

**Resolution Honoring Indigenous Peoples' Day 2021
and the Native Peoples of North Carolina**

WHEREAS, Orange County Schools was founded on land previously settled by ancestors of the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation; and,

WHEREAS, the ancestors of the Occaneechi people lived west of the mountains in the Ohio River Valley for millennia; and,

WHEREAS, over 1,000 years ago the ancestors crossed the mountains and settled in the high, hilly land of the east; and,

WHEREAS, the people, collectively known as Yésah, established villages along the Great Trading Path, and following the slaughter of the Occaneechi by Nathaniel Bacon's men, by 1682 many of the Occaneechi survivors migrated south and settled along the banks of the Eno River, near present-day Hillsborough¹; and,

WHEREAS, "between 1492 and 1880 between 2 and 5.5 million Native Americans were enslaved in the Americas in addition to 12.5 million African slaves;²" and,

WHEREAS, under a peace treaty with Governor Spotswood of the Colony of Virginia, the Occaneechi formed a confederation with the Sappony and several other tribes, collectively referred to as the Saponi Nation; and,

WHEREAS, one of the earliest documented experiences of Indigenous children along the colonial boundaries of North Carolina and Virginia in White-run schools was in 1714 to 1718, when Sappony children were held hostage to be educated and religiously indoctrinated in Fort Christianna Indian School, in Brunswick County, Virginia; and,

WHEREAS, the practice of forced boarding of Native children in Residential Schools with the goal of assimilation into White Christian culture continued across the United States well into the twentieth century; and,

WHEREAS, "North Carolina's 1868 constitution, written when the state re-joined the United States after the Civil War, created a public school system free for all the children of the state aged 6 to 21. In 1875, the state constitution was amended to specify that 'the children of the white race and the children of the colored race shall be taught in separate public schools.'³ ; and,

WHEREAS, the local Indian schools that functioned during the over one hundred years of school segregation in North Carolina were mostly built with the cost and labor of the Native community, without state-funded building materials or labor, unlike the White schools, and the Indian communities did not have choice in the White teachers sent to instruct their children; and,

WHEREAS, Occaneechi children attended their own Indian School starting in 1840, then later the McCray School prior to 1924 and subsequently Martin School; and,

WHEREAS, the State of Virginia's Racial Integrity Act of 1924, with the intention of protecting a "pure white race" by forbidding interracial marriage, was also a tool to effect erasure of tribal heritage and Native American identity by limiting racial identifiers only to two, "White" or "Colored," which impacted Native peoples far beyond Virginia; and,

¹ [The Orange County History of the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation](#), by Lawrence A. Dunmore, 2020

² Linford D. Fisher, Associate Professor of History, Brown University, 2017, "Colonial Enslavement of Native Americans Included Those Who Surrendered, Too"

³ Mary Beth Fitts, NCDNCR Office of State Archaeology Blog, 2020, "Mapping North Carolina's American Indian Schools"

WHEREAS, the Certificates of Degree of Indian Blood issued by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, known as “Issue Cards” were a method of securing recognition of tribal ancestry, but the intention of which by White-run systems was to control movement of Native Americans on a day-to-day basis in North Carolina throughout much of the 1900s; and,

WHEREAS, Native Americans were not able to exercise their right to vote as established by the 15th Amendment of 1870, until the Snyder Act of 1924 specifically granted full citizenship to Native Americans, following which their effective ability to vote was blocked by strategies of those in power such as poll taxes and literacy tests, until the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and subsequent legislation in the 1970s and 1980s; and,

WHEREAS, the Occaneechi community in Alamance, Orange, and Caswell Counties formally reorganized in 1984, establishing a 12-member tribal council, which in 1995 amended the name of the tribe to the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation (OBSN), which finally received state recognition in 2002, whereupon the “Occaneechi purchased a 25-acre portion of its ancestral lands in the “Little Texas” Community of NE Alamance County”⁴; and,

WHEREAS, for centuries before, and for decades since school integration, the stories of Native peoples have been inaccurately and often disrespectfully told by educators, authors, and publishers, even today; and,

WHEREAS, the path to academic success for Indigenous students, as for all students, requires a school setting that fosters a healthy sense of identity, communicating that they are valued and capable, and not one that inflicts harm by inaccurate and racist curriculum, literature, and practices; and,

WHEREAS, today students and staff in Orange County Schools have tribal heritage reflecting an unknown number of North Carolina’s eight state-recognized tribes, the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation, the Sappony, the Haliwa-Saponi, Waccamaw Siouan, Lumbee, Meherrin, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and the Coharie tribes; and,

WHEREAS, the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation has over 2,000 members in and around Orange County Schools, and is based today in Orange, Alamance, and Caswell counties, and is represented by cultural leaders and experts serving in our k-12 public schools, our local colleges and universities, and in professional fields of all kinds; and,

WHEREAS, in the 2020-21 school year Orange County Schools began the pursuit of establishing a Native American Studies course offering at the high school level, and the OCS Board of Education began training to better support outcomes for Indigenous students in OCS; and,

WHEREAS, on April 27, 2021 North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper acknowledged the racial bias working against protections for Native American women by proclaiming May 5th, 2021 the Day of Awareness of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women; and,

WHEREAS, on June 22, 2021 Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo) announced a federal Indian boarding school initiative to investigate the troubled legacy of forced removal of Native children from their families, stating, “The Interior Department will address the intergenerational impact of Indian boarding schools to shed light on the unspoken traumas of the past, no matter how hard it will be...I know this process will be long and difficult. I know this process will be painful. It won’t undo the heartbreak and loss we feel. But only by acknowledging the past can we work toward a future that we’re all proud to embrace;”and,

WHEREAS, Orange County Schools Policy 1030: Equity in Education, states that our school district acknowledges persistent racial intolerance, inequities and academic disparities in our district; and,

WHEREAS, we see our schools as centers for culturally diverse learning where all students are educated to their fullest potential and as centers of our community around which we come together in support of the education of all students; and,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, we recognize the value and contributions of our Indigenous community, continuing to seek relationships with and guidance from the Occaneechi Tribal Council, educational leaders from the Sappony Tribe,

⁴ LA Dunmore

and leaders of the other eight North Carolina tribes especially as we learn of their representation among the Orange County Schools community; be it further

RESOLVED, we will continue to implement teacher training from the NC State Advisory Council on Indian Education professional development materials, including PD8048, so that our classroom materials are culturally relevant, our celebration of holidays are culturally respectful, and our Indigenous students can experience the equitable school climate they deserve; be it further

RESOLVED, we will continue to pursue the establishment of an honors-level course in Native American Studies at the high school level; be it further

RESOLVED, we will seek to better compile accurate data reflecting who our Native families and students are, thereby removing the “asterisk of invisibility;” be it further

RESOLVED, Orange County Schools will officially and permanently recognize and designate on the OCS calendar and other appropriate materials the second Monday in October each year as “Indigenous Peoples’ Day”; and be it further

RESOLVED, that Orange County Schools will work with the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation to determine how best we can recognize the tribal heritage of the land where River Park Elementary School was established; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Orange County Schools Board of Education stands in solidarity with our Indigenous students, staff and community members and will continue to promote school communities that foster an affirming sense of personal identity for all students.

The Board would like to express our deepest gratitude to the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation for their willingness to guide Orange County Schools in becoming a better place for Indigenous students to learn and grow and for their continued partnership with district leadership. Historical information from Lawrence A. Dunmore (OBSN) as well as from <http://www.obsn.org> were used in the creation of this Resolution.

The Board would like to extend special appreciation to Kara Stewart (Sappony) for sharing her expertise and personal story as an educator with the Board; much of this Resolution was developed from her professional materials.

Adopted by the Orange County Board of Education this 11^h day of October, 2021.

Hillary MacKenzie, Chair
OCS Board of Education

Dr. Monique Felder, Superintendent
Orange County Schools