senate Bill 215 (2013), The SB 1509 Staff Measure Summary (2014), and the Topic Summary of SB 1509 • YouTube video “Tribal Sovereignty: The Right to Self-Rule” (5:09 minutes) • YouTube video “Oregon Bans Native American Mascots - May 18, 2012” (1:26 minutes) • Chart pad, marker, tape

**Staging the Question:** What are some of the pros and cons of using Indian mascots that have been expressed by tribal members and others? Why would the State Board of Education ban Indian mascots in Oregon schools when not all Tribes or tribal members do not oppose them as sports team names or logos?

1. Ask the class to share what they learned from the videos about why some tribal members do not oppose Indian mascots. Record responses on a separate sheet of chart paper and post on the wall. Emphasize the tremendous cultural diversity among Native American tribes and individuals and therefore, there is an extremely wide range of opinions. In addition, with over 50% of Native people living away from reservations in both rural and urban communities, the difference in perspectives is immense.
2. Explain that of the 574 tribes in the U.S. five have allowed college sports teams to use their tribal name as their mascot (Seminoles-FL, Choctaw-MS, Catawba- NC, Chippewas- MI, Utes-Utah). Discuss why these tribes gave colleges permission to do so. (Economic: some have casinos they want locals to continue frequenting. Some feel the use of their tribal name is an honor and not derogatory if used appropriately. It’s an opportunity for cultural sharing, celebrating that tribe’s culture on campus, and for teaching accurate Indian history. These select tribes have agreements with local colleges to teach incoming students about their tribe and may include summer programs for tribal students. Partnerships with these colleges also can have long-term benefits such as funding for education programs on the reservation and scholarships for tribal youth.)
3. Explain that tribes in the U.S. are sovereign nations; therefore, they have the right to make their own laws and govern themselves within their tribal boundaries. And they may make decisions independent of organizations they may be members of such as the National Congress of American Indians.
4. Show YouTube video, “Tribal Sovereignty: The Right to Self-Rule”. (5:09 minutes) Explain that tribal sovereignty will play an important role in the Indian mascot controversy in Oregon.
5. Inform the class that for the rest of the week they will be learning about the Indian mascot controversy in Oregon and about how laws on this issue were enacted and revised.
6. Play the short YouTube video “Oregon Bans Native American Mascots” then give a brief history of the events that led to the State Board of Education’s ban. Read the first three paragraphs of Section 12. THE INDIAN MASCOT ISSUE IN OREGON to emphasize that the brave actions of a Native high school student was the impetus for the ban. Explain that there were a number of steps that led to the State Board’s decision that included public testimony, reviewing research and letters of both support and dissent, and debate with Board colleagues.
7. Divide the class in half and distribute p. 4-5 of handout to Group 1 and p. 6-7 to Group 2 that they will read silently and:

Group 1 will seek answers to the following questions: ‘What did this Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) prohibit?’ and ‘What are the consequences if schools do not comply with the directive?’

Group 2 will seek answers to the following questions: ‘How do the major reasons outlined in the State Board of Education’s resolution compare to the key points the National Congress of American Indians outlined for opposing Indian mascots?’ (Refer to the chart hanging in the room.) And ‘How does the elimination of Indian mascots benefit both Native and non-Native students?’

1. Students in Group 1 will report answers to the full class that they found to both questions and Group 2 will do the same.
2. Ask the class what they think the reaction to the ban was from communities with a high school mascot. Inform students that the vigorous pushback from these communities resulted in the first attempt by state legislators to reverse the rule in 2013 with SB 215.
3. Distribute the three handouts (**Senate Bill 215**, **The SB 1509 Staff Measure Summary**, and the **Topic Summary of SB 1509**) for homework.

HOMEWORK: Students will review three handouts: **SB 215** (2013), **The SB 1509 Staff Measure Summary** (2014), and the **Topic Summary of SB 1509** (2014) and write their responses to the following questions: Although SB 215 and SB 1509 were very similar, why was SB 1509 not vetoed when SB 215 was? What were the amendments made in SB 1509 that strengthened the bill to ensure passage?

**LESSON OUTLINE – Day 4 (50 Minutes)**

**Essential Question:** How have major external influences and legislation prevailed over significant attempts to eliminate the use of Indian mascots in Oregon public schools?

**Materials:** • Handouts: Senate Bill 13: Tribal History/Shared History, Senate Bill 13 Highlights, Siletz Tribal Council Resolution 2012-082

• YouTube Video “The Power of Tribal History/Shared History” • Chart pad, marker, tape

**Staging the Question:** What forces drove the passage of SB 215 to reverse the ban on Indian mascots in Oregon public high schools? Did legislative efforts to change the ban result in a favorable outcome?

1. Discuss student responses to the two homework questions.
2. Explain that state legislators in communities that had Indian mascots were pressured by vocal constituents to reverse the State Board’s ban. The sponsors of SB 1509 capitalized on the government to government relationship the State established with the nine Oregon tribes to give tribes local control in deciding appropriateness of Indian mascot names and images through the tribal consultation process. The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians helps to support a public charter school (Siletz Valley Early College Academy) with a Warrior mascot and a logo of a chief in a feathered headdress. While most of the nine Oregon tribes remained neutral, the Siletz submitted a resolution opposing the ban recommending that the State Board recognize the authority of Oregon tribes to approve the use of Indian mascots and logos in their community schools. As sovereign nations tribes have the right to govern themselves and are not obligated to enforce state laws within their tribal territories.
3. Distribute copies of the Siletz Tribal Council Resolution 2012-082. Have a different student volunteer read aloud one section of the resolution after the other.
4. Divide the class in half and conduct a “forced debate” to actively engage in a stance either in favor or against the tribe’s position. One half of the class will take the position in support of the tribe's resolution to oppose the ban on Indian mascots and the other half will be against the tribe’s resolution. Each side will take turns stating reasons why they support or oppose the tribe’s position. Students will discuss what they learned as a result of the debate.
5. Post a chart with 5 columns labeled SCHOOL NAME, MASCOT, LOGO, CHANGED, NEW, and TRIBE. List the 15 Oregon high schools that had an Indian mascot in 2012, their mascot name, and their logo, ending with Siletz Valley Early College Academy. (See pages 25–27 of the Report to the State Board of Education in the Resource list.) Have students count off from 1 – 4 then have them move into 4 designated areas of the classroom and join peers with the same number. Students will use either their cell phones or laptops to fill out the chart. Groups 1 and 2 will search the first seven high schools listed and determine whether or not a change of mascot and/or logo has been made and, if yes, list the tribe the school made an agreement with.
6. Groups 1 & 2 will report their findings to the full class, then Groups 3 & 4 will do the same. Put an X in the CHANGED column on the chart if there’s been a change, and in the NEW column write in what the new mascot or logo is.
7. Students will analyze chart results and share their observations. Remind the class that SB 1509 did not specifically overturn the State Board’s rule, but it added components and directed the State Board to revise the original rule to include the new provisions regarding the school’s agreement with the local tribe and the agreement approval process.
8. Explain that one of the outcomes of SB 1509 is that Oregon tribes were granted funds to write their own tribal history curriculum for the purpose of educating students in the school they had an agreement with. In the meantime, the Oregon Indian Education Association was working toward the goal of getting a bill passed in the State Legislature that would make the teaching of Oregon tribal history mandatory in all Oregon schools.
9. Distribute two handouts: **Senate Bill 13: Tribal History/Shared History** and **SB 13 Highlights**.

HOMEWORK: Students will read the two handouts and write a one-page response to these questions: How might the teaching of Oregon tribal history in K-12 schools impact students in schools with Indian mascots? Do you feel that teaching Oregon tribal history can lead to the eventual elimination of Indian mascots in public high schools? Why or why not.

**LESSON OUTLINE – DAY 5 (50 Minutes)**

**Essential Question:** Does the use of Indian mascots deny Native people of the same rights and privileges as other U.S. citizens?

**Materials:**  • YouTube Video “What Does Social Justice Mean to You?”

• Chart pad, marker, tape • Post Assessment

**Staging the Question:** What does social justice mean to you?

1. Discuss the answers students found to the first of the two homework questions. Then ask students to raise their hands if they feel that teaching Oregon tribal history can lead to the eventual elimination of Indian mascots in public high schools? Ask students to share reasons for voting the way they did.
2. Explain that many people believe that the use of Indian mascots and logos are cultural violence and is social injustice. Ask students when they hear the words “social justice” what does that mean to them. Write key words from their responses on chart pad entitled “Social Justice”.
3. Play the video “What Does Social Justice Mean to You?” Ask students what other key words they heard in the video to describe social justice and list their responses on the chart pad. (i.e., equality, human rights, social reform, equal access, equal treatment, accountability, involvement)
4. Explain that when people are passionate about what they view as social injustice, they can form coalitions of like-minded people to bring the injustice to the forefront of public consciousness. And the use of social media is the fastest and most effective way to spread their message. Ask students to name movements that are bringing attention to social injustices in the U.S. today. (Me, Too; Black Lives Matter) Also ask students to name any current movements by Native Americans to bring social injustices they face to the forefront. (No More Stolen Sisters – Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women; No DAPL – Dakota Access Pipeline/Standing Rock, etc. A chronological outline of other movements is in the Resource list.)
5. Explain that the Civil Rights movement of the 1950’s and 1960’s was a fourteen-year effort that resulted in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that ended segregation in schools and other public places. This legislation also banned employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin; however, it did not totally eliminate these unjust discriminatory practices to this day.
6. Ask students to brainstorm ideas where they can begin to challenge the use of Indian mascot at the local, state or national level. (Ideas might include doing more research on the topic, developing a plan, gaining allies, mobilizing friends and family, beginning a writing campaign, going to public meetings, contacting local newspapers, radio and TV stations, writing a blog, making a short video and sending it out via social media.) Remind students to be prepared for resistance and stay focused on the goal.
7. To wrap up this curriculum, by a show of hands ask class if they believe—in spite of all the resistance from school administration, alumni, community members, etc.—that students have the power to challenge and change their school’s mascot and/or logo regardless of the entrenched racist attitudes that still exist in American society today.
8. Students will complete the online post assessment survey.

**Summative Performance Task:** Students who support ending Indian mascots either locally,statewide, and/or nationally will generate a list of actions they can take to begin this effort. Students who are indifferent or do not choose to support ending Indian mascots can consider 1) a cause they feel strongly about and want to support, and 2) the challenges taking informed action to rectify the situation may pose.

**Mapping Informed Action (Optional):** Discuss the challenges of taking informed action to rectify this injustice and support the great majority of Native American’s ongoing demands to end Indian mascots.

**Taking Informed Action:** For a list of causes and campaigns refer students to Do Something.org. Young people can join and use the digital platform to volunteer or develop their own campaigns for social change and/or civil action to make a real world impact on causes they are passionate about.

**Extending the Lesson:** Students with multiliteracies might enjoy designing a mascot or logo for a school with the idea of replacing an Indian mascot. Students can brainstorm ideas such as animals or something from the cosmos (sun, moon, star, shooting star) or something to do with the local landscape (a famous peak, river, valley, etc.) or a collage relating to education (paper, pens, books, art, music, athletics). The finished paintings or drawings could be put up on the wall of the classroom; students could get up and move around the room making notes about the suggestions and then voting (anonymously) on their favorite.

**NOTE:** Teachers who might like to make this lesson place-based and local may want to investigate whether their state has developed Native American Essential Understandings. Here are a few examples besides the one for Oregon:

• The National Museum of the American Indian Essential Understandings <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/about/understandings>

• Montana’s Essential Understandings <http://www.montana.edu/iefa/background/understanding.html>

• North Dakota’s Essential Understandings <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/education-programs/indian-education/north-dakota-native-american-essential-understandings>

RESOURCES:

**Educators Can't Ignore Indian Mascots.** [Dr. Cornel Pewewardy](https://aistm.org/cornel.why.educators.htm#cornel). <https://aistm.org/cornel.why.educators.htm>

**Ending the Legacy of Racism in Sports & The Era of Harmful “Indian” Sports Mascots.** National Congress of American Indians. October 2013 <http://www.ncai.org/attachments/policypaper_mijapmouwdbjqftjayzqwlqldrwzvsyfakbwthpmatcoroyolpn_ncai_harmful_mascots_report_ending_the_legacy_of_racism_10_2013.pdf>

**Essential Understandings of Native Americans in Oregon.** Oregon Department of Education. <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/equity/NativeAmericanEducation/> Documents/Essential%20Understandings%20of%20Native%20Americans%20in%20Oregon%20June%202020.pdf

**Join Do Something.** Do Something.Org <https://join.dosomething.org/>

**List of Unrecognized Tribes in the United States.** Wikipedia.<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_unrecognized_tribes_in_the_United_States>

**Native American Activism: 1960’s to Present.** Zinn Education Project.<https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/native-american-activism-1960s-to-present/>

**Native American Mascot Controversy**. YouTube Video. 2012 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nARu8hoc1Qw>

**Native American Mascot Debate (GHB News). YouTube Video. 2017.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGnBW23g9Rc>

**Oregon Bans Native American Mascots**. YouTube Video. 2012 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9un-pF-04Q>

**Redskins is a Powerful Name. YouTube Video. 2014.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40SFqadRTQ0>

**Report to the State Board of Education.** Susan Castillo (March 2012)<https://www.oregon.gov/ode/about-us/stateboard/Documents/native-american-mascot-report.pdf>

**Senate Bill 13: Tribal History/Shared History**. Oregon Department of Education [https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/equity/NativeAmericanEducation/Pages/ Senate-Bill-13-Tribal-HistoryShared-History.aspx](https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/equity/NativeAmericanEducation/Pages/%20Senate-Bill-13-Tribal-HistoryShared-History.aspx)

**Senate Bill 215 2013 Session.** OregonLive. 2013 <https://gov.oregonlive.com/bill/2013/SB215>

**Siletz Tribal Council Resolution 2012-082.** Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. March 2012 <http://www.ctsi.nsn.us/uploads/Siletz%20Resolution%20on%20Native%20Mascots.pdf>

**State Board of Education Topic Summary Topic SB (Summary of OAR 581-021-0047 and Resolution).** StudyLib. 2012 <https://studylib.net/doc/7209459/state-board-of-education-%E2%80%93-topic-summary-topic--sb>

**The Power of Tribal History/Shared History.** Education Northwest. May 2019 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JKpIH0-5ro>

**Tribal Sovereignty: The Right to Self-Rule.** YouTube Video. February 2010 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3pohsdryNc>

**What Does Social Justice Mean to You?** YouTube Video. December 2019 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c4t1VhOOmuY>

**Where Did BIPOC Come From?** Sandra E. Garcia. New York Times. June 2020 <https://www.nytimes.com/article/what-is-bipoc.html>

**5G: Contemporary Life/Educating Others & Correcting Misconceptions: Clover Anaquod.** Lewis & Clark Trail - Tribal Legacy Project. 2007 <https://www.lc-triballegacy.org/video.php?vid=2&query=mascots>

**SAMPLE ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS**

Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1–5,   
with **1 as “Strongly Disagree”** and **5 as “Strongly Agree”**:

1. The Indian mascot controversy is something familiar to me.
2. Indian mascots honor Native Americans.
3. If Indian mascots aren’t offensive to all Native Americans, they are okay to use.
4. Stereotyping an ethnicity or “race” of people is okay with me.
5. Indian mascots are a form of oppression.
6. Indian mascots are harmful to Native youth.
7. Indian mascots promote discrimination and harassment of students.
8. Indian mascots deny Native Americans the same rights & privileges as other citizens.
9. The use of Indian mascots is racist.
10. Indian mascots should be banned from public schools.
11. Teaching Tribal History in public schools can help end the use of Indian mascots.
12. Native American tribes are sovereign nations with the right to govern themselves.
13. I can define sovereignty.
14. It is okay for Native American tribes to use images and Indian mascots for their sports teams.
15. I can define social justice.
16. I could provide an example of social injustice happening in the U.S. today.
17. I believe that I can affect change through the legislative process.
18. I believe that public testimony is an effective way to influence legislators.