

March 7, 2022

Members of the Dartmouth School Committee:

We, members of the federally recognized Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) and all of Dartmouth's tribal families comprising of proud residents, alumni and current students, fully support preserving the Dartmouth Indians name and symbol. As you are well aware, an iteration of the current logo was authored by fellow tribal member and Dartmouth High School alumnus, Clyde Andrews, around 1974 after his mother Edith Andrews was asked by Gil Madrigail, Director of Music, and the late Carlin Lynch, Head Football Coach to redesign the then-existing Great Plains Indian symbol to reflect an accurate depiction of an Eastern Woodlands Indian. The Dartmouth Indian, its symbolism, history, and the pride behind it has united our families and generations of Dartmouth residents alike.

Despite the battle cries of a few non-tribal voices in Dartmouth as well as a few out-of-town organizations, the symbol is not disrespectful, disparaging or derogatory in any manner. Over generations, many of the undersigned students thrived (and continue to) while attending Dartmouth schools, representing our town across the state and nation in various capacities through scholastics, sports and the music program.

Unfortunately, there are some, including several members of the Dartmouth School Committee, who are determined to erase the Dartmouth Indian at all costs. The three-year process to erase the Indians was deliberately exclusory from the onset; from the creation of a cherrypicked, now-defunct subcommittee, demonstrating a complete lack of outreach for public comment and dissenting opinions, to ignoring the sentiments of our tribal members who reside in Dartmouth. In addition, certain school committee members have intentionally downplayed our federal recognition status—a government-to-government relationship between our tribe and the United States with inherent rights of self-government and sovereignty.

Further, we, as tribal members and residents of Dartmouth were not invited to be 'presenters' at the March 8th "tribal" forum located in the high school library. Rather, we, along with the rest of the public have been relegated to the high school auditorium where we can access the meeting via livestream. According to the March 8th agenda notice, no public comment will be permitted, including comment from members of our Tribe who reside in Dartmouth. How tragic would it be to our Dartmouth High students who are tribal members who are being stripped of their representative identity without ever having been consulted?

On July 13, 2021, staying true to the theme of suppressing dissenting viewpoints, School Committee Chair, Dr. Shannon Jenkins, said, "*We shouldn't ask oppressed people if they feel comfortable with their oppression.*" Almost a year earlier, on August 13, 2020, Jenkins publicly tweeted: "*They're mad that I've pointed out our mascot . . . is racist. It's a lot easier to LOL when racists are mad at you,*" @slnoonanj, Twitter. This type of rhetoric has significantly polluted any school committee forums on this matter and it demonstrates a lack of appreciation for the intelligence and sophistication of our tribal members who are thriving citizens across the state and

country that include law enforcement, doctors, teachers, lawyers, tradesmen, scientists, artists, tribal leadership, elected officials and great parents to name a just a few. We are not oppressed.

Moreover, the Dartmouth Indian is an honorable symbol, not a mascot. Over the years, the school department has respectfully utilized the symbol in a limited manner that demonstrates honor and pride for our people—the symbol won't be found on the floor of a school hallway, a basketball court, field of play, or any location where it can be stepped on.

Of course, we understand that not all tribes or tribal members agree on whether to maintain indigenous imagery or names in contemporary culture. Just like any subset of people in our country, we have differing thoughts and diverse perspectives. We agree that all people should have an opportunity to voice their opinions. However, the issues related to the Indians name and symbol are local, special and unique to Dartmouth. These issues should ultimately be resolved by Dartmouth's residents and alumni. The Dartmouth Indians name and symbol is unifying, respectful and pays homage to our indigenous history. It should be reaffirmed, honored and celebrated.

Respectfully,

All of Dartmouth's member families, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah),

Edith Andrews, *Tribal Elder, Dartmouth Parent*

Clyde Andrews, *DHS '74, (author of logo)*

Cheryl Andrews-Maltais, *DHS '77*

Mark Andrews, *DHS graduate*

Kyle Andrews

Sean Carney, Esq., *New Bedford*

Naomi R.A. Carney, *DHS '74*

Wendy Harwood, *Dartmouth Parent*

Meaghan Harwood

Jeff Marden, *Dartmouth Parent*

William Marden, *DHS '20*

James Marden, *current DHS student*

Mary Marden, *current DHS student*

Courtney Pousinho (Marden), *DHS '04*

Lauren Marden, *DHS '08*

Kaitlyn Ance

Randall "Bear" Monteiro, *Dartmouth*

Celeste Ventura, *Dartmouth Parent*

Jacob Ventura, *DHS '05*

Jeremy Ventura, *DHS '09*

Jaryd Walker, *New Bedford*

Justyn Walker, *New Bedford*