

Olentangy Schools Public Participation Comments for February 25, 2021

2/11/21 18:18:20

Russell Wangler

7207 Redwood Valley Court Lewis Center Ohio 43035

All of our children, especially our elementary-aged children need to have a full-time option. Teachers have been and are being vaccinated despite their risk being low. Contact tracing studies demonstrate globally that community transmission rate from school-aged to adults is low. Teachers are essential workers. The in-person classroom experience is critical for social and intellectual development K-12. State test results demonstrate remote schooling is NOT effective for all. Give our kids a full time in classroom option.

2/11/21 18:41:40

Dennis Bell Den-Nis Bell

8122 Trail Lake Dr., Powell, OH 43065

I'd like to thank the Superintendent, staff and school board for their prudence, forbearance and persistence in the face of continued adversity and daily criticism. Even though you're normally responsible for decisions that have impacts on lives throughout the district, those in the past 12 month period have been on a drastically elevated level. I am one of many who appreciates the care and consideration you've taken in the attempt to get this right. I'd venture to say most everyone, including you, wants everything to return to normal but I wanted to take the opportunity to thank you all for exercising judgement and restraint throughout this period. I'm proud to be an Olentangy parent and will be forever grateful.

2/11/21 19:29:45

Robin Winslow

2300 Reeves ave, Lewis Center, Oh 43035

How could you possibly keep students apart in our highly populated middle school and high schools going 5 days a week? It would be negligent to rush back to 5 days a week. How would transportation be handled? I worry about our teachers, staff, and students. We enforce CDC guidelines at a board meeting, in restaurants, etc. but exempt schools. That is not logical. You have to look at the big picture, we're surviving a pandemic. Our children are resilient, we need to be too and patient. The pressures of a pandemic are being blamed on OLSD and school districts around the country. It's unfair and ignorant. You are doing a great job. Don't be bullied into making a dangerous decision that is not logical. Packing schools back to full capacity when it's not safe, is not ok. Children are resilient, grown ups need to be too.

2/12/21 11:55:37

Ceylon Wise Salon Wise

4842 Normandy Dr, Galena, OH 43021

Hello Board Members, After last summer's events, it's great to see Olentangy taking steps in the right direction regarding race. Admittedly, we have a long way to go and much work to do ensuring an equitable experience for all students. But to Olentangy's credit adding staff to the district equity and inclusion team, expanding the One Community conference, as well as working toward long and short term goals in the area of race and equality are all positive steps in this long journey. However, when it comes to the district rebranding plan, I'm afraid the board has a tremendous blindspot. The Olentangy High School "Braves" nickname is widely viewed as

dehumanizing and equating Native American males to something less than a man. It is comparable to calling an African American man “boy”. How can we claim to have zero tolerance for racism in our buildings when the school walls, athletic jerseys, basketball court and football field are all covered with the a racial slur? How can we endeavor to be one community when we completely disregard the offense that name causes a small but present portion of our community? How can we continue to associate that word with one of our schools when the National Congress of American Indians, American Psychological Association, National Education Association, the NAACP and others all condemn its use? The fact is we cannot claim our school buildings to be a racism free zone while the school itself maintains a racist slur as its nickname. I’m aware there is a vocal segment of our community who would prefer to continue using that name in the interest of tradition. Tradition is an important part of life, but not when it dehumanizes and demeans. Holding on to such traditions will appease many but simultaneously insult, offend and devalue students and families throughout the country and in our own community. This is not a time for upholding tradition. It’s a time for doing what’s right and frankly inevitable whether or not it is politically popular. This decision rests solely in your hands. Thank you for your consideration and courage as you lead us away from outdated and offensive traditions in favor of a more respectful, inclusive, and equitable Olentangy experience for all students, staff, and community members. Thank You, Ceylon Wise of The Parent Diversity Network

2/12/21 11:55:53

Ashley Wise

4842 Normandy Dr. Galena

Hello School Board Members, I applaud the district’s rebranding effort that is already underway. As an active community member, I realize the time and energy that goes into such a task. However, in my opinion and in the opinion of many other allies throughout our community, changing only the offensive imagery associated with Olentangy High School while maintaining the mascot name does not remedy the problem. It is actually painting over an issue, not progress. Choosing to keep the name “Braves” while overlooking the objections of people from a minority community is actually an example of privilege. While our voices as parents and community members matter, we realize what matters the most regarding this issue are the facts and the opinions of the Native American community and today I choose to speak up as an ally. The use of this mascot and the associated name was adopted at a time when this type of racism was unfortunately acceptable, but once you know better you do better. Olentangy, this is your chance to do better as we strive to be “One Community”. I strongly encourage you to reopen this discussion and allow the committees charged with the task of rebranding to be able to truly do so while being respectful to our Indigenous brothers and sisters and fiscally responsible. Respectful by acknowledging the offense it causes and fiscally responsible by avoiding having to revisit this issue in the future. Native Circle is the longest active Native American education website. They explain the term “Braves” dehumanizes and equates the Native American male to something less than a man. Comparative example: calling an African American man 'boy'. The use of such mascot names has been condemned by many nationally recognized groups such as the National Congress of American Indians, American Psychological Association, National Education Association, the NAACP and more. The National Congress of American Indians called upon the Secretary of the Department of Education to immediately eliminate race-based Native logos, mascots, and names from state educational institutions across the United States. If NFL and MLB teams are finally looking at this issue why not

Olentangy High School? Thank you for listening and reopening this discussion so that we are not perpetuating these offenses to the next generation of Olentangy students. As a community, let's do better. Thank You, Ashley Wise Member of the Parent Diversity Network

2/12/21 13:08:19

Pam Lewis NO ADDRESS PROVIDED

Hello, I am writing in regards to the rebranding effort for Liberty, specifically the name "Braves". I applaud your willingness to remove the offensive imagery and ask that you continue to make the bold moves of eliminating offensive language and imagery. The National Council of American Indians and many Native Americans have made statements specific to the use of the word "Braves", asserting the use of the word perpetuates the "warrior savage" myth often associated with Native people. I implore you to rethink your position. As I always say it's about learned and shared values and constantly changing behavior, (practices, norms, etc.) of a group of interactive people. Our community is interactive and is changing for the good. The "warrior savage" myth reinforces the racist views that Indians are uncivilized and uneducated. Thank you again for rethinking and changing the negative narratives. Let us mitigate the use of this word to heal the deeply painful misidentification Native Americans have endured and instead, send a message of progressive positive change in our Olentangy community. I believe this mascot and the associated name was adopted at a time when this type of racism was acceptable, but we are in a more enlightened time! I urge you to embrace a full rebranding, one that sheds painful images and language of the past. Thank you!

2/12/21 16:31:36

Christina Solmos

3177 Farmers Delight Dr. Lewis Center, OH 43035

Hello Board Members, I applaud the district rebranding effort that is already underway. However, in my opinion and in the opinion of many other allies throughout our community, changing the offensive Native American imagery associated with Olentangy High School while maintaining the mascot name does not remedy the problem. While our voices as parents and community members matter, we realize what matters the most regarding this issue are the facts and the opinions of the Native American community. Native Circle is the longest active Native American education website. They explain the term "Braves" dehumanizes and equates the Native American male to something less than a man. Comparative example: calling an African American man 'boy'. The use of such mascot names has been condemned by the National Congress of American Indians, American Psychological Association, National Education Association, the NAACP and more. The National Congress of American Indians called upon the Secretary of the Department of Education to immediately eliminate race-based Native logos, mascots, and names from state educational institutions across the United States. There is no question, we as a district have no choice but to eliminate any variation of the name "Braves". Choosing otherwise would be a tremendous slap in the face to the Native American community, the advice of the American Psychological Association, and recommendation of the NEA. I encourage you to reopen the discussion in this matter and come to the only conclusion worthy of a district truly endeavoring to create One Community. Thank You, Christina

2/12/21 18:01:36

Sarah Narayana Sarah Na Ri Ya Na

7746 Lydia Dr Lewis Center Ohio

Dear Olentangy School Board Members, I am writing in regard to the rebranding of school mascots and specifically keeping the name "Braves". I want to applaud your willingness to remove the offensive imagery and ask that you continue to make the bold move of removing equally offensive language. Many Native American people, including the National Council of American Indians have made statements specifically about the use of the word "Braves", asserting the use of the word perpetuates the "warrior savage" myth often associated with Native people. This may come as a surprise to people not part of a marginalized group and I implore you to rethink your position. The "warrior savage" myth reinforces the racist views that Indians are uncivilized and uneducated, and it has been used to justify policies of forced assimilation and the deconstruction of Indian culture. The use of this word can be deeply painful for people who identify as Native American and sends a bigger message to the community that Olentangy is insensitive, at best. I believe this mascot and the associated name was adopted at a time when this type of racism was acceptable, but we are in a more enlightened time now and I urge you to embrace a full rebranding, one that sheds painful images and language of the past. Thank you for your attention to this matter. Sarah Narayana

2/15/21 16:16:06

Romy Wilson Ro- me Will son

8146 Wildflower Drive Powell, Ohio 43065

Would like to talk about a fundraising night at Chipotle for my club, Teen Institute, and other event ideas

2/17/21 22:46:39

Rebecca Roebuck

3108 Shoreline Drive

Dear Olentangy School Board Members, I am writing in regard to the rebranding of school mascots and specifically keeping the name "Braves". I want to applaud your willingness to remove the offensive imagery and ask that you continue to make the bold move of removing equally offensive language. Many Native American people, including the National Council of American Indians have made statements specifically about the use of the word "Braves", asserting the use of the word perpetuates the "warrior savage" myth often associated with Native people. This may come as a surprise to people not part of a marginalized group and I implore you to rethink your position. The "warrior savage" myth reinforces the racist views that Indians are uncivilized and uneducated, and it has been used to justify policies of forced assimilation and the deconstruction of Indian culture. The use of this word can be deeply painful for people who identify as Native American and sends a bigger message to the community that Olentangy is insensitive, at best. I believe this mascot and the associated name was adopted at a time when this type of racism was acceptable, but we are in a more enlightened time now and I urge you to embrace a full rebranding, one that sheds painful images and language of the past. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

2/18/21 9:07:34

Lizett Schreiber

Liz-ette Shry-brr

3041 Alum Trail Pl., Lewis Center

Dear Board, I appreciate the district rebranding effort that is already underway. However, I believe changing the offensive Native American imagery associated with Olentangy High School while maintaining the mascot name does not remedy the problem. Native Circle is the longest

active Native American education website. They explain the term “Braves” dehumanizes and equates the Native American male to something less than a man. Comparative example: calling an African American man 'boy'. The use of such mascot names has been condemned by the National Congress of American Indians, American Psychological Association, National Education Association, the NAACP and more. The National Congress of American Indians called upon the Secretary of the Department of Education to immediately eliminate race-based Native logos, mascots, and names from state educational institutions across the United States. Professional sports teams have already changed the mascots, and are in process of changing the names of their teams as well (see: Atlanta Braves, Cleveland Indians, and Washington Redskins). We must follow these examples and change Olentangy High School’s mascot name as well.

2/18/21 17:51:21

Cara Randolph

Dear Olentangy School Board Members, I am writing in regard to the rebranding of school mascots and specifically keeping the name “Braves”. I want to applaud your willingness to remove the offensive imagery and ask that you continue to make the bold move of removing equally offensive language. Many Native American people, including the National Council of American Indians have made statements specifically about the use of the word “Braves”, asserting the use of the word perpetuates the “warrior savage” myth often associated with Native people. This may come as a surprise to people not part of a marginalized group and I implore you to rethink your position. The “warrior savage” myth reinforces the racist views that Indians are uncivilized and uneducated, and it has been used to justify policies of forced assimilation and the deconstruction of Indian culture. The use of this word can be deeply painful for people who identify as Native American and sends a bigger message to the community that Olentangy is insensitive, at best. I believe this mascot and the associated name was adopted at a time when this type of racism was acceptable, but we are in a more enlightened time now and I urge you to embrace a full rebranding, one that sheds painful images and language of the past. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

2/19/21 13:23:53

George Reed

6593 Kellogg Drive Powell

First of all - Kudos to everyone to finally making the correct decision to open schools full-time on March 15th. Albeit later than hoped, it's the correct step forward. Now that our children can start getting a full, 100% education - we have lots for which to make up, seeing that most at-home schooling days are homework and not a day of learning. That, and the fact that schools are closed for less than 1-inch of snow, we only fall farther and farther behind. And why do we close an entire day for a meager amount of snow? It is Central Ohio, it is wintertime, and it snows. Since we have this remote thing down so well, any 'snow days' should become remote days for students, not a free day. I understand the law states we can have 20+ days of no school per year, but how does that maximize learning for every student? I suggest we first of all cancel spring break - the kids will be back to school for less than a complete 2 weeks, they will be starting to get some momentum, and then they get a week plus a day to lose that momentum all over again. And why do we need a day off before an entire week off? You need to push these kids, and push hard this final part of the year, they've had enough 'breaks' and too-easy days these past 12 months. This is the end of the third week of February (February 19th), and my

Group B student has been in the classroom for a total of three days this month. That's why we need to kill the 4-days weekends, the snow days for a measly amount of snow, and cancel spring break. We encourage people not to travel, but we give them 6 school days to do that. THE Ohio State University canceled their Spring Break. We need to give it all we have going into the end of the school year, and maximize our days available, and their learning. Thank you for your time.

2/22/21 2:53:46

Kurt Kovaleski

2857 Prairie Dr, Lewis Center

After reading all the public participation comments from last month's Board meeting it is quite amusing to read multiple identical 'form responses' all in resounding support for ridding our district of all those racist indian images/mascots. It almost conveys the sense that there is widespread support in the community for the nonsense undertaken with the 'rebranding' project, when in actuality, we all know it was one of the angry gender studies students or an angry America hating activist staff member who went around yelling, screaming, and shaming people into signing a prewritten form and submitting it to the Board; of course with the threat of being called a racist looming over their head if they didn't comply. My God, didn't you know how utterly insensitive and racist it is to use the word 'braves' or to have pictures of indians all over the place. Because everyone knows that the most devious and racist way for the dastardly white man to denigrate those hated Indians, and to wipe their existence from the collective memory, is to name cities, buildings, sports teams, and schools after them and to make kids wear clothes with indian images on them. Please... You people need to go back to the universities with your drum circles and gender/race/whiteness studies classes, and keep your insane ideologies far far away from our children and our school district. I have never seen so much time and effort put forth into so many pseudo intellectual, nonsensical ideas (anti-racism indoctrination for teachers, diversity nonsense 24/7, rebranding images/mascots, socio-emotional pseudoscience forced on our kids, obscene questionnaires given to our children, and the list goes on and on) that are not at all relevant to your mandate of imparting knowledge to our children. Your job has never been the socialization of our children, regardless of what John Dewey and all his Progressive acolytes believed, that job is for the parents. It's very simple, you teach our children the three Rs and non-revisionist history, and we do the rest... It really is that simple. The new mascot at my son's school is a puppy dog, yeah! Actually, it is a German Shepherd. Did you know Hitler had a German Shepherd and her name was Blondie. Do you know how offensive that is to so many people around the world whose family suffered during the Holocaust, to have to see a picture of a German Shepherd plastered all over school? On a side note, I can't even put into words how traumatized that poor dog felt going through life with the name Blondie, when it was abundantly clear from all the archival footage and documentation, that she self identified as a male cheetah. What do you wokesters call that, misgendering or something? You see where this is going, right? You can deconstruct anything and everything you want if you look at it long enough, and that is exactly what these Progressive activists are currently doing. It has nothing to do with how the Native Americans feel (the issue is never the issue), it has everything to do with destroying everything that holds a society together (mascots, statues, traditions, holidays, respect for our history, love of country, reverence for the founding fathers and other historical figures, etc., etc.) and once everything has been burnt to the ground (literally and figuratively), they can rebuild society in their distorted utopian vision. The Jacobins tried something similar and it didn't work out too well for the French people or the Jacobins. I believe

a lot of people got significantly shorter during that period. Well I've run out of comment space so I'll submit the remaining comments at next months Board meeting. Thank you for your time comrades...

2/22/21 6:52:02

Kurt Kovaleski

2857 Prairie Drive, Lewis Center

With regards to opening the schools up full time, without masks or social distancing (masks and social distancing are simply nonsense virtue signaling that don't do a darn thing but irreparably damage the psyche of our children), that should have been done long ago. If children are at less risk with Covid than they are with the seasonal flu, are we going to close down schools every cold and flu season? If absolute risk mitigation is the new standard, why in the world would we put our children on a school bus, allow them to participate in sports, ride a bike, allow them out of the house, etc., when the risk to them of injury/death is much higher from all those activities than the risk of dying from Covid? People have seriously lost their collective minds over the past year and I wish people would go back to being free thinking individuals who know what is best for themselves and their family, instead of mindlessly following the ever changing, and frankly, schizophrenic mandates put out by the so called "experts". I know the typical retort to such an assertion is "my god, they will spread it to their older family members and teachers, do you want to kill everyone you monster". Just for kicks, please provide one instance, anywhere in the world, where a child has infected their teacher or brought the virus home from school and infected an older, at risk family member. I will be patiently awaiting your response.

2/23/21 12:57:20

Jillian Bickley

6287 Streamside Dr. Galena, OH 43021

As a fifth grader, I have been looking forward to this year since I first came to Johnnycake Corners in kindergarten. I've really looked forward to being able to use a locker as a fifth grader. It may seem trivial, but I would like to be able to use my locker when we go back to school full time. There will not be enough room in the classroom with all of the students and their backpacks and such. I know we can find a way for us to be able to use our lockers safely. This is a big deal to those of us in fifth grade! Thank you for listening.

2/25/21 11:44:08

Hamza Choudhry Haamza

1414 Carylake Cir, Columbus

What data (factual statements) backs up the decision to have all students come back on March 15 and shows that students and their parents will be safe? Why are we not waiting until vaccination is available for the public (students & parents)? The hybrid model is great and reduces chances of transmission since it is easier to social distance 15 children vs a full classroom of 25/30 students. I just do not understand what we are accomplishing by going back for 4 weeks (excluding the spring break). Also, can you elaborate what percentage of teachers will be vaccinated by March 15 for elementary, middle and high school? I believe we are increasing the chances of transmission by not letting children/parents be vaccinated in time.

2/25/21 13:17:11

Tanya Copley Tan-ya Cop - lee

5873 Harrow Glen Court Galena

As we move towards the end of the year, I am anxiously awaiting the decision on graduation ceremonies. While I understand the circumstances that led to a drive thru ceremony last year, I think a drive thru graduation is tasteless and devalues the Class of 2021's accomplishments. This class has suffered far more consequences due to the pandemic and by hosting a drive thru it would only add to an already poor experience. I find the support of a drive thru graduation selfish and abhorrent. I would expect a parent and student survey to be sent prior to any plans be solidified. It is my hope that the district will chose to have graduation in person even if requires the class to be split into groups.