

SYCSD Diversity Committee

Report to the Board of Education regarding the Native American Logo March 18, 2021

Introduction

In the summer of 2020, the Southern York County School Board requested the District Diversity Committee to conduct a study to allow time for thoughtful discussion, research, and analysis with stakeholder input on the use of the current District Native American logo. As a result of this request, the District Diversity Committee divided into relevant subgroups to analyze and research specific areas related to the Native American logo. These subgroups focused on the available history of the Susquehannock Tribe and subsequent selection and naming of the high school and school logo, the inclusion of the Susquehannock Tribe in District curriculum, and the stakeholder perceptions of the use of a Native American Indian as the District logo. The following report is a summary of the findings of each of these subgroups.

History Sub-Committee Report

Background:

The History Subcommittee of the Southern York County School District's Diversity Committee was asked to research the history of the naming of the high school, Susquehannock High School, and the use of the Warrior head logo for the District. As part of this research, the Committee was also asked to research the history of the Susquehannock Tribe in the Southern York County School District.

Committee Members:

Co-Chairs

Susan Green (Chief Financial and Operations Officer)
Kevin Molin (Principal)

Members

Bruce Bauman (Board Director)	Rachel Metzler (Teacher)
Wade Bowers (Teacher)	Artemas Mott (Public Information Specialist)
Deb Chilcoat-Goble (Parent)	Kristen Petry (Teacher)
Tanya Dozier (Parent)	Len Reppert (Principal)
Kelly Dunleavy Lanham (Parent)	Mark Rill (Coordinator)
Abbegale Eakins (Teacher)	Cate Scholles (Teacher)
Carla Kruzic (Teacher)	Atticus Silbaugh (Student)

Summary of Research:

Beginning in approximately 1947, the municipalities of Codorus Township, Shrewsbury Township, Glen Rock Borough, New Freedom Borough, Railroad Borough, and Shrewsbury Borough began work to consolidate as a school system and build a junior-senior high school. While previous planning of the new consolidated Southern York Joint School District occurred, approval of the Articles of Agreement occurred on March 2, 1950. Shortly thereafter on April 27, 1950, the Planning Committee of the Southern York Joint

School District was instructed to decide upon a name for the new junior and senior high school that was to be built on the Fissels Church Road site.

Consensus of opinion of the Planning Committee was that a contest be conducted among the pupils of the Joint Board with a prize of \$35.00 to go to the pupil submitting the accepted name accompanied with a qualifying essay and \$15.00 to go to the home room of the winning pupil. On July 13, 1950, the judges recommended that the name Susquehannock High School be used as proposed by Jere Miller, a pupil in the 6th grade at New Freedom. Per the minutes (July 13, 1950), "The name Susquehannock was proposed due to the fact that it was the name of the Indian tribe formerly inhabiting this area and using the site of the proposed school." [Historical perspective: The Korean War began in June 1950. This is important to note as the community was planning for this new building, but also living through a war.]

Extensive research on the Susquehannock Tribe was conducted to determine if they inhabited this part of Pennsylvania and York County. Citations for the research conducted are listed at the end of this summary and included contacting other tribes that may have ancestors of the Susquehannock Tribe after it ceased to exist. Additionally, local York County Historians were contacted and their works were read to try to identify the existence of the Susquehannock Tribe in Southern York County.

Historical evidence regarding the Susquehannock Tribe is limited due to the time period in which the Susquehannock Tribe thrived along the Susquehanna River Valley and the subsequent decline. Research of the Susquehannock Tribe supports the following:

1. Anthropologists and historians believe the Susquehannock to be closely related to the Iroquois and that the Susquehannock migrated south from present day New York beginning around the year 1450 A.D.
2. The name, 'Susquehannock' was first used in historical documents detailing Captain John Smith's encounter with the group. French colonists called the Susquehannock 'Andaste', Swedish and Dutch colonists referred to the Susquehannock as the 'Minqua', and English colonists living in Pennsylvania called them 'Conestoga.' Some historians believe the tribe members would have referred to themselves as the Conestoga, but no consensus on their exact name exists.
3. At the height of their economic and cultural power, historical documents suggest that the Susquehannock may have controlled areas stretching east into present day New Jersey and southern Maryland.
4. During the 'Contact Period' (1550 AD to 1670 AD), historical accounts show that the Susquehannock actively traded with French, Swedish, Dutch, and English colonists.
5. Susquehannock villages found in Pennsylvania have all been located along the Susquehanna River from the New York border to the Lower Susquehannock Valley. A Susquehannock village(s) did exist in Lower Windsor Township, York, PA. The exact size of the York County village(s) as compared to the larger Susquehannock villages excavated and surveyed in Lancaster County has not been fully determined at this time.
6. It is believed that the Susquehannock may have inhabited the village(s) located in Lower Windsor Township until as late as 1680.
7. Given the location of the Susquehannock village(s) in Lower Windsor Township and the size of the excavated sites in Lancaster County, it is reasonable to believe that the food and resource supply needed to sustain a village of that size meant the Susquehannock would have used the entirety of York County for hunting and gathering purposes.
8. At the height of their power, some historical documents suggest that the Susquehannock may have controlled areas stretching as far east as present day New Jersey
9. Prior to being submerged by water from construction of the Safe Harbor Dam, petroglyphs produced by the Susquehannock Tribe could be found on both the York and Lancaster County sides of the

Susquehannock River. Those petroglyphs were photographed and cataloged by the Pennsylvania Historical Society.

10. The Monocacy Trail, which connected Philadelphia and Taneytown, Maryland has been identified as the Native American footpath and is believed to have transversed through present day York City and Hanover. Because the Susquehannock were actively involved in trading, it is reasonable to believe the Susquehannock would have used this pathway as a trade route between their allies the Lenape Tribe (Montgomery County, PA) and the Native Americans living in Western Maryland and Northern Virginia,
11. Due to a series of long trade wars with neighboring tribes, unfavorable political alliances with Europeans, and the adverse impacts of disease, the Susquehannock were forced to abandon their villages in the region. The remaining members of the Susquehannock Tribe living in the Lower Susquehanna Valley moved south into Maryland and possibly Virginia for a period of time only to return to Lancaster County in smaller numbers prior to the American Revolution.
12. John Edward Vandersloot (February 17, 1869 - November 20, 1936), a York County Attorney and Glen Rock, PA native, was an advocate for the preservation of Native American history and culture. He built what is currently known as Indian Steps Museum (completed in 1912) as a summer retreat and a depository of local Native American artifacts.
13. Despite local folklore and legend, current research findings demonstrate that there is no evidence that the Susquehannock Indians lived in or around the municipalities that comprise the Southern York County School District.

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[Petroglyphs \(Rock Carvings\) in the Susquehanna River near Safe Harbor, Pennsylvania \(Safe Harbor report #1; Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1934\)](#)

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Curriculum Sub-Committee Summary

Background:

The Curriculum Subcommittee of the Southern York County School District's Diversity Committee was asked to examine the curriculum currently in place demonstrating a historical perspective of the Southern York County community and the Native American life here in this region. As part of this research, the Subcommittee was asked to make recommendations for additions to the curriculum on the impacts of the Susquehannock Tribe in the Southern York County School District.

Committee Members:

Co-Chairs

Kimberly Hughes (Director of Curriculum and Instruction)

Stephanie Winemiller (Principal)

Members

Deb Kalina (Board Director)

Kelly Jarvis (Board Director)

Matt Amberman (Teacher)

Michelle Brengle (Counselor)

Mark Finn (Teacher)

Jalen Franklin (Student)

Lillie Grove (Teacher)

Lisa Kline (Teacher)

Amy Koval (Parent)

Hayley Leach (Teacher)

Erica Littleton (Teacher)

Alicia McCrary (Teacher)

Erin O'Connor (Counselor)

Frank Posner (Teacher)

Tracey Rankin (Parent)

Alison Reppert (EL Teacher)

Brendan Rogers (Director of Special Education)

Sarah Shaull (Teacher)

Erica Sterner (Teacher)

Andy Warren (Teacher)

Summary of Research:

Southern York County School District created a subcommittee to examine what currently exists in our curriculum in regards to the Native American community and diversity.

The teachers on the subcommittee met with their grade-level/department teams to compile a list of current curriculum connections to the Susquehannock North American Indian Tribe and positive communities.

Students in the primary grades examine communities and the roles and responsibilities of citizens in the community. Primary grades also look at local exports and area landmarks to establish an understanding of Glen Rock and the surrounding areas. The curriculum also looks at the role of Native American's in the settlement of Jamestown and early colonization.

Our students in intermediate grades examine Native Americans and their impact on Pennsylvania and other States throughout the country over a span of time. The curriculum includes topics of Louis and Clark exploration, the Indian Removal Act and the impact of the Navajo Code during WWII.

In grades 7 and 8 the focus on Native American Indian culture is discussed during examination of Colonization in 8th grade Social Studies. Students revisit Native American and English settlements and the Trail of Tears throughout the unit. In addition, the use of Native American logos in professional franchises are discussed.

The US History course is a continuation of the 8th grade curriculum, building from diverse perspectives of American history (gender, race, country of origin, etc). In AP US History, a more in depth analysis of the Native American perspective occurs through analysis of the Colonial Era, points of cooperation and conflict with Native Americans, Westward Expansion and aftermath for various Native American tribes. The course tries to avoid a universal approach of 'Native American culture', focusing rather on the Native American perspective in the modern age, struggles faced by those who tried to adapt, and other topics such as Carlisle Boarding School to assimilate Native American children and teens into mainstream culture.

The subcommittee identified the key components of a Warrior Nation as a positive community which exhibits the following qualities:

- Brave
- Empathetic
- Overcoming obstacles
- Supportive
- Respectful
- Culturation rather than assimilation
- Accepting of Differences
- Having a Voice
- Safe space

Recommendation:

Members of the sub-committee cited the need for a cohesive, purposeful district-wide plan to increase our students' understanding of diversity not just of Native American's but the need to include representation of all. Subcommittee members felt it is imperative that curriculum, instructional resources and classroom novels include stories from people of diverse backgrounds. We would like for our students to explore differing perspectives of historical and modern events to build an understanding of diverse perspectives and build empathy towards others. In addition, the subcommittee recommended extending the local history in our current curriculum.

The team felt strongly that the curriculum and literature needs to continue to develop and expand upon civil discourse, and promote a fostering of empathy, communication skills, and critical thinking as the foundation for the K-12 plan. In addition, the relationships between diverse groups of people are ever changing and need to be reflected in our curriculum.

Perspectives and Stakeholders Sub-Committee Summary

Background:

The Perspectives Subcommittee of the Southern York County School District's Diversity Committee researched and collected the perspectives of stakeholders including students, staff, community members, alumni, and Native Americans/American Indians locally and nationally.

Committee Members:

Cochairs

Mary Dankosky (Principal)

James Hollinger (Principal)

Members

Deborah Kalina (Board Director)

Candice Fallin (Parent)

Lauren Hoffman (School Psychologist)

Aneesha Kandala (Student)

Jason Katz (Counselor)

Angela Miller (Counselor)

Jill Platts (Social Services Coordinator)

Nick Schiffgens (Teacher)

Matthew Shervington-Jackson (Counselor)

Donna Schick (Assistant Principal)

Deb Smith (Social/Racial Justice Coordinator-YWCA of Hanover)

Deborah Stone (Assistant Principal)

Summary of Research:

The Perspectives subcommittee reached out to a variety of local and national organizations that represent Native Americans and historical organizations. Southern York County School District community members also contacted the committee and district administration to offer their perspectives on the retention or retirement of the Native American logo. The purpose of this report is to present the gathered information for consideration by the Board of Directors.

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) is the largest and most representative organization advocating for tribal nations and peoples in the United States. It was founded in 1944 to establish a congress of Native Americans and Alaska Natives with the purpose of developing national consensus on issues that impact tribal sovereignty (National Congress of American Indians, 2021). NCAI has engaged in frequent and sustained contact with the Perspectives subcommittee to provide information and perspectives. According to Dr. Ian Record, Vice President, Tribal Governance and Special Projects, the NCAI "has been leading Indian Country's consensus-driven movement to eradicate offensive Native themed mascots and popular culture for the past 50 years" (personal communication, October 21, 2020). Dr. Record also shared that the name "Susquehannock" is not considered to be problematic as many towns, roads, etc. have Native American names and have not been the subject of consensus from the NCAI. Additionally, the "Warrior" name is viewed by the NCAI as general enough to not be offensive when not associated with Native American imagery (personal communication, October 27, 2020).

The NCAI's (2013) report states, "The use of racist and derogatory Indian sports mascots, logos, or symbols, is harmful and perpetuates negative stereotypes of America's first peoples. Specifically, rather than honoring Native peoples, these caricatures and stereotypes contribute to a disregard for the personhood of Native peoples. Efforts to end harmful Indian mascots are rooted in an attempt to achieve social justice and racial equality across all parts of American Society" (page 5). This report is further supported by Davis-Delan, Gone, and Fryberg's (2020) meta-analysis of research on the effects of Native-themed

mascots and imagery, whose academic research on the topic suggests that the use of these mascots induces or correlates with negative psychosocial outcomes regardless of the stated intent of those that support the use of Native mascots to honor Native Americans. The studies show that Native mascots generate negative psychological effects for Native students; including lower self-esteem and lower community worth. Studies also demonstrated that Native mascots and logos are associated with negative stereotypes and with a tendency to discriminate against Native Americans. No evidence was found from any study that associated positive or beneficial effects for Native Americans from the use of Native mascots, logos, or imagery. The American Psychological Society (2005) also called for the immediate retirement of all Native American mascots, symbols, and images by schools due to the growing body of literature on the harmful effects on social identity development and self-esteem of Native American children.

Results of multiple studies showing the damaging effects of Native American mascots have not gone unnoticed in the education and sports communities. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) (2005) issued guidelines that took effect in 2006 to prohibit NCAA college and universities from “displaying hostile and abusive racial/ethnic/national origin mascots, nicknames, or imagery at any of the 88 NCAA championships.” The NCAA “strongly suggested” that institutions do not support the use of Native American mascots or imagery, educate stakeholders of the negative impact of this imagery, and increase their own knowledge of Native American culture. Additional sports governing bodies have followed; in 2019, Little League International prohibited the use of racially insensitive mascots and imagery (NAI, 2019). In 2018, Cleveland’s Major League Baseball team removed the Native American caricature from their imagery and followed in 2020 with the announcement that a name change is planned (Schmidt & Waldstein, 2020) In 2020, the Washington’s National Football League announced that they were retiring their name (Carpenter, 2020). In 2020 alone, 68 schools across the nation have retired Native American logos, imagery, or nicknames (NAI, 2021).

Some evidence indicates that members of the Lenape Nation may be descendants from the Susquehannock tribe. Adam Waterbear DePaul, member of the Tribal Council and Storykeeper, responded to a request for perspective that was sent to the Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania. “We definitely prefer not to be used as a mascot/logo in any form. Regarding honoring us, we feel too often mascots/logos contain harmful stereotypes or misrepresentations of our people or culture; however, even if they do not, they tend to root us in the past, solidifying us as an historical exhibit, rather than a living people. If you would like to acknowledge us, we would prefer to offer a presentation so you can learn about our culture, both past and present” (personal communication, December 7, 2020).

Despite the research and wave of recent retirements of Native American mascots and logos, there is not a universal opinion on the matter. A representative of the Native American Guardians Association (NAGA), formed in 2014 to advocate for retention of respectful Native American names and imagery, also reached out via email to offer a statement of the perspectives of their organization. NAGA’s position is to “educate, not eradicate” Native American imagery and logos. The stated position is that Native imagery and logos honor and promote remembrance for Native Americans (personal correspondence, August 24, 2020). The Perspectives Subcommittee reached out to NAGA for more information on their perspectives but did not receive a response.

The Southern York County School District continues to make the recruitment and retainment of diverse teaching candidates a top priority. The District understands the importance of having a staff that is representative of the students in which they teach. From a human resource perspective, the current district logo can be perceived as culturally insensitive and racist; potentially making recruitment of a diverse staff increasingly more difficult. This same perception of insensitivity could be shared by families moving into the district or families with preschool age children that are unfamiliar with the district.

Some community members and alumni support the retention of the Native American logo at Susquehannock High School and the Southern York County School District. Reasons cited for retention of the current logo include preserving the memory of a local tribe, showing respect for the Native peoples that inhabited this area, and preserving the legacy of the school. Many stakeholders also view the logo as a symbol of strength, honor, self-discipline, and bravery as it is, in their opinion, depicted in a respectful manner. The current logo was not created with ill-intent and provides a source of pride, tradition, and an identity to the community and the proud graduates of Susquehannock High School.

The current academic research speaks with unanimity on the harmful impact of Native American imagery when used as a logo and supports the perspective of all but one Native American organization that offered their perspectives. As the largest representative organization of Native people in the United States, the NCAI's position on this issue has been consistent for over 50 years as they have actively advocated for the retirement of Native American imagery and mascots as they view these representations as racist and demeaning, not as an honor given to them. Despite the research and views of many Native Americans, some stakeholders wish to preserve the traditional logo of Susquehannock High School as it is thought to be an important part of their past. These opposing viewpoints appear to be the major conflicting perspectives collected by the subcommittee for consideration by the Board of Directors.

Correspondence

The following quotes were taken from email correspondence sent by current students, alumni, parents, and community members:

- “Our mascot is an inaccurate depiction of a functioning minority, chalking them up to an artifact rather than an active culture. This symbol is also a stereotype of indigenous people, proven to encourage racism and discrimination...”
- Current SHS Student
- “I am an alumni [sic] and I would be extremely offended if my school decided to change and delete the Warrior. That would mean I am alumni [sic] of nothing.”
- SHS Alumnus
- “We view the image as a representation of strength and honor. The image is respectful and pays homage to the tribe that lived in this area.”
- SYCSD Parent
- “To think we know what this artwork means to an affected population who can’t tell us, is ludicrous. We somehow then become self-righteous as though it is our mission to correct some past event, without factual basis!”
- SHS Alumnus
- “Changing the mascot will not change the wonderful legacy of SYCSD. The strength, heart, and local pride is woven through everything we do. This is not a matter of political correctness. It is a matter of compassion and a clear vision for our district”
- SYCSD Parent and Teacher

Survey Data

[Insert table upon completion of the survey]

References

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