

Good morning,

I am Ashley Williamson and I am currently a four-year senior at MEHS. I am Tlingit as well as a member of the Blackfeet Nation from Montana. Each year that I return to Mt. Edgecumbe, I notice how the logo and the mascot misrepresent our student body. This concerns me greatly and I would like to move to change both for a number of reasons.

1. The logo and mascot represent colonization.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs assigned us this logo and mascot that is a general caricature for all Natives. That being said, the logo is stereotypical in addition to being an inaccurate representation of our students.

2. Appropriation of Culture.

The "Indian" that the logo and mascot represent are more symbolic for Plains tribes. They do not represent Alaska Natives in any way. This appropriation of culture is hurtful and disrespectful to Plains tribes. As a predominantly Alaska Native school, it is all the more important for us to respect fellow Indigenous cultures.

3. The direct connection to the Washington Redskins.

The logo is identical to that of the football team the Washington "Redskins." The name itself is derogatory and offensive, and our school should not be associated with that.

As an underclassman, I did not have the courage, bravery, or voice to advocate for my beliefs these past few years. However, as a senior now, I can not leave this school without first speaking up on behalf of my tribe; it is my responsibility as a member of a Plains tribe to do so. I do understand and respect that this logo has been a part of our school's tradition and history, but it is at the expense of someone else's traditions, history, and cultural pride. Furthermore, an even more important part of our school's history is our tradition of respect, and as such, in honor of that tradition of respect, the time has come for a change. My proposal is for us to change the logo and the mascot costume, but to keep the name "Braves," and for us, as a school, to elaborate and establish a new logo and mascot that not only ceases to degrade our Plains brothers and sisters, but also one that better represents our school of Alaskan students.