

## **Olentangy Schools Public Participation Comments for April 8, 2021**

3/25/21 17:01:14

Tracy Kourie

2793 Coltsbridge Dr, Lewis Center

Good evening, Professional Development for teachers has been focused on a sense of belonging and anti-racism. Do you feel like the training has given all teachers a sense of belonging in the district and do you think it addresses the issues our district is facing in a Pandemic? It appears there has not been diversity of opinions in materials or individuals providing professional development which is concerning. There are many different sources of information that can be pulled from across the political spectrum to provide teachers with unique perspectives on Diversity and Inclusion. This would be a more inclusive approach for the district since not all parents believe in Critical Race Theory and other Progressive Ideologies. A few resources I would suggest are The Heritage Foundation, Hillsdale College, Thomas Sowell, Ben Carson, Leo Terrell, Ben Shapiro, Carol Swain, PragerU, Candace Owens, Dinesh D'Souza, Larry Elder, ... just to name a few. We are concerned about the direction of the district and what appears to be a one sided agenda and is not reflective of the diversity of thought and opinion across the district.

3/27/21 10:52:47

Kurt Kovaleski

2857 Prairie Drive, Lewis Center

Good evening comrades and fellow travelers. Once again the same asinine form letter about the braves mascot is inundating the public participation comments, 21 pages from the last Board meeting. Since you seem to be ok with the same exact letter being submitted over and over and over again, I am going to submit my letter from the Feb 25 meeting again. But before I do that I want you to know about this awesome article my son was asked to read for his seventh grade English class a few days ago; it was titled 'How LGBTQ musicians are owning their queerness in pop music'.. Really good stuff. You Board members should be extremely proud of yourselves for allowing this garbage to be introduced to our children. You are all feckless and spineless and not one of you has the testicular fortitude to stand up to these Marxist leftists who are pushing this poison onto our children.. You should all be ashamed of yourselves. If you are too scared to stand up to the mob and to tell them to pound sand, I would be more than happy to do it for you. Also, does anyone know the over-under on how many times the words diversity, equity, and inclusion will be repeated during this Board meeting? I have a friendly wager going with a friend. Ok here's my letter that I submitted to the Feb 25 meeting. 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, obscure 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.

3/27/21 11:58:01

Kurt Kovaleski

2857 Prairie Drive, Lewis Center

Continued.... 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. 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.

3/30/21 11:12:39

Bryn Tokarz brin toe-cars

2256 Park Circle, Lewis Center

Hello, my name is Bryn Tokarz and I am currently a senior at Olentangy High School. As you know, the senior class has faced one heartbreak after another (no football games, no homecoming, no Der Dutchman trip, no sports banquets, no cedar point trip, no senior breakfast, no prom, Etc...). The icing on the cake is graduation. I understand that you are trying to do the best you can this year with the given circumstances. I also understand why you chose to have a drive thru graduation over the other options. However, the most disappointing thing is that the teachers and "special handshake staff" won't actually be able to shake our hands when we receive our diplomas. I understand why this was done last year because we were on full lockdown and staying 6 feet apart, but with school being back full time with less stringent rules there should be a way to accommodate this. While this might seem like something small and unimportant I can assure you it is NOT to your senior class. This would be a special thing any other year but it means a lot more this year. Our teachers have gone above and beyond to make school better for us in a time of uncertainty. They have taught us and kept us safe both physically and mentally. Personally I chose to have my orchestra teacher shake my hand. I have had her for all four years and have taken seven classes with her in my time at Olentangy. She is not only a teacher, but she is also a mentor and like a second mom to me. I was extremely disappointed when I read that all of the staff would be on the route into the school and not available to be there after us graduates receive our diplomas. I understand that you are trying to make graduation safe, but I would also like it to be special. Having the people there who helped get me to graduation would be super meaningful. I will gladly donate some hand sanitizer if we can make this happen. Thanks, Bryn Tokarz

4/7/21 23:55:31

Ceylon Wise "Salon" Wise

4842 Normandy Dr, Galena, OH

Good Evening Board Members and Community, The push for fair school funding from the state of Ohio seems to be a cause of great frustration for many on the school board and in our community. It's easy to understand why. The school board and other members of the Olentangy administration have been speaking up for months, raising their voices and advocating for what they consider to be necessary changes only to be shut down by the state of Ohio. I am not minimizing these feelings or the importance of school funding but this pattern of speaking up only to be shut down is ironically also the experience of many members of the community who express their concern and perspective regarding the rebranding project for the Olentangy High School "Braves". After speaking up for months and raising our voices, there have been efforts from the Olentangy school board to shut us down. More significantly there seems to be no regard for the Native American community who courageously emailed or submitted statements to the school board explaining variations of the "Brave" mascot name are harmful, demeaning, derogatory, and as one Native described it an issue of human dignity. This issue may seem small and not important to some, but to those who expect Olentangy schools to exemplify the One Community narrative it portrays, this issue is quite important. For those expecting the district to learn from the racially insensitive and biased experiences students endured and boldly shared with us all on DearOLSD, this issue is of utmost importance. In fact, it reveals whether Olentangy Schools is truly

interested in building an inclusive and empathetic culture for the entire community or if it is content catering to the nostalgic wishes of the majority. Multiple Native American organizations and individuals including the Chief of a tribe indigenous to the area specifically and personally asked the Olentangy school board to remove any variation of the "Braves" mascot name. If the board chooses to proceed with plans of an acronym mascot name spelling BRAVE, it will show they believe they have the right to tell a minority group what should and should not offend them. It will show the board members' desire to assert their sense of privilege outweighs their desire for our schools to inspire a sense of belonging. That's why we are hosting a live virtual town hall this Monday April 12th at 7PM called Embrace Change - A discussion surrounding Native American sports mascots and names. This free educational event will be streamed live on the Parent Diversity Network Facebook page and also online at [www.ParentDiversityNetwork.org/townhall](http://www.ParentDiversityNetwork.org/townhall) on this coming Monday, April 12th at 7PM. The evening will be hosted by the Coalition of Natives and Allies and the Parent Diversity Network. It will feature Native and non Native speakers and include a question and answer session providing a safe place to ask questions and most importantly learn. We invite the school board, superintendent Raiff, and the entire Olentangy community to attend. The Native community is speaking up regarding the Olentangy rebrand. As we listen and learn together, we'll discover it's not too late to respect their requests and affirm their human dignity. Thank you, Ceylon Wise

4/8/21 8:48:01

Linda Elam

10811 Eckington Drive, Dublin, Ohio 43016

I would really like the board and Mr Raiff to change course on senior graduations. These seniors deserve a traditional graduation since they have been robbed of their senior year. Graduation should be held in the outdoor stadium. You all need to step up and hear us. This community has stood behind the district passing every levy that has been put on the ballot. Now we are asking you to step up and do your part and allow the seniors to have this graduation they so deserve

4/8/21 8:43:54

Justin Debord Dee-Board

Weatherburn Drive, Powell Ohio 43065

I am a parent of a Liberty Senior. I write to express my sincere displeasure with the drive-through graduation plan and the reluctance for this Board and specifically the Superintendent to change the graduation plan now that the Governor has lifted his restrictions on mass gatherings. The Olentangy School District is the ONLY district in the Columbus area that is going to have a severely restricted graduation. As we have seen from the press coverage of the Parent's displeasure with this plan, Mr. Raiff has not and doesn't appear to be open to a traditional plan that has been submitted by the parents to hold the graduation in the Stadiums while being socially distanced. Furthermore, through Freedom of Information requests with the Delaware Dept of Health, Olentangy School District didn't even ask options for a traditional questions when every other Delaware School made those requests. Mr. Raiff said it during his 10TV interview "we didn't ask the question (to the parents) because we knew the answer". You are doing what you and the teachers is convenient, will save time for planning, but refuse to do what the students and the parents desire. This is unsatisfactory. During the last meeting your group read over 25 minutes of inputs on the word "Braves" from people who aren't even residents of this school district. Residents that do NOT pay taxes to this school district. Our parents group will not

go away, we will not quit until you do what you are paid to do and make these student's graduation an event that they and their families will remember forever. If you put as much planning into doing a traditional graduation as you do for requesting and soliciting for Levy approvals then I'm sure it will be a phenomenal event worthy of one of the top school districts in our great State. Make the change and do it for the students and parents.

4/8/21 9:39:50

Brian Till

3677 Waverly Place Dr., Lewis Center, OH 43035

What happened? What happened to our schools? Our educators that once seemed to care about their students more than a woke culture and fear mongering. What happened to celebrating life, success, challenges and finding answers? You, the Board Members, Superintendents and Directors have not only let your students down, there are some who believe you've done it for money. "Follow the science" has been a rallying cry for those that have fear mongered for the past year. Well then, I'll jump on that bandwagon now..."follow the science". Our governor has just announced new, relaxed restrictions on gatherings, seemingly just in time for graduation season. Have ANY of you actually read them? Do any of you actually care? The quote from my Olentangy Orange senior: "They don't care about us dad. All they care about is money. If they don't have to spend it they'll be happy." Now, whether he's right or not about your reasoning, what matters are the students' perceptions. You preach and teach about feelings, inclusion and acceptance...and yet the hypocritical manner in which you approach this graduation season is embarrassing. And it should be embarrassing to you who supposedly represent our children's emotional well-being. But apparently it is not. You have been presented with well thought out options which would allow for a more traditional graduation ceremony for our children. Will you act on them? Graduation is the passing of a torch. A life experience for our children some of you are so willing to turn into a drive-in fast food procession. And for what purpose? Truly, what purpose? This I know...this will not happen again. My children will have finished their education in the Olentangy school district at the end of this year. But I will do all that I can do to ensure that the decision makers who have passed this poorly designed and insensitively administered graduation plan, and who continue to stubbornly stand steadfastly behind it, will no longer return to their positions once their terms are up. Do your jobs. Open your minds and accept that others have created and offered up better proposals that far and away meet and exceed our children's expectations. If this correspondence angers and/or upsets you, it should. Look into the faces of your fellow board members and tell us and your students whose ego it is that keeps you tied to a mindset that is a failure and a series of ceremonies that many will forgo as their opinions weren't heard, their feelings didn't matter and their ideas "listened to" only in a patronizing fashion. So, will you do the right thing? Are you courageous enough to step-up and take on others ideas? I pray you do. For the sake of all those involved.

4/8/21 10:45:39

Margo Seyboldt

6922 Saint Ninian's St; Lewis Center, OH 43035

Dear School Board Members and Superintendent Raiff, My family would like to express our support of an in-person graduation for our senior and all of the other OLSD seniors. We have been watching messages from the Governor with full support of in-person graduations. We have also watched the

news about parents discussing and planning an alternative to the drive by graduation the school district has decided upon. The parents who have offered alternative ideas are on track with what our son has expressed he would like to experience as his final good-bye to these important years in his life. It came to my attention there was no attempt by OLSD to contact the Delaware Community Health Department regarding protocols for large gatherings or to investigate if they would offer a variance for an event. It's a shame no effort was made to explore options, but I have to believe for the good of our community, it is not too late to contact the experts on these matters. I read emails to the Delaware Community Health Department from many other schools in our county where they explored the options for prom, and graduation. These schools have taken the steps to not only investigate but also to plan and execute an in-person graduation. We hope you will consider sending off the seniors in a way where they feel their journey with OLSD has been honored and respected, which includes the classmates graduating together with family present. Kind Regards, Margo, Eric and Emanuel Seyboldt (life-long OLSD student beginning with pre-school)

4/8/21 10:42:33

Tracey Green

2200 Killdeer Place

Hi everyone, I wanted to make sure that it was on record that myself and many other senior parents are supportive for an in stadium graduation, whether this be hybrid or full school. The governor has released the occupancy limits for outside events including graduation. After seeing all the emails with the Delaware health department and what other schools in the area are doing. I'm very frustrated and disappointed that Olentangy did not reach out to the health dept for guidance. I hope Olentangy will do the right thing now and allow this group of amazing kids an in person traditional graduation 🙏.

4/8/21 11:05:35

Alyce Elbert Alice L-bert

2847 Pebble Dr, Lewis Center

I am respectfully asking the board to encourage our superintendent and administration to allow a traditional graduation ceremony at each of our high school stadiums. These beautiful taxpayer-funded stadiums are the perfect venue for graduation. There is no reason why graduation cannot be held safely in a traditional way. Olentangy has done a great job of getting our students back to school full-time and I know with a little effort and creative thinking we can devise a plan to have a traditional graduation for the Class of 2021. Thank you for giving this serious thought and time.