Seventh Grade Citizens Now Connect Passport Studies of Indigenous Persons To Present Day NYSED Ban of Indigenous Mascots Statewide.

Mr. Carideo asked the students to discuss the use of Native American imagery and names in the context of team mascots.

The students team talked and tagged about this issue. They also reacted in team discussion to the NYS ban on the use of these mascots as well as the ongoing defiance of the Massapequa district of this ban.

Student remarks included:

I feel that they should ban these Native American Indian mascots because during the coverage of this issue the CBS news team, an actual current indigenous chief stated he felt that mascot use was disrespectful and racist. The use of a mascot for a sports team or school representative should bring happiness to the school community. I, as a young citizen, ask myself whether if I were an indigenous person, would I be happy with this choice of mascot? This outdated representation of indigenous persons, in light of current study of them, is horrible. In addition, for painting a mural that is a violation of the statewide ban, the district will ultimately lose funds. None of these results is acceptable. Aiden Butts

I do not agree that the ban should remain or be applicable to Massapequa district. If the school is using the mascot to represent and to honor indigenous persons, they should be allowed to continue using the mascot. If on the other hand, the purpose of the mascot of the Indian chief in a headdress is to show disrespect for the culture of indigenous persons, than the ban should remain valid. Ingrid Meza Dorado.

I think that all mascots that use Native American symbols should be banned. These symbols disrespect current indigenous persons. Beyond disrespect of current indigenous persons, the schools and students will also lose money if they continue to defy the ban. Just because within the Massapequa district students and community support the use of the mascots, does not mean that statewide, this support exists. Zaina Adnan

I feel if there is love and support for the mascots throughout the community, where they are used, the ban should not apply. As long as the local school community likes the mascot, it should remain for that community. Giovanny Rorna

I am against banning historical indigenous mascots from schools in NY State. These mascots just represent a time in indigenous persons’ history, not current day life. I do feel that in using these indigenous persons past mascots, those see them should not feel that the mascot represents the lives of indigenous persons today. Riyan Akhtar

I do not agree that all mascots using Native American images should be banned from school use in New York State. I feel the mascots do not represent current Indigenous persons, but do represent in part the past history of indigenous persons in the United States. The mascots show some parts of past indigenous person culture and history. If you ban these symbols of Indigenous history past, then you are preventing the next generation from understanding the past of these persons. Part of respecting Native Americans understands their past and how they were represented at that time. Rubaia Sneha

I feel that these mascots representing the past should not be banned from use in the state’s schools today. If kids like and respect these mascots, then it is fine to display them. They at least have a lesson about the past and what was thought at that time about indigenous persons. These mascots have been loved and inspired students in Massapequa for many years. They should not be banned. Maryam Ishtiaq

Since the mascots have been used and inspired children in this district’s schools for over three decades, they should not now be banned in Massapequa. For this New York State community, the mascots are a part of their heritage. Fatima Khayritdinaa

I do not agree with a ban all over the state of these mascots. As the elected assembly member who was interviewed stated, the use of mascots should be up to specific state districts and communities. For some communities, mascots are a beloved part of their community school or sports history. Removing them would be harmful for that culture. Mohammed Hossain.

I support the student artists painting the mural. I see nothing wrong with these students working on a painting. A school should be able to celebrate the mascot they want to have. After all the United States is built on free speech and freedom of expression. Should actual indigenous persons not want the mural and are indeed offended by it, they should take legal action. If they do, then this will prove that indeed they the indigenous persons are offended by the mural, not the state non-indigenous officials who are banning the mascots on their behalf. Luis Uzhuri

I feel the mural artists did not realize they would get in trouble for painting the mural. They probably felt that they were just painting the mural to celebrate indigenous persons. Hailie Sanchez

I support the artist because the artist should have freedom to paint the mural. No one should be able to take a painted mural down without permission. This is a free country. This Native American chief is actually a symbol of the strength of the indigenous persons. Justin Holder

I have a difficult time answering this question, because on the one side the student artists are drawing the mascot as a piece of art. For them, this is how they present their school. Yet the consequence of their art will be that they lose school funds from the state that are needed. I do not know what the correct answer to this question is or should be. Anisa Rambharose

I support the artist designing and painting the mural. The artist was just designing the mural. It was a logo for a mascot long used by the school, which has now been banned. Michaela

I believe that if you use an indigenous role as a mascot and you design it respectfully, you should be able to use that mascot. I do not think that Indian chief mascots should all be banned in the New York state. If done correctly, the mascot could still represent how the indigenous persons had their land be stolen. Nozila Mahmudjonova

I ultimately think that the use of the mascot or not, should be made by the indigenous persons present day, not New York State officials. Justin Holder

I think losing state education monies, is too high a price to pay for use of this banned mascot. Anisa Rambharose

I, too, have mixed feelings because the government is taking this into their own hands without actually questioning actual indigenous persons. Justin Holder

This is probably disrespectful of indigenous persons, They are very sensitive right now to these mascots. Alexis Norbe Flores

I feel that using the mascot of an indigenous person is okay even if some individuals view it as offensive and stereotypical. The use of a mascot itself does not make people automatically think badly of indigenous persons currently alive at all. A mascot does not equal an actual live indigenous person. Reuben Rai

 I personally think using stereotypical indigenous chiefs or other stereotypical characters is disrespectful to the indigenous culture. This is a form of cultural appropriation. If you want to display dignity and affirmation within a community, you need to demonstrate it properly. It should not be demonstrated in a stereotypical way. The chief mascot in this case reported on from Massapequa is very much a stereotype. To avoid the stereotype, they should research the way a chief might actually have looked at that time or currently. Nozilla Mahudjonova