

Rationale

Two of PTA's core values are diversity and respect. To accomplish our mission of enabling every child to reach their potential, we must focus on respecting all children, their diversity, and their experiences. For our communities to operate in full engagement and empowerment to advocate for all children. We must consider the names and symbols of educational institutions within our communities.

The harm from colonization and enslavement on our country, state, and local communities is profound. Commemorations and symbols become ingrained into the background tapestry of our institutions. Despite this background, we must examine our commemorations and symbols so we can fully advocate for all children. School names and symbols (e.g. mascots) that disenfranchise their populations reinforce racism and stereotypes, and thus continue disempowering and harming our communities. Our public schools are proclaimed safe places, and must be safe for everyone.

PTA's mission is to advocate for all children to reach their full potential. We can not effectively do that if one child is allowed to be harmed. If we are ever to find a way forward for every child to reach their full potential, each PTA needs to speak up with one voice to ensure that our educational institutions are safe - even in their names and symbols.

A Resolution on Culturally Insensitive School Names and Mascots

Whereas, At least 195 public schools around the country have names that are culturally insensitive. They memorialize Confederate soldiers, leaders or politicians even though more than half of the 125,000 students who attend these schools are Black (22%) or Hispanic (31%). In North America, there are more than two thousand professional, college, and high school teams with Native team names and symbols. [1] [2] [3]

Whereas, An often overlooked component of race and racism is the impact of school names and symbols on the school culture in shaping the identities of students, teachers, and their communities. These memorializations normalize stereotypes and reinforce systemic racism, thereby producing toxic learning environments for students and educators leading to inequitable learning outcomes [4] [5] [6]

Whereas, School names and symbols (e.g. mascots) reflect school community values. Removing or transforming symbols of racial hierarchy and creating affirming sites of memory in their place expresses respect towards the lives of people who were harmed by the historical injustices. Title VI provides practices and supports community engagement that lead to reflections regarding our schools, including their names and symbols, as recently demonstrated in Hillsborough County. [7] [8] [9] [10] [11]

Be It Resolved, that Florida PTA and its constituent associations call for and support the renaming of schools which have culturally insensitive names,

Be It Resolved, that Florida PTA and its constituent associations call for and support the replacement of school mascots which are culturally insensitive,

Be It Resolved, that Florida PTA and its constituent associations advocate for school community and stakeholder input in the renaming and replacement process.

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11. *Hillsborough County Public Schools*, 2020,
www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/doc/list/title-vi/about/178-866/.