



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

15 Charter Road Acton, MA 01720
978-264-4700
www.abschools.org

Peter J. Light
Superintendent of Schools

TO: Members of our Acton and Boxborough Community
FROM: Superintendent Peter Light
DATE: November 2, 2020
RE: Records Request for Emails Regarding Request to Retire the AB Colonials Mascot

Subsequent to the school committee decision to retire the Colonial as the AB Mascot on October, 15, 2020, we received a public records request from one of our citizens. Specifically, the citizen requested copies of the feedback provided to the school committee which contributed to the decision. In response we are providing these records to our community.

This information is included with the meeting materials of the October 15, 2020 School Committee meeting. It was at this meeting that, after much deliberation, the School Committee members unanimously voted the following:

"To retire the AB Colonial Mascot, recognizing that there are many positive attributes of our town history that we associate with the students of ABRSD, and with the understanding that programs and new purchases made by the District will no longer bear the name "Colonials", but changes to existing capital items such as uniforms, scoreboards and other items will be undertaken as time and funding permit."

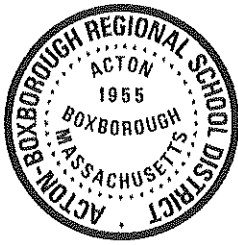
More information is found in the posted minutes of that meeting and the recording on actontv.org.

Chairperson Tessa McKinley's memo on the next page describes the events leading up to her request for public input regarding the retirement of the mascot. This memo seeking public comment, was sent to school families, junior high and high school students, all school staff, many alumni and booster groups, and was posted in the Beacon.

The emails that follow are in response to Chairperson McKinley's memo. Specifically, the emails presented here were sent to the School Committee (abrsc@abschools.org) between October 15, 2020 and September 17, 2020 regarding the mascot request. Due to the size of the files, the emails are available in 3 pdf documents, generally in chronological order with the most recent first. Current students' names, email addresses and identifying information was redacted. All other email addresses, home phone numbers and addresses were also redacted.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to share their thoughts on the AB Mascot decision. We recognize that there were very diverse opinions on changing the mascot and the school committee decision was satisfying for some, and frustrating for others. We hope that in the coming weeks and months, our community can begin to feel relief from the difficult dialog during the process. More information about the process that will be used to determine a new mascot will be available in the coming weeks.

To develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships.



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

15 Charter Road Acton, MA 01720

978-264-4700

www.abschools.org

9/25/20

Peter J. Light
Superintendent of Schools

Members of the Acton and Boxborough Communities,

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee is welcoming public comment as it considers a petition to retire the Colonial as the official mascot of the District.

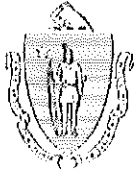
On September 17, 2020, the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee heard from a student group, AB Students for Equity and Justice (ABSEJ), who recently submitted a petition to the Committee requesting consideration to retire the Colonial as the official mascot of the High School and District. Last Spring, the petition garnered over 1,300 signatures supporting this change. At our meeting on September 17, ABSEJ presented their case for this change which included a letter which was supported by many notable individuals and groups in our community including: Senator Jamie Eldridge, Racial Justice for Black Lives, Educators Committed to Anti-Racist Equity and Social Justice (ECARES), Fostering Racial Justice Boxborough, First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, Unitarian Universalist Church, Angel Youth Foundation, Indivisible Acton, and Highrock Covenant.

In their letter to the Committee, ABSEJ noted *"a white-male-colonist mascot in no way reflects the ever-changing community of Acton-Boxborough. As the community grows and diversifies, our current mascot is not representative of who we are or what we stand for as a community."* The petition submitted last Spring further noted, *"Although mascots intend to bring fan bases together, the AB mascot gives a likeable face to a time period that set the stage for present day racial divisions. Changing the mascot is an ethical and educational action that will underscore the need to know real, and not sugar coated, representations of the past."*

The Committee recognizes that the Acton-Boxborough community includes many members and groups who may have a variety of views on the issue before the Committee. The School Committee will deliberate on the petition again and consider action at its meeting on October 15, 2020. We invite the public to submit comments in writing by **Wednesday, October 14th** by emailing us at abrsc@abschools.org. While we recognize that public comment is not a vote, we are interested in hearing a variety of opinions on changing the mascot to help make our deliberation more meaningful.

Sincerely,
Tessa McKinley
ABRSC Chair
abrsc@abschools.org

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

#1 of 3

SENATOR JAMES B. ELDRIDGE
Middlesex and Worcester District

STATE HOUSE, ROOM 511C
BOSTON, MA 02133-1053
TEL: (617)722-1120
FAX: (617)722-1089

JAMES.ELDRIDGE@MASENATE.GOV
WWW.MASENATE.GOV

Chair
JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
and
Vice Chair
JOINT COMMITTEE ON ELECTION LAWS

DISTRICT OFFICE
225 MAIN STREET, ROOM 106
MARLBOROUGH, MA 01752

October 15, 2020

Dear Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Members,

I write to express my support for the Acton Boxborough Regional School District (ABRSD) changing the name of the school district's mascot, the Colonials, and for the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee to consider allowing the current student body to decide whether to change the school mascot.

As a proud graduate of the Acton-Boxborough public schools, including the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School (ABRHS), where I played junior varsity soccer, freshman, junior varsity and varsity basketball, and served in leadership positions in school government, ABCO, the school yearbook, and the AB Spectrum newspaper, I am deeply grateful for the public education that I received, and remember well the school spirit that surrounded the schools' academics, sports teams, student group, and student activities.

Until this past summer, I blithely accepted our school mascot, the Colonials. Three things happened that opened my mind to consider whether the school district should change its mascot. First of all, after the murder of Minnesota Black resident George Floyd set off racial justice and Black Lives Matters protests across the country, including in the Senate district that I represent, I gained a greater awareness of the need to take every possible action to address racial injustice in our country.

Second, in response to the outrage over glaring racial injustices that continue in our country, some off the founders of AB Students for Equity and Justice (ABSEJ) reached out to me, to discuss their ideas about addressing racial injustice in Acton and Boxborough, including the Acton-Boxborough public schools. In an era where especially white elected officials, community leaders and institution executives need to be more aware of the concerns, requests, and visions of people of color, I felt it was my responsibility to be responsive to ABSEJ's specific requests, especially in light of our conversations about systemic racism that they have experienced in the Acton-Boxborough public schools.

Third, since this summer there has been growing momentum around legislation filed by some of my colleagues, to change the school mascots across Massachusetts that portray Native Americans in a negative or stereotypical light. That creates a greater focus on the symbolism of the Colonials, given

the direct and often violent interactions between English refugees who arrived in the land that later would become the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and indigenous people and tribes.

As the School Committee deliberates on the school mascot, the Colonials, I would respectfully ask the committee to reflect about the word “Colonial,” from a few perspectives.

1. Colonial – before American Independence

As an Acton resident who grew up in Acton, early on I had a sense that the Colonials was of course about Acton residents’ critical role in the American Revolutionary War, including Captain Isaac Davis, the first American officer killed in the American Revolution. However, “Colonial” in the context of New England, is not restricted to the men and women of New England who decided to separate from Great Britain, beginning in the mid-18th century. The colonization of New England by mostly English settlers, and therefore loyal to England, spanned from 1620 to 1776. If Acton and Boxborough residents are identifying, whether through their town government, or public schools, as “Colonials,” is that celebrating a group of people who did not have full self-government, and remained loyal to the Kings and Queens of England? And let’s not forget, that when some English colonists decided that they wanted to be independent of Great Britain, that there were other colonists who remained loyal to the British Crown.

2. Colonial – a global perspective.

The English Pilgrims of the early 17th century were of course just one group of colonists in world history. Nations (mostly European) across the globe were colonizing other regions of the world from the 15th century through the 20th century. Putting aside the colonists of Massachusetts, are the people who are from nations that were colonized and eventually became independent in the past 500 years, does having a school mascot “Colonial” have much of a positive ring to it? Do people in China today have good memories of Japan colonizing parts of China? What is the legacy of the British colonization of India? Are there no more hard feelings between the nations of Spain and Portugal, and most South American countries? What about the continued analysis of the impact of colonists from Germany, France, Great Britain, and Portugal on most African nations? The Acton and Boxborough of 2020, and especially their schools, are celebrated as educational institutions that people not just from across Massachusetts or other parts of the U.S., but around the world, come to live here, because of how great the schools are. Does the term “Colonial” roll off the tongue of many residents, and especially the youth of Acton and Boxborough, who have settled down in Acton and Boxborough over the past 30 years, compared to when I grew up in Acton? Isn’t that something that we should all care about, no matter when we came to be Acton or Boxborough residents?

3. Colonial – the genocide of Indigenous People and Tribes

Putting aside the various conflicts, wars, tensions, and yes, partnerships with Native American tribes and English colonists since 1620, I hope there is an awareness of how Indigenous people were treated. Two separate passages:

1. Deer Island: A History of Human Tragedy Remembered

From India Country Today, August 23rd, 2013

In October, 1675 (Just five months after the start of the King Philip's War, 1675-1676) some 500 Nipmucks from what is now South Natick were forcibly removed to Deer Island, a barren strip of land off Boston Harbor, as a concentration camp for Indians (later it would become a holding area for Irish immigrants fleeing the Great Famine (1800s), a major hospital (1847), a prison (c. 1882-1988), and now a wastewater treatment facility and national park), was established by the Massachusetts Council that same year. King Philip's War, or Metacomet's Revenge, as it came to be known, was the first large-scale military aggression in the American colonies and the bloodiest conflict between settlers and Indians in 17th century Puritan New England. Without adequate food, clothing, shelter or medicine, the pro-English Algonquian converts, who had been converted to Christianity by the zealous Congregationalist minister from Roxbury named John Elliot, half of the Indians confined on the Island died of starvation or exposure during their imprisonment; when John Elliot visited them in December, he could only report with horror, "The Island was bleak and cold, their wigwams poor and mean, their clothes few and thin." These were the same Indians who once welcomed the English in 1621 with their Sachem, Massasoit.

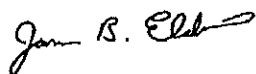
2. Mayflower: A Story of Courage, Community, and War by Nathaniel Philbrick

Epilogue: Conscience

"As early as the fall of 1675, they had begun to sail from the coast of New England: the slave ships, It began in September when a Captain Sprague departed from Plymouth with 178 Indians. By July of 1676, Plymouth had formalized the process of removing potentially dangerous Native men and boys by determining that 'no male captive above the age of fourteen years should reside in the colony'....It has been estimated that at least a thousand Indians were sold into slavery during King Philip's War, with over half the slaves coming from Plymouth Colony alone."

Thank you very much for your consideration and deliberation of this matter, it is one that I believe has real meaning and value, especially in 2020.

Sincerely,



James B. Eldridge
State Senator
Middlesex & Worcester District

Dr. Tami L. Gouveia



October 15, 2020

Acton Board of Selectmen
bos@actonma.gov

Dear Board of Selectmen:

I write to you today as a resident and private citizen of the Town of Acton and not in any official capacity with the Massachusetts General Court. I have lived in town for over a decade and have done my best to make meaningful contributions to our vibrant and increasingly diverse community. I am the proud parent of an Acton-Boxborough Regional High School junior and 2019 alumnus. For the past 25 years I have dedicated my public health social work career to serving individuals and families in our community and across the state.

I am writing to express my disappointment in the vote you took on October 5th as the Acton Board of Selectmen to keep the Colonials as the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools District (ABRSD) mascot. While the Colonials mascot may be a source of pride for several of you on the Board, it is clear that many of our residents and ABRSD students and alumnae do not share your perspective. Their concerns about the mascot, the role of colonialism in our country's history, and our students' commitment to creating an inclusive, safe, and anti-racist learning environment for all students ought to be given fair and thoughtful consideration. Indeed, this is precisely why the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee (ABRSC) has taken the last few weeks to hear the opinions of students, staff, and community members on our students' request to retire the mascot. As was reported in Wicked Local yesterday, the ABRSC has received several hundred individual letters regarding the matter, which will be discussed during the ABRSC meeting this evening.

In taking a position on a matter that is before the ABRSC – an independently elected body that has full authority to take up matters related to school and education policy – I believe that the Board of Selectmen acted outside the scope of the powers and duties of the Board. The powers of the Board as they relate to the ABRSC are described in the Town of Acton Charter and Town of Acton By-Laws and relate to budgets only and not to policy before the ABRSC.

As we strive to create a more inclusive and welcoming community for our immigrant families and families of color (many of whom came from countries that suffered economic exploitation under colonial rule even as late as the 1970s), it is critical that our local leaders engage in active listening and thoughtful discourse. By rushing to take a vote before the comment period was completed and analyzed, the Board of Selectmen's vote lacked due consideration of public opinion, especially input from young residents and residents of color. In addition, the vote of the Board may have influenced public opinion about the issue and may have interfered with the ABRSC's decision-making process.

Our students should be lauded for their close examination of the impacts of European colonialism on Indigenous populations here in the United States as well as on people in African, Asian, and Latin American countries. Our students should be thanked for their righteous compassion in bringing the petition to the ABRSC to retire the Colonials mascot. I believe that we can evolve our understanding of key concepts and retire images that no longer reflect our shared values, while also honestly acknowledging our town's history.

I look forward to learning more from community members tonight and as this conversation progresses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Tami L. Gouveia".

Dr. Tami L. Gouveia

cc: Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

To: abrrsc@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 16:49:28 -0400

Subject: (maybe too late) support of petition to change the mascot

I can trace my ancestry to one of the Mayflower passengers whose family ended up residing in the Billerica area. One would think I get to have some say in celebration of my ancestor's role as a colonial. However, it's also documented that my ancestor and his family repeatedly engaged in violence against the local tribes - not a point of pride by any means.

So I'm proud to be a descendent of one of the first European settlers to America and to Massachusetts, but cautious of how I celebrate that without also suggesting pride in the violence he and his fellow colonials visited on Native Americans and the legacy of that which continues today.

I wholeheartedly support the A-B mascot change. I want my children to grow up in a town and school system that acknowledges their ancestors' role in our history and where we are today, but that does not celebrate the oppression of others by those same ancestors.

I wholeheartedly support the A-B students' call to change the mascot and I hope the School Committee will support it!

~Mikell
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "Eldridge, James (SEN)" [REDACTED]

To: "abrrsc@abschools.org" <abrrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 21:32:29 +0000

Subject: Letter from Senator Eldridge

Good evening, attached is a letter from Senator Eldridge to the members of the school committee. Thank you, Michael Carr

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "'Sarah Lent' via AB School Committee" <abrrsc@abschools.org>

To: "abrrsc@abschools.org" <abrrsc@abschools.org>, "tmckinley@abschools.org" <tmckinley@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 20:46:37 +0000 (UTC)

Subject: Procedural question regarding retirement of JH and HS Mascot.

Dear School Committee Members:

I understand there is a meeting tonight, October 15th, at which the issue of the retirement of the school mascot will be discussed. Without getting into the pros and cons of the issue itself I write to voice my concerns over the process by which you are proceeding. My hope is that whatever decision is being made, it is not tonight, but rather after giving both sides ample opportunity to voice their opinions. In particular, the decision must not be made hastily as the Committee has specifically set forth in its own policies (Section F, File FF, Naming, District Facilities) that:

The Acton Boxborough Regional School Committee believes naming or renaming a school building, structure, space, property, program or other District asset (hereafter referred to as a "Facility") is a matter of significant importance, one that deserves the most thoughtful attention of the School Committee and the Administration, and one that is an unusual occurrence or event. Further, the Committee believes it should not be influenced in its decision by personal prejudice, favoritism, political pressure or temporary popularity. (emphasis added)

The timeline set forth by your own memo of September 24th indicated that you were presented with a petition in the Spring of 2020, then invited the petitioners to speak at your September 15th meeting. The only public opportunity the Committee afforded for receiving other perspectives has been a three week period during which you only invited direct emails, discounting online petitions and comments such as the Change.org petition because you were unable to verify the identity of the people who responded. Ms. McKinley's subsequent email responses to public inquiries and social media posts suggest that the Committee's invite for public comment to the community was never intended for the purpose of receiving a "vote." Consequently, this causes me to be troubled by your memo to the Committee dated October 13th that not only summarizes the email comments you received, but paints a biased light (perhaps

unintentionally) against those who support to keep the mascot asserting that 79% of the current student and staff support the change. If it was not a vote, then the numbers should have never been published. Rather, the substantive content of the emails should have been shared with the entire Committee solely.

I only emphasize that this process needs to be fair, balanced and done in a manner in which BOTH sides feel as if they have had ample opportunity to present their perspectives. Under the Committee's own policies I believe a screening committee should be appointed "consisting of representatives of *various interest groups*," (emphasis added) before a decision should be made to consider to move forward on the petition to retire the mascot. (See Section F, File FF-R).

The process matters.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sarah Lent

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Tami Gouveia <[REDACTED]>
To: bos@actonma.gov
Cc: abrsc@abschools.org
Bcc:
Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 16:40:56 -0400
Subject: October 5th vote on Colonials Mascot
Dear Board of Selectmen,

I hope that you and your family are faring well.

Attached please find a letter I respectfully submit to you as a private resident and citizen of the Town of Acton with regards to the October 5th vote on the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
Tami Gouveia

--

Tami L. Gouveia, DrPH, MPH, MSW
Acton, MA 01720
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Melissa Coucke <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:

Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 16:37:14 -0400

Subject: I support our students. No more Colonials mascot.

These kids are the future, we need to listen to them and take action according to their desires. The goal is for an inclusive society. They are sick and tired of hypocrisy. It's time we listen and heed the suggestion. No more Colonial. Keep it neutral. It's not that hard. No more divisiveness. It's beyond time to let the past go and move toward the future.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Mary Ann Bassett <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 14:15:20 -0400
Subject: Keep mascot, MaryAnn Dargin Bassett, 1968

Sent from my iPad

----- Forwarded message -----

From: KaReN JoNeS <[REDACTED]>

To: abrsc@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 14:34:33 -0700

Subject: mascot change PLEASE 🙏🙏🙏🙏

look dude- ya gotta get w the times. a colonial? really? come onnnnn, bruh. like we aren't out here celebrating the systemic repression of indigenous people, nor are we gonna maintain a mascot that, frankly, sucks. like gO colOniALs? that sounds so lame. change it to something cool, like a coyote, or a cougar. hell, GO WILDCATS, even, if ya wanna do a tribute to like hsm. ya can't go wrong with a wildcat mascot. but fr bruh, change the damn mascot. idc what ya gotta do to make the change, but it's got to b done. this land belonged to the pennacook tribe, until the colonists struck. but sure, keep supporting a racist ass mascot. it's a great message to send to the younger generation. but surw, [REDACTED], go off, ig. GOBBLE ME SWALLOW ME DRIP DOWN THE SIDE OF ME TALK YO SHIT BITE YO LIP!!!! fuhgedaboutit.

bitch.

-a blonde white liberal who hates colonialism
(aka shawty the baddest, that bad *bleep* addison rae)

"and remember that it matters not what you've done, or what others have done for you, but what you do with what you've done for others." -noah scented mayo

HavE a LovELy dAy, but no ♥.

~also happy belated indigenous people's day!~

LIFE HACK: REAL WOMEN SET THEIR HUSBANDS ON 🔥 FIRE 🔥

p.s. you aren't deserving of any WAP

SENT FROM MY IPHONE TO YOUR RACIST ASS KAREN

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Jena Finley <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 14:07:28 -0400
Subject: Mascot Name Change- NO
Ladies and Gentlemen of the AB School Committee,

I went to kindergarten in Acton. Elementary school as well. Junior high and high school. I graduated from ABRHS in 1980. I am a Colonial and will always be a Colonial. The Colonial and what that image represents has been an important part of my life and history. I am proud of the area I was raised in and the rich history that we claim. I will refer your to Elliott Donald's letter that he submitted to the committee in early October because his sentiments reflect mine more eloquently than I ever could.

Simply - "Rather than repudiate the Colonial as the school mascot the Committee should validate it."

Respectfully,

Jena Finley

Sent from my iPad

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Kerry Talbot <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 13:31:01 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot: Kerry Talbot graduated 1992

Sent from my iPhone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Ann Shaw <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 13:07:44 -0400
Subject: Changing Colonial Mascot

I have no deep thoughts here but have included my two 30 and 32 age boys' opinions as well..... [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]...both proud Colonials representing Hockey, Baseball and LAX! Their words..."The most ridiculous thing I've ever heard..we are Colonials and proud!" I wonder if any of those that oppose even attend sports events ?? Or do those offend them because they arent athletes? I am also an AB Alum class of '74. I studied the revolutionary war and participated in a lot of the historic traditions our proud towns of Acton and Boxborough celebrated.... FREEDOM..... How badly would those that oppose feel under a dictatorship...Would that offend them??

There is nothing that makes any sense here! Keep the Colonials alive and proud!

Thank you!

Ann Erickson Shaw '74

--
Ann Erickson Shaw REALTOR

Cell: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

Keller Williams Realty Boston Northwest

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From: Mike Dow <[REDACTED]>

To: abrsc@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 12:35:39 -0400

Subject: Keep Mascot-Mike Dow-1985

Good afternoon School Committee Members,

My name is Mike Dow, a 1985 graduate of Acton Boxborough. My last name may raise an eyebrow or two. Both my parents, Rosemary and Richard Dow were Educators in the District for over 30 years each. As a matter of fact, the Track at AB is named after my Father. I am currently a High School teacher in Lakewood Ohio, which is an extremely diverse community. Here in Lakewood in grades K-12, there are 34 different languages spoken by our student body.

I understand, and applaud students and their endeavors in regards to what they believe in. I am really struggling with the "movement" to remove the Colonial Mascot from Acton Boxborough. I have read many different articles in regards to this subject. If it is really about the Indigenous People, and your Committee votes to remove the name. Where does it stop? Will you remove the name of Blanchard Auditorium at the Middle School because his ancestors fought in the Battle of the Old North Bridge? Will the Elementary School in Boxborough be renamed as well? I am afraid of the potential damage that may be done in regards to how the once proud Alumni will feel about a change. Personally, my association and promotion of Acton Boxborough Schools will stop. I have also spoken with my Mother about the possibility of removing my Fathers name from the track. It is not something that my Father would be proud to be associated with. I respectfully hope that that you consider all peoples feelings in this issue, both current and formers students, alumni, and community members. At least send out a survey to all. Maybe a link with a simple Yes or No. Like I stated earlier, I do respect students in their endeavors. I just think that the survey needs to be broadened a bit to involve the many other passionate people that feel very strongly about this issue. Thank you for taking the time to read my email. Best of luck in this very tough issue.

--

Mike Dow
Construction Trades Instructor
West Shore Career & Technical
#skillsforsuccess
Lakewood High School
Head Boy's Track Coach
Asst. Golf Coach
[REDACTED]



mike.dow@lakewoodcityschools.org

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: "'Ann Knapp' via AB School Committee" <abrsc@abschools.org>

To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 16:32:09 +0000 (UTC)

Subject: Mascot Vote

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a graduate of ABRHS (Class of 1997) & while I was originally neutral on the position of changing the mascot, the longer I marinated on the subject, the more change of heart I had.

I wouldn't change one thing about the education that I received at AB - it's part of who I am today. I was a good (not great) student, participated in many clubs & was a varsity letter recipient for my time on the girls swim team.

What I have learned since leaving AB, is that while the school prepared me for post-secondary education, I was very unprepared for the realities of life in the real world. I have taken the time & put in the effort to make sure that I'm a better citizen of the world - it's taken me several decades to get to where I am now & there is still plenty of learning to do.

One of the biggest things that I've learned, as an adult & increasingly vocal member of the world, is that just because it doesn't "bother" me (or impact me), doesn't mean that it isn't a situation that needs addressing. Which is where I find myself now with the mascot questions.

I've heard from a few of my classmates that believe changing the mascot is ridiculous & that there are more pressing matters to attend to in today's world - and that may be true to them, But there is a reason this topic has come up & in doing deeper dives into American history, I'm no longer comfortable staying silent.

Yes, "Colonials" were an integral part of the American Revolution. But they were also a large part of the atrocities against Native Americans. The good they did in separating from the Crown, doesn't & can't erase what they did to people who's land they were invading. I don't believe those actions should be celebrated.

I don't believe that I can be a champion for women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, immigrants rights, African-American rights, etc., if I ignore the issues with keeping Colonial as our mascot.

ABRHS is advanced in so many ways & one of the best public high schools in a state that has premier education. So, why would we root ourselves in a muddy past (to put it nicely)?

If I had a vote, I would vote to change the mascot from Colonial to something else.

Thank you for your time & consideration.

Ann

Ann E. Knapp
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Brooke Nichols <[REDACTED]>

To: abrsc@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 11:44:48 -0400

Subject: Mascot

I saw the letter you posted on FB today and the numbers do not represent the alumni correctly. There is a petition that I will include at the bottom of this page. I also understand that the kids at school have signed on against the change as well. Expect to receive many emails today regarding this.

My thoughts on this. I grew up in this town, played and coached many teams under the name Colonials. I've always been very proud of the heritage this town played in winning our freedom. These three men never owned slaves, they were poor farmers who sacrificed their lives for us. Should be stop having Patriots day?

History is riddled with countries taking over other countries and taking people for slavery. England, Spain, France, Greece, Italy and on and on. Sad thing is it's still happening today. Not to mention what religions did to people who didn't believe what they did. Should we be ashamed of our heritage because of what our ancestors did? We can't go back and fix any of this, but we can honor the men that did right by us.

Sent from my iPad

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "Patria, Margarita" [REDACTED]
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc: [REDACTED] >

Bcc:

Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 15:23:47 +0000

Subject: Mascot vote

Hello,

My husband and I live in Acton. My son goes to [REDACTED].

We are all against changing the AB Mascot. We see the Mascot as a tribute to brave citizens of Acton that risked so much in fight for freedom that we all enjoy.

Thank you,
Margarita

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy Note9, an AT&T 5G Evolution capable smartphone

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: "Jenn Dyer" via AB School Committee" <abrsc@abschools.org>

To: abrsc@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 10:58:26 -0400

Subject: Keep mascot, Jenn Gomm, 1992

I would like you to keep the mascot of the Colonial.

My name is Jennifer Gomm (Dyer)
Class of 1992

Thank you-
Jenn Gomm Dyer

Sent from my iPhone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Kenny Mayer <[REDACTED]>

To: abrsc@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 10:49:41 -0400

Subject: K.Mayer, AB Class of 1972

Dear AB School Committee Members,

Do the names Davis, Hayward, Faulkner, Hosmer and Blanchard have any meaning to you? Have you ever visited the Acton Center Monument and read its words?

The towns of Acton and Boxborough hold a unique standing in history. "The shot heard around the world" is an honor that should NEVER be taken from us..

The Battle of Lexington was fought in Concord BY ACTON MEN!

Please recognize the supreme sacrifice these "Colonials" made in overthrowing the tyranny of the English Crown. A silly, big headed Colonial costume - wearing student is no reason to change the name COLONIALS at ABRHS.

I respectfully request that you put to rest this absurd proposal.

Sincerely,

Kenneth J. Mayer
AB Class of 1972
Inductee to the AB Athletic Hall of Fame
First ever Student Member to the AB School Committee
20 year P.A. Announcer for Colonial Football
Served on the Board of Friends Of Leary Field
Co-Chair and Founder of The Colonial Club, Acton Boxboro's Athletic Hall of Fame

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Melissa Clayton <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 10:39:47 -0400
Subject: Updated numbers ?

Hi Tessa,

I'm Melissa Clayton and I've emailed already but wanted to ask for updated numbers on emails received from students as of today? I know many students thought petition was way for them to voice opinion and now we're scrambling to email. Updated numbers would be very much appreciated. Lastly, would you confirm the vote is tonight? Rumors are saying the vote already happened.

My best

Melissa

--

Melissa Clayton, CEO + Founder, Tiny Tags

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "Ed Coverdale" via AB School Committee" <abrsc@abschools.org>
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 14:31:00 +0000 (UTC)
Subject: Fw: Mascot call for comment

Dear School Committee

I am for keeping the mascot as are my children (Students at AB) as i mentioned in my previous email. I was very disappointed to see Tessa's memo to SC out on Facebook today. In particular how the request for comments were used as a vote. Your letter to the community clearly asks for comments and it clearly states *that public comment is not a vote*

The summary in that Oct 13th memo uses the comments as a vote which clearly does not represent the students, parents and community. If you asked for a vote, there is no doubt that the overwhelming majority would vote to keep the mascot. In fact, it is the faculty vote/comment that distorts the combined student/faculty #s in the memo

You also need to consider the petitions and large number of signatures of those wanting to keep the mascot.

It is disappointing that the apparent decision of the school committee is one of politics and emotion rather than objectivity and reasonableness.

Just like removal of the Pledge of Allegiance was to satisfy a small group, it appears the same is about to happen now

Ed Coverdale
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Coverdale, Edward (Ed) <[REDACTED]>

To: [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, October 15, 2020, 10:13:14 AM EDT

Subject: FW: Mascot call for comment

From: Acton-Boxborough Regional School District <notification-do_not_reply@target1103.brightarrow.com>

Sent: Friday, September 25, 2020 2:58 PM

To: Coverdale, Edward (Ed) <[REDACTED]>

Subject: Mascot call for comment

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not follow guidance, click links, or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Thank you to everyone who has commented on this inquiry. We are resending this letter because yesterday's version was not translatable.

Members of the Acton and Boxborough Communities,

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee is welcoming public comment as it considers a petition to retire the Colonial as the official mascot of the District.

On September 17, 2020, the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee heard from a student group, AB Students for Equity and Justice (ABSEJ), who recently submitted a petition to the Committee requesting consideration to retire the Colonial as the official mascot of the High School and District. Last Spring, the

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: Jennifer Park <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 10:24:11 -0400
Subject: school mascot community opinion
Dear ABR school committee,

I am writing as a community member and parent of 3 bi-racial children, two of which are enrolled in the [REDACTED] here in Acton. It is my opinion that we should retire the Colonial as a mascot for our school. When the mascot was chosen many years ago the Colonial may have represented some fine characteristics that the community *at that time* wanted to uphold or strive for. However since that time the image of the Colonial has come to represent many negative characteristics that are in conflict with the community we are trying to build that uphold diversity, equity and inclusion. To me the Colonials actions against the native peoples of the americas, their role in slavery and it's expansion and building a society that puts white men at the heart of America's power structure overshadows any good characteristics of hard work etc. Instead of glorifying the Colonials I think we need to educate our students about both sides of the colonial era and not just through the lens of white Europeans and our mascot should reflect the diversity of our community.

Symbols, mascots and what they represent or stand for change over time and it has been decades since we have chosen a mascot to represent what our community is trying to hold up as the highest values and characteristics. With the work on DEI we should use this time to capitalize on the conversations happening to pick a mascot that represents all of the Acton-Boxborough community not just the white male viewpoint.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Park

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "'Jan Finley' via AB School Committee" <abrsc@abschools.org>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 10:23:32 -0400
Subject: KEEP MASCOT! Jan Finley, 1971!!!

Sent from my iPhone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Leslie Sherman <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 14:19:53 +0000
Subject: keep Mascot, Leslie Sherman (Nichols), 1996

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Katherine Greene <[REDACTED]>
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 09:49:46 -0400
Subject: Mascot
Hello,

I am in my 5th year teaching at AB and am also a parent of 3 future AB grads, and I have been amazed by the strong, bright students I've had at all levels. If students are saying the mascot doesn't represent them, which demographically it does not, I strongly believe we need to honor their request to change the mascot.

I see adults in the community complaining on social media and signing the petition against the change with racist and abusive language. Marginalizing groups of our diverse population is never a good look, especially not in 2020.

I hope the School Committee will respectfully honor the students wishes.

--
Katherine Greene
AB Strings

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 09:33:50 -0400
Subject: Changing the Mascot
Dear school committee members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a student of the class of 2022.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot. I believe the mascot glorifies colonialism and ignores the trauma of indigenous peoples, and changing it would be creating a good first step for positive change in the community.

Thank you for your consideration,

[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Amy Osenar <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 09:24:35 -0400
Subject: Please change the mascot
Dear School Committee Members,
Thank you for your service. Please choose to do the right thing and abolish the use of the colonialist mascot which is oppressive. You will get backlash and we will all need to work extra hard to support you as you swim upstream to do the right thing.
With much gratitude,
Amy Osenar

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Megan McGrath <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 00:16:48 -0400
Subject: A-B Mascot Change
Dear School Committee Members,

I am writing in support of the removal of the Colonial mascot. As a new teacher, I was drawn to the A-B school district because of its commitment to not only celebrate diversity and inclusion but also anti-racism, equity, and social justice. During my first year teaching U.S. History at ABRHS, I interviewed to be an advisor of A World of Difference because the program provides both students and teachers with concrete and effective strategies to address prejudice, name-calling, and bullying when they witness it. This is exactly what ABSEJ, AWoD, and other A-B students are doing by demanding the removal of the Colonial mascot.

Our students are trying to create a community of belonging at A-B by developing an understanding of our community's own biases regarding indigenous peoples, identifying how we can combat such bias and prejudice in our school/community, and establishing a common language so we can be a better ally to the Nipmuc tribe and other Native American tribes.

However, I am increasingly concerned that A-B has made a commitment to be anti-racist but is not willing to be anti-racist in all aspects of the district. Being antiracist is not about who you are; it is about what you do. Being antiracist requires ongoing self-reflection to make frequent, consistent, equitable choices daily. I urge the district to back up its commitment to being anti-racist by removing a symbol of violent oppression from our schools.

Personally, I strongly believe in the underlying principle of the A World of Difference, which is that learning about social justice issues is a life-long process. This is our opportunity to show the young people of this community that they can always help make justice and equality a reality in the world around them.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Megan McGrath

--

Megan McGrath

She/her/hers

Social Studies, U.S. I & U.S. II

A World of Difference Advisor

Email: [REDACTED] | Phone: [REDACTED]

Acton-Boxborough Regional High School

36 Charter Road

Acton, Massachusetts, 01720

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Maggie Liu <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrschools.org" <abrschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 23:12:37 -0400
Subject: Change the mascot
Hi there,

I'm emailing in support of replacing ABRHS' mascot. I graduated in 2015 and have signed the petition - please let me know if there's anything else I can do to help.

Best,
Maggie

--

Maggie (Meiqi) Liu
University of Rochester '19
Political Science & Environmental Studies Major
Captain | UR Women's Ultimate Frisbee

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:05:14 -0400
Subject: [REDACTED] 10th grade at the high school

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Judy Reilly <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org

Bcc:
Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 18:29:32 -0400
Subject: Colonial's

I am totally against changing the name. I know I am a day late but my opinion should count. We cannot change history and the colonists are the ones who helped set us free. History is part of our heritage and the only way to make it better is to improve our thinking, the way we treat our fellow citizens and hopefully become better neighbors. We cannot change the past, but we can prepare for a better future.

Judy Reilly - proud parent of past Colonial players

Sent from my iPad

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Jill Wheeler [REDACTED]
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 21:53:30 +0000
Subject: Keep the colonials...
Keep our mascot the colonials!

Thanks,

Jill Wheeler



Keeping the Colonials name, but doing more to bring the diverse community together

Buster O'Brien <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org

Wed, Oct 14, 2020 at 10:55 PM

Hello,

May I first thank you for your work on behalf of the town and your volunteerism. We can only remain a great community with people giving of their own time and effort and it is appreciated. I also believe that these are times of great stress to so many and heightened emotions can lead to heightened reactions on all issues, I am sure the Colonials name is no exception.

Though I am certainly a former athlete at AB with children in the school today, I also have also led military units of diverse Americans in combat, coached hundreds of Acton and Boxboro kids of all ethnicity and backgrounds, led hundreds of kids of all backgrounds in Acton Scouts and have volunteered on numerous committees with diverse groups of fellow citizens in the schools and town. In my work as President of a national firm I started and have grown our diversity and inclusion initiatives and am intimately involved in social justice initiatives in and out of work.

In my Veteran's Day Speech given at the town monument a couple of years ago I wrote:

It was from this neighborhood that they marched to the bridge in Concord. We are so proud of those first veterans of Acton. And I believe that if faced with such a clear and present danger today, our community would again line up to defend all that we hold dear. The unit on the march would look very different from the one Isaac Davis commanded in 1775. This one would be filled with women and men, from countries the world over, with diverse backgrounds, hopes, dreams – all willing to defend the idea and place that has always had room and protections for everyone willing to do so. Just amazing.

I want my children to grow up in a more diverse world. I want to celebrate our diversity and work to understand the incredible backgrounds of those in our community. I hate the culture currently led by the leadership in our country that harms many, denigrates diversity, persecutes differences and promotes the bullying of others. Hopefully we will be turning the page and getting back to our better angels as a nation in early November.

All of that said, I do not believe changing the name "Colonials" achieves the desired positive impact in line with the sentiment above. Unlike when the town of Walpole removed their school-sponsored confederate flag theme - a clear symbol of racism rooted in the institution of slavery - the name Colonials is linked to the defense of liberty and those early Americans (Actonians) putting the freedom of all before their own safety. This use is rooted in bravery, community and selflessness against powers working to limit, if not destroy those values. This is our community link to a critical moment in the growth of freedom in the entire country and world. If we stopped using the actual mascot - a foam suit that seems overly caucasian and in that case offensive - and focus on the actions of these Colonials there is much that we can learn to continue to bring us together. And we do have work to do as a community to bring together people of differing backgrounds in our district. I have read the letters on both sides and they are emblematic of a cultural gap in our student population and that should be the focus of our efforts. I do not believe changing the Colonials name helps us work to that end.

I appreciate your time and effort and, again, want to thank you for your work on behalf of our students and community.

Thank you,
Buster O'Brien AB Class of 1994
Married to [REDACTED]
Parent of AB Students
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Laura Helmuth <[REDACTED]>

To: abrsc@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 23:05:06 -0400

Subject: Keep the Colonial

Everything about this is wrong. I am a white woman of privilege in Acton. I hate to say that. I feel like I am being driven out because I am white. I love my neighbors. They are a blended family and my family is also blended. My sister is a lesbian. Her wife is from the south and their adopted child is Mexican. My family is from Finland. Oops. He has an accent. I guess he won't fit the bill. Why is the school system making changes for kids that will just take off after reaping the benefits of our school and town?

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Tom Gillispie <[REDACTED]>

To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 02:48:52 +0000

Subject: Mascot

Change Colonial if u must. Its important we show we care.

Consider Patriots or something that reflects our history. Minutemen won't fly today but its in the ballpark.

Thx

Tom Gillispie
[REDACTED]

Results! I have gotten a lot of results. I know several thousand things that won't work.
Thomas A. Edison

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Harriett McMahon <[REDACTED]>

To: abrsc@abschools.org

Cc: [REDACTED]

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 22:36:36 -0400

Subject: Change the Mascot

Dear School Committee Members,

I respectfully request that you listen to our wise students, who realize it's time to drop the Colonials as mascot. It's time for change.

Thank you.

Harriett McMahon
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Chad Kroll <[REDACTED]>

To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 02:26:45 +0000

Subject: Mascot call for comment

Dear Members of the Acton-Boxborough School Committee,

Firstly, I would like to thank you for alerting us to this proposal and allowing us to have our voices heard as both parents and members of the AB community.

As an Acton resident for 15 years, I can attest to the changing landscape of the area. However, the reason for our move remains unchanged - the great school system and wonderful place to raise a family.

Part of the allure of this area is the history and connection to the birth of the United States. Our area's involvement in that is well remembered and should be. The very rights which were fought for by those people are what allows us the free discourse to debate such things as this.

The proposal before you may be well intentioned, but it is not well thought out. The idea of taking away and replacing the AB Colonials is one born of the maelstrom of this year in our country. As we have seen as recently as Monday, "The Day of Outrage", even statues of great leaders as Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt have been toppled in this fervor.

If the idea is to rid ourselves of words with "problematic" connotations, such as colonials, where does that end? The idea that this period in history was not with costs to many is very true and should be taught and reflected upon, not have its participants or their names removed from sight.

The AB Colonials are a mascot that pays homage to the history of this great community. We all are the beneficiaries of those who sacrificed much to develop this area. We should not forget that the colonials have given much to all of the community of Acton-Boxborough, no matter the color, creed, or composite of the family.

My family and I are proud to have our [REDACTED]'s education be in this wonderful system and look forward to the day when she will graduate as an AB Colonial.

Thank you all for your time and efforts,

Chad Kroll
[REDACTED]



One more opinion on the mascot

1 message

Rev. Cynthia Landrum <[REDACTED]>

Thu, Oct 15, 2020 at 1:32 PM

To: abrsc@abschools.org

Dear AB School Committee and Superintendent Light,

It is clear you've received many opinions on the mascot issue, and I've read Tessa McKinley's excellent summary. Nevertheless, I wanted to share one more opinion from a community member, understanding that while we are stakeholders, we are not those most directly impacted.

This academic year we mark 400 years since the Mayflower landed in Plymouth. What a perfect opportunity to examine what it means to be Colonials, and whether or not we wish that to be how we continue to define ourselves as a multicultural community.

As a leader of a community organization that includes AB students, families, and faculty, I wanted to share that our congregation has also been engaging in the work of self-examination related to our colonial legacy. As a congregation that dates back to 1683, our church history is inextricably woven with Colonial history. Indeed, our internal history documents tell us that the church building was built "in the fear of the Lord and of the Indians." This history is part of who we are as a community. That fact cannot be changed. But we can change how we understand it, and how we talk about it, and whether or not we celebrate it. And it is also possible to celebrate a long and proud history and at the same time lament the legacy of colonization and the impact on Native peoples and the connection of it to slavery.

Changing the name of a mascot, of course, doesn't change our history, erase it, or negate it. Nor does it fix all of our problems of oppression, racism, and the legacy of colonization.

But to hold a name as a mascot is about more than simply *acknowledging* and *understanding* our history. A mascot is a symbol of who we are as a community, a symbol of those values and traits about ourselves that we are proud of, and even of what we aspire to be. When we choose a mascot we choose something that our gathered community may chant at sports rallies, that we put on t-shirts, that uphold as what is best about us.

So at this point in history, when this issue has been brought before you as deciders in this community, it is about more than saying "this is our history," it is about saying, "this is who we are, this is our source of pride, this is our aspiration." And when looked at it that way, it is clear that the Colonial mascot can no longer represent all of this community, a community that has grown increasingly ethnically and racially diverse, and a community that now has a different understanding of the legacy of colonization than we did when it chose the Colonial.

The board of trustees of my congregation voted to support the Mascot Initiative sponsored by the Acton Boxborough Students for Equity and Justice, upon the advice of our racial justice task force. I also support the voice of the students and faculty who are saying that now is the time for change. I hope you will, too.

Sincerely,
Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum, Minister
First Parish Church of Stow and Acton

Rev. Dr. Cynthia Landrum, Minister
First Parish Church of Stow and Acton
www.fpc-stow-acton.org

[REDACTED]

Schedule an appointment: <https://calendly.com/minister-fpc>

Dear AB School Committee,

I am a fourth grader at [REDACTED]. Here are my thoughts about our mascot:

1. Many students at AB high are **uncomfortable** on spirit wear days because of the mascot. We are ignoring them.

2. A lot of people are concerned that if our mascot is decided to be changed that we won't know what to change it to, and will be mascot-less for a while. I think that it would be a fun icebreaker for classrooms to think about what our mascot could be changed to. What about the AB hawks? Blue herons?

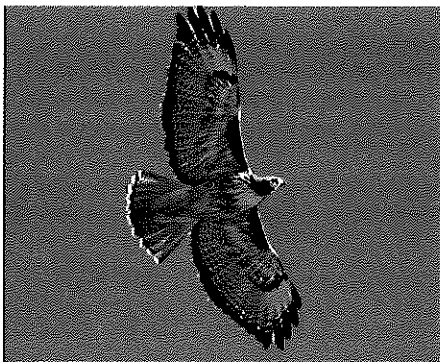
3. A lot of people are saying that changing the mascot would be too expensive due to uniforms, murals etc. Really, that is just an excuse. If the mascot gets changed, we will just slowly fade into it. First, when kids grow out of uniforms, we will buy new ones, with the new mascot on it. When score signs fall apart, we will get new ones with the new mascot name on it.

**Those are the 3 points that are most important to me.
Remember, if you want to include new students, have a better
representation of our school district, or help carry on the Black Lives
Matter movement, vote to change our mascot!**

Thank you so much for taking the time to read my letter.

Thank you again,

[REDACTED]



P.S. native americans honored the red tailed hawk and as an AB student I think it is really cool. It is Local! It also soars high and it's beautiful.



Fwd: Mascot emails

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] (via Google Docs)" [REDACTED]

To: abrsc@abschools.org

Cc: [REDACTED]

Bcc:

Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 02:17:19 +0000

Subject: AB Mascot

[REDACTED] has attached the following document:



AB Mascot

Google Docs: Create and edit documents online.

Google LLC, 1600 Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View, CA 94043, USA

You have received this email because 29floh@abschools.org shared a document with you from Google Docs.

Google™

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "michele abroff" via AB School Committee" <abrsc@abschools.org>

To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Thu, 15 Oct 2020 02:11:12 +0000 (UTC)

Subject: Replace colonials mascot

I'd like to see the colonials mascot replaced. It's inappropriate and I'm sure we can find something else awesome that's not offensive.

Thank you

Michele Abroff

[REDACTED]

Parent

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Nick Coucke <[REDACTED]>

To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 22:08:30 -0400

Subject: ABRHS Mascot

Hi,

My name is Nicklas Coucke and I am an ABHRS alum who graduated in 2020. I am emailing to ask that the ABRHS mascot be changed. A 'colonial' is a racist icon that represents hundreds of years of mistreatment of the Native American people and it should not be the symbol that represents our school.

Get rid of it.

Acton Boxborough Regional School Committee;

I am writing in support of keeping the AB Colonial mascot with having two children that played sports at AB and proudly wore AB Colonial uniforms. I have read the reasons for the AB Equity and Justice Club's proposed removal of the mascot, however the rationale focuses on only a narrow view of history, and doesn't represent a complete historical picture of Acton and Boxborough.

For many current students, parents and alumni, the AB Colonial mascot represents the town's history when the Colonials fought for our country's freedom. The word 'colonials' is relevant in school spirit events and sports. The high school theater group, which supports this initiative, is identified as AB Proscenium Circus, even in state competitions, not Colonials. For students who play sports, they are the AB Colonials. They are called the Colonials when battling with the "Patriots" in Concord or the "Warriors" at Lincoln-Sudbury. The sports community at AB largely opposes a mascot change. While the mascot represents all students, the sports community is more impacted by this change. If the mascot is removed, there will be little impact to the students who requested this change. In fact, it will not address racism in America, and it will not suddenly solve our inequity issues either locally or nationally.

Nobody is disputing the early settlers moved into already inhabited land and many treated the Native Americans badly. The colonials were fleeing from an oppressive rule, fighting for survival, but later fought for freedoms and against slavery. All history of Nations have dark aspects. The racist treatment happened in all colonies, but more prevalent outside New England. There are many accounts of colonials in our area living side by side Native Americans and sharing religion. The reason for the change in mascot is due to the initial treatment of the Native American tribes, but ignores the rest of history, which had enormous impact on Acton and our country. Should we remove the stripes on the American flag that represent the 13 original colonies? I understand the urge to make a change in a bad political climate, where racism is an issue nationally, but this petition uses only one aspect of history to help combat a modern day issue.

I wish this issue was handled differently, and all students had a voice early in the process. It has been framed on social media that there is enormous support from the students for this change. This is just not true. The student body is split on their views of changing the Colonial mascot. The petition garnered support over the summer from the local BLM movement and the School Committee, however the students who oppose this never had a voice. The larger community is more likely to support a student led initiative. Equity was one of the reasons for this change, yet this issue wasn't handled equitable for all students, especially the ones directly affected by the change.

My suggestion for a solution or compromise could be to remove the visual of a white-male-colonist and just use the AB symbol to depict the AB Colonials. The actual mascot is rarely a visual during school spirit events or sports. The AB symbol is used on all sports clothing, banners, JH/ABRHS fields and gyms, and not the visual of the white-male-colonist.

Thank you for your time.

Elizabeth Bruce, [REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Omar Tejeiro [REDACTED]
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 22:08:21 -0400

Subject: Mascot

I am parent of a student in [REDACTED] and I want to express my support of the student body request to remove the offensive colonials mascot.

Thank you.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Elizabeth Bruce <[REDACTED]>
To: ABRHS School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc: Peter Light <plight@abschools.org>
Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 21:59:06 -0400 (GMT-04:00)

Subject: School Committee Vote

Acton Boxborough Regional School Committee;

I would like to propose to the School Committee to hold off on a vote during Thursday's meeting 10/15, in order to give more time and consideration to the issue of the mascot change. Many of the students at the high school have been told that their opinion doesn't count, so as a result didn't write letters. Students who are in favor of the mascot change are under the impression this is a done deal, with their large swath of community and special interest support, so they use those words in posts and in talking with other students. I believe its important to get all student's input, not just one side of the student body.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Bruce
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 21:46:33 -0400

Subject: KEEP MASCOT

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a senior at AB. I have proudly worn the Colonial name on my uniforms for four years, and feel strongly that the mascot for our school should not be changed. It seems one of the driving forces wanting this change to occur is a result of the racial tensions our world and community are presently facing. What is happening in modern day 2020, is not a result of Acton's 37 heroes from April 19, 1775, many of whom sacrificed their lives for freedom. The colonials are simply that, heroes.

Please consider my opinion as you make your vote, as it directly affects me as an athlete that wears the mascot name on a regular basis.

Thank you for your time.
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 21:44:12 -0400

Subject: KEEP MASCOT

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a senior at AB. I have proudly worn the Colonial name on my uniforms for four years, and feel strongly that the mascot for our school should not be changed. It seems one of the driving forces wanting this change to occur is a result of the racial tensions our world and community are presently facing. What is happening in modern day 2020, is not a result of Acton's 37 heroes from April 19, 1775, many of who sacrificed their lives for freedom. The colonials are simply that, heroes.

Please consider my opinion as you make your vote, as it directly affects me as an athlete that wears the mascot name on a regular basis.

Thank you for your time.

[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 21:44:12 -0400
Subject: In Favor of Mascot Removal Vote-See attached for offensive social media post
Dear Acton-Boxborough School Committee Members,

*Attached is an example of why the mascot is an oppressive symbol and harms our community. An ABRHS community member posted an offensive post on social media about how the colonials "destroyed the f***ing natives so we won haha suck it" I implore you to ask yourselves, what messages are we sending the ABRHS community is we refuse to remove the Mascot?*

I am emailing in regards to the Mascot Removal Vote taking place tomorrow. I am an ABRHS alumnus from the Class of 2017, and I joined ABSEJ during the summer as the Communications Director to help spread the message that the current Colonial Mascot is an unacceptable symbol. I sat in on our calls with the ABRHS Superintendent and the School Committee Chair, who were all very receptive to the idea.

As a brown woman, I have experienced microaggressions and racism, but I have never experienced more aggression in my entire life than when I tried to speak to my fellow community members about the Colonial mascot.

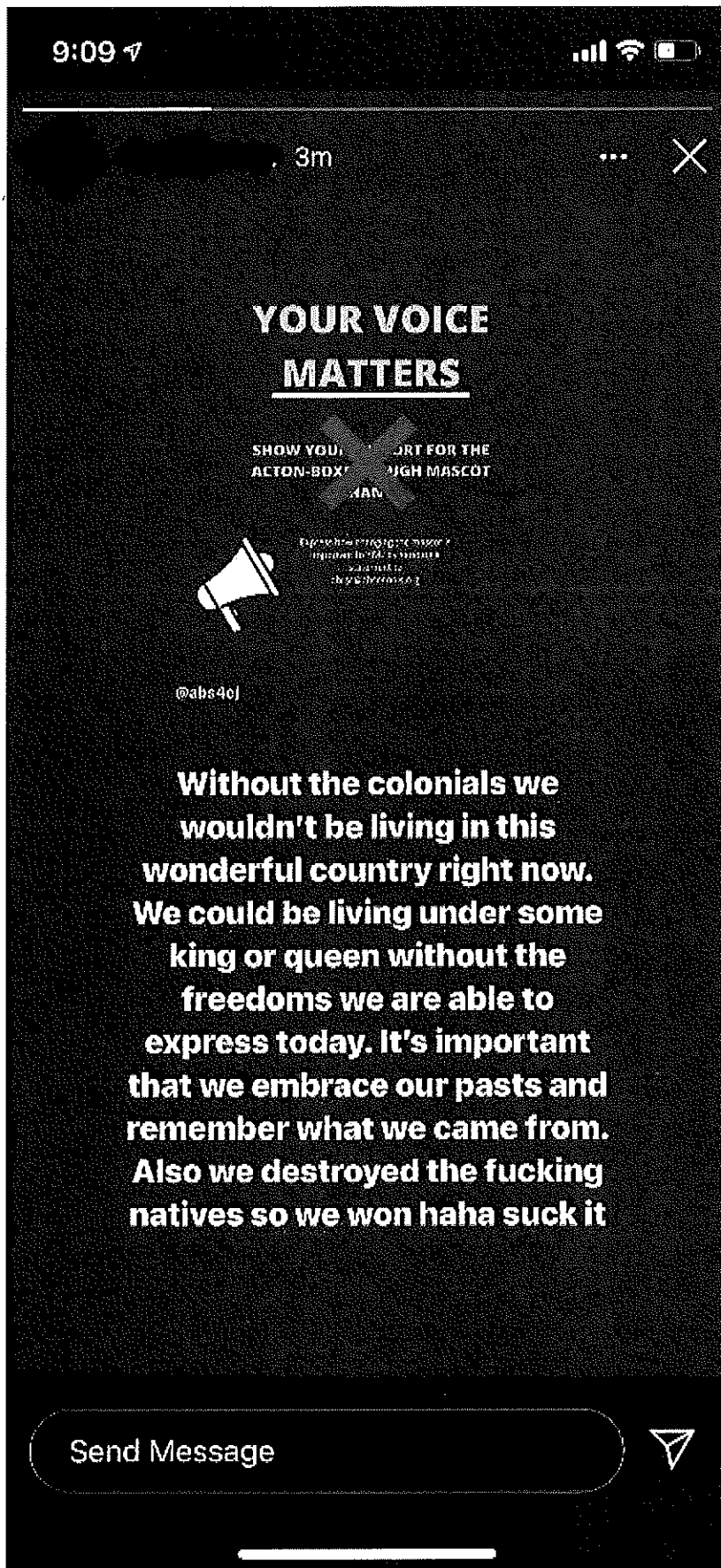
To those who say why bother with this initiative: that perspective is a privilege to hold. You cannot police how oppressed groups choose to reclaim their dignity.

To those who created the petition in favor of keeping the mascot: That initiative should be a warning to the ABRHS community of the underlying racism that our community still possesses. The petition fails to mention any of the harm colonials did to indigenous and black individuals, once again erasing a part of our history. I quote it "the mascot may not represent our school's demographic."

In regards to majority rules: Our petition still holds more numbers in favor of removing the mascot. That is a win, since we are fighting for minority voices. Please remember the concept of Tyranny of the Majority.

An opportunity: This is an opportunity to show school spirit. Many ABRHS students have not felt connected to the Colonials. It is time to create a new symbol that can bring our community together during these divisive times.

Thank you for your time,
Shaina Sikka
ABRHS Class of 2017



----- Forwarded message -----

From: Shannon Flynn <[REDACTED]>

To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 21:34:37 -0400
Subject: I support changing the mascot
Hi school committee!

I am an ABRHS Class of 2014 alumni and still live in Acton. I support changing the mascot. I think it is a great opportunity to engage in town dialogue about the history of the land we live on and the narratives of history that we inherit. Especially this year, when the federal government has been trying to take away the land of the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe.

Thank you!
Shannon Flynn

--
Shannon Flynn
[REDACTED]
she/her

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Carole Feldhusen <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 21:19:57 -0400
Subject: Colonial Mascot
To whom it may concern,
I have lived in Acton for 37 years. Both my children went through the AB school system.
I want it noted that I am in support of removing the Colonial Mascot.

Carole Feldhusen
[REDACTED]'s

--
Carole Feldhusen

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Ted Omer <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc: [REDACTED]
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 21:16:31 -0400
Subject: Re: Mascot call for comment
Dear ABRSC,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the petition to change the school mascot from the Colonials to something else. I believe this petition should be reconsidered and rejected, and my explanation follows.

The Colonials were and will continue to be an integral part of our American heritage and history. They fought for freedom from the largest dictatorship of their time to establish a free country of their own. Their actions, sacrifices and successes provided for the birth of Liberty never seen before in this world. We should continue to honor and celebrate them and their efforts, because we and the rest of our 21st century world continue to benefit from what they accomplished and stood for.


To throw away and belittle this heritage is ungrateful, myopic and perilous. We all should thank Providence that we live in this country and live with free agency. We would be wise to see beyond near-term political expediency to provide shallow comfort from loud voices. And we should be wary of changing history, because both good and evil coexist in any civilization, and hindsight through tainted lenses is often a distortion of reality as it applies to current events and issues.

My family is new to this area, but not new to America. We are honored to live within a few miles of where the colonists stood at a bridge and turned back the king's army, thereby starting the revolution that would save this land and give hope to the world. My wife has an ancestor who came from Canada to join the colonial army to defeat the redcoats. I have four children who are descendants of Roger Williams. I was in the US Army as a Reservist for most of two decades, so I feel a kinship to the Minutemen who risked their lives for future generations.

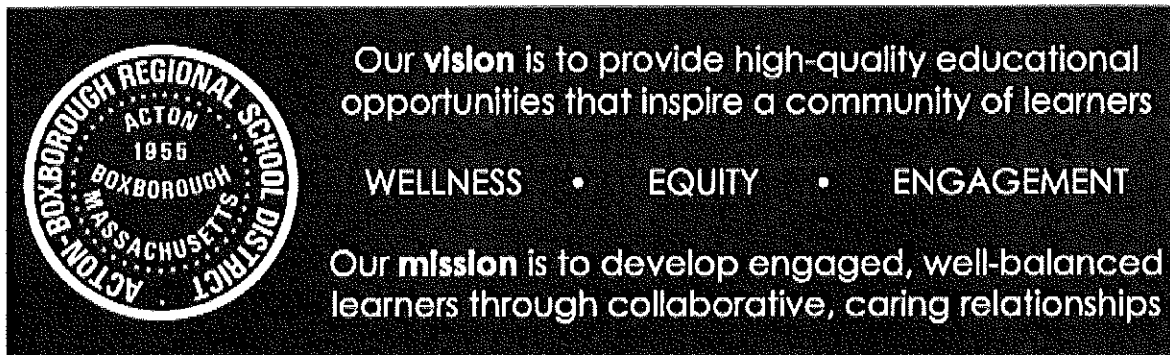
I oppose the suggested change also because it's divisive. We need an increase in love and understanding and tolerance at every level in order to keep us together while pursuing happiness. Maintaining meaningful traditions, such as this mascot, can provide strength and resilience in the coming storms because they serve as reminders of those who have lived and overcome and prospered before us.

Thank you, again for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Ted Omer


On Sep 25, 2020, at 3:05 PM, Acton-Boxborough Regional School District <Notification@target1003.brightarrow.com> wrote:



Thank you to everyone who has commented on this inquiry. We are resending this letter because yesterday's version was not translatable.

Members of the Acton and Boxborough Communities,

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee is welcoming public comment as it considers a petition to retire the Colonial as the official mascot of the District.

On September 17, 2020, the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee heard from a student group, AB Students for Equity and Justice (ABSEJ), who recently submitted a petition to the Committee requesting consideration to retire the Colonial as the official mascot of the High School and District. Last Spring, the petition garnered over 1,300 signatures supporting this change. At our meeting on September 17, ABSEJ presented their case for this change which included a letter which was supported by many notable individuals and groups in our community including: Senator Jamie Eldridge, Racial Justice for Black Lives, Educators Committed to Anti-Racist Equity and Social Justice (ECARES), Fostering Racial Justice Boxborough, First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, Unitarian Universalist Church, Angel Youth Foundation, Indivisible Acton, and Highrock Covenant.

In their letter to the Committee, ABSEJ noted "a white-male-colonist mascot in no way reflects the ever-changing community of Acton-Boxborough. As the community grows and diversifies, our current mascot is not representative of who we are or what we stand for as a community." The petition submitted last Spring further noted, "Although mascots intend to bring fan bases together, the AB mascot gives a likeable face to a time period that set the stage for present day racial divisions. Changing the mascot is an ethical and educational action that will underscore the need to know real, and not sugar coated, representations of the past."

The Committee recognizes that the Acton-Boxborough community includes many members and groups who may have a variety of views on the issue before the Committee. The School Committee will deliberate on the petition again and consider action at its meeting on October 15, 2020. We invite the public to submit comments in writing by Wednesday, October 14th by emailing us at abrsc@abschools.org. While we recognize that public comment is not a vote, we are interested in hearing a variety of opinions on changing the mascot to help make our deliberation more meaningful.

Sincerely,

Tessa McKinley
ABRSC Chair
abrschools.org

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Notice of Nondiscrimination: ABRSD does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions, age, active military/veteran status, ancestry, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, employment policies, and other administered programs and activities. In addition, students who are homeless or of limited English-speaking ability are protected from discrimination in accessing the course of study and other opportunities available through the schools. Read our Nondiscrimination Notice.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 21:16:16 -0400
Subject: School Mascot

Dear Members of the School Committee,

When I heard that our school district's Mascot was under consideration for change, at first, I didn't understand why. Due to the privilege of my race, it hadn't even accrued to me that something that was supposed to symbolise school spirit and pride could be offensive. Directly after it was explained to me, I knew it was a disgrace that a white male, who furthermore took part in shameful history, represented our school district. One white man cannot even come close to doing justice to our diverse and changed school district. Furthermore, many early colonists who came to America, killed, raped, enslaved, and stole land from Native Americans. I don't want the school district I am a part of to take pride in such a horrible thing. Many opinions of the opposing side of this argument have claimed that we can't just ignore our history, and that colonials founded the country we are a part of today. In response to the many who have said things like that, I agree, we can't ignore history. By changing our school mascot from a Colonial, we will be acknowledging the history they took part in, and making a statement that things like that are not okay in this day and age. Especially not in our school district. Another common justification for not changing the Colonial was that by making our mascot different, we would somehow be announcing we are not proud Americans. I can understand why one might think this, seeing as Colonials founded this country, but believe it to be better or worse, America today is so contrasting from the one the Colonials founded. I am proud to be a part of this modern, more diverse, America, not one from before I was even born. Though change can be hard, after hearing points such as the ones put forth by the ABSEJ, anyone could argue that making change is the right move to make our school district a more fairly represented, equal, and overall closer community, starting with the change of our mascot.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
RJ Grey, 8

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Martin Benson <[REDACTED]>
To: abrschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 21:07:31 -0400
Subject: Keep the Colonial

Dear School Committee Members,

My name is Martin Benson. I am a 2006 graduate of ABRHS and served as Student Council President during my senior year as well as a student representative to the School Committee for two years. I am writing to express my support for keeping the Colonial Mascot, but, more importantly, that as a body you act slowly and thoughtfully in reaching a decision. The Colonial has long been a source of pride for our town and our role in American history. Our citizen farmers bravely took up arms against the world's greatest superpower. Their sacrifice on April 19th, 1775, served as a catalyst for the other colonies to take up arms against their colonial oppressor. The success of the American Revolution inspired other countries to fight for their own freedom which led to the end of the colonial era. Captain Isaac Davis, who led the Acton militia, was killed that day at the Concord Bridge. He is buried in the center of town, and the Minuteman on the back of the Massachusetts quarter is his image. His plow is on display inside the entrance of town hall symbolizing Acton's citizen soldiers.

We are living through tense times. Politics has divided our country while a novel pandemic has changed our way of life. The upcoming months and years are going to be long and arduous and our community needs to be brought together not driven apart. In the coming years, Acton will need community support to pay for possible school overrides, projects, scholarships and related expenses. Abruptly retiring a town tradition to satisfy a segment of the community is likely to be short sighted.

What is of great concern to many is the Committee's appearance of rushing to a decision without properly studying this issue and its potential effects. Specifically, statements in Tessa McKinley's October 14th letter suggesting that there is no need for further history lessons as the history has been "misrepresented" is inaccurate, dismissive, and offensive to many community members. Additionally, this statement clearly indicates a lack of historical knowledge and academic curiosity amongst members of this school committee. Furthermore, as the economy continues to falter and budgets grow tighter, the \$218,295 cost to replace team uniforms is not the best use of our resources at this time.

This debate has only divided the town at a time when we need to be united. Thousands of people on both sides have expressed their opinions. Rather than make an abrupt decision, I encourage the School Committee to form an exploratory committee to study this issue. This committee could be composed of students, alumni, teachers, community members, and historians. It's critical that it include a diversity of views in order for all sides to have a seat at the table and hopefully result in a community buy in. After studying the comprehensive history of the town, the committee may reach a conclusion on whether the mascot should be updated and how it could reflect the diverse community that now is Acton.

I encourage committee members to approach this subject with an open mind and to take the time to learn the history of our unique town and its role in the founding of our nation. The Minuteman, who some students find offensive, sacrificed their lives for the town we all live in and inspired others around the world to take up arms against their colonial oppressors. Let's not sever connections to the past, let's add to them. It's best we come to these decisions together.

Sincerely,

Martin Y Benson

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 20:59:09 -0400
Subject: Colonials mascot change
Dear ab school committee, I strongly believe that we should change the mascot.
I am a 6th grader at [REDACTED]

1. First of all and definitely most importantly, there are people that go to school on spirit wear days and feel uncomfortable.
2. The mascot does not include everyone. Its a white man. I am not saying that white men are bad, but as a girl I feel like it does not represent me. And for other students that are not white or not male they also may not feel represented.
3. Last but not least, it is not a very fun mascot. I mean who would choose a colonial, given the chance to pick anything. How about an animal?

From,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 20:16:13 -0400
Subject:
Dear AB School committee members,

My name is [REDACTED], I am a member of the AB class of 23, and I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot. A mascot is supposed to represent a school and it's students, keeping the colonial as our schools mascot only glorifies the history of the colonials while ignoring the trauma and history of the indigenous people. I firmly believe that changing the school mascot will be a step in the right direction and it will help in creating a more positive and comfortable environment in our community.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Hayden Johnson <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 19:27:25 -0400
Subject: Colonials Mascot

Hi, I am writing on behalf of the discussion surrounding our school mascot at the time. I fully believe that the mascot should not be changed. Obviously, this mascot was not made to offend or make anyone uncomfortable. This is an example of cancel culture, and if it goes through, our town will begin to see more unnecessary changes due to the cancel culture. Our town will end up on shows like Sean Hannity and Tucker Carlson and be seen as a laughingstock. I'm not sure if you are aware, but the girl [REDACTED] runs a private group on facebook where she accuses anyone that doesn't agree with her idea to be a racist, terrorist, bigot, etc. She also promotes causing trouble on her page, and I have screenshots as proof if you are interested in viewing them. She claims she is against racism but when I politely told her that I think our mascot should stay, she resorted to calling me a "fragile white male" and that "I can't have an opinion on this because I'm white", which is just racist in itself and goes against everything she preaches. I urge that you keep the mascot and not destroy our town, and our school's history. Wouldn't be the United

States of America if it weren't for Isaac Davis and the minutemen (Colonials). If you want anymore info on Leela and the radical stuff she posts in private, please feel free to reach out to me.
Thank you

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Joe Sansone [REDACTED]>
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 20:13:19 -0400
Subject: Change the Mascot
Hi there,

Former AB student, class of 2011, and resident here. A few years at a party the topic of major league teams with racist names and mascots came up, which evolved into sharing what our high school and college teams were. A friend with African American, Native American, and Latinx ancestry looked disgusted when myself and another AB alumni said we were "The Colonials". They explained while for us white kids from AB the name was a celebration of the town's patriotic roots, colonialism also represents slavery, genocide, and rape.

Long story short, the name needs to be changed ASAP. The writings on the wall that this is a topic that will not go away. For a town and school that prides itself in progressive views, it would be best to swiftly change the name than continue to uphold a name championing what could be interpreted as white supremacy.

-Joseph Sansone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Francesca Arsenault [REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 19:21:16 -0400
Subject: Remove the current mascot
Good Evening,

I am writing to express my thoughts about the current efforts of the ABRHS students who would like to change the current mascot to something that is more inclusive of the entire school community, I feel this decision should be made by the current students and only the students--they are the ones who are affected by the connotations of the current mascot. As our town morphs and changes into a more diverse and inclusive community the new voices must be heard. The students' ideas, thoughts and actions matter and should be taken seriously.

I felt badly that the need to open this conversation up to the community as a whole which also extended to alumni/ae that live out of state to have a say was unfortunate. I don't even think I should be commenting my daughters graduated in 2014 & 2016. Again, this decision should be made by the current student body.

I hope the outcome of this endeavor is one that makes the current students at ABRHS happy and proud.

Sincerely,

Fran Arsenault
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 19:13:51 -0400
Subject: Mascot
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 22.

I **strongly** support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Elizabeth Hora <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 18:07:09 -0500
Subject: Changing the Mascot
Hello,

I graduated ABRHS in 2018, and as a graduate, I would like to see the mascot changed. After thinking about what a colonial is and what it represents in the context of the push for racial justice and progress, I cannot continue to support the colonial as our mascot.

It is a general rule of thumb not to turn any person or racial group into a mascot, and the colonial is no different. I've seen public comments say that the colonial represents standing up to the imperial British oppressors, but fail to acknowledge how the colonials oppressed the Native Americans who were here first. By choosing the colonials as the mascot, it elevates that particular group over others, and I'm sure that is not the message that ABRHS wishes to convey.

I've seen other comments about the colonials being a sign of heritage. I am a fourth generation American while many of my peers were first and second generation Americans. By saying that the colonial is part of our heritage holds us hostage to the prejudices and injustices of the past. Our student body continues to be more diverse and open minded than the years preceding, and therefore it would not make sense to prioritize those who have had ancestors in the New England era and allow them to define our present and future.

Being a New Englander is so much more than just fighting against the British in the 1700s. We value education, equal opportunity for all, and progress. Our very education system has taught us about the murder of Native Americans by European settlers, we strive to make all students feel included and represented, and we want to see progress in society to allow everyone to enjoy every freedom guaranteed to every American. We are so much more than our past, and we can be represented better than just one group of people from the 1700s.

I urge that you at least allow for the opportunity to change the mascot, and at the most, that you retire the colonial as the mascot.

Thank you,
Elizabeth Hora

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Masha Elkin <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:06:10 -0700
Subject: Colonials Mascot Should be Changed
To whom it may concern,

As an alumna of ABRHS, class of 2011, I urge the school committee to drop the Colonial as our school mascot. While we can be proud of our revolutionary spirit and the founding values of Massachusetts and the United States of America, we cannot be proud of colonizing indigenous land and facilitating the genocide of entire peoples. If Acton-Boxborough wants to live up to its claim to be a fair and inclusive school for all, then we must stop glorifying symbols of oppression and violence. Please retire the Colonial as our school mascot.

Best,
Masha Elkin, PhD

----- Forwarded message -----

From: E abramowitz <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 22:47:11 +0000
Subject: Mascot

I'm an alumni class of 2016 and played sports for AB, I vote to keep the colonial mascot.

Sent from my iPhone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: craig <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 22:42:09 +0000
Subject: Keep mascot
Craig Buxton
ABRHS
Class of '91

Sent from my iPhone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Steve Miller <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 22:35:34 +0000
Subject:
I am am Acton resident and I vote to keep the mascot.

Best regards,

Stephen T. Miller
President
Far East Resources, Inc.

[REDACTED]
Suite 3
Stow, MA 01775-0256

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Web: <http://www.fareastpcb.com>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Somya Prabhakar <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:33:51 -0700
Subject: please change the mascot
It's offensive and hurtful. Why is this even a question?

--
Somya Prabhakar
ABRHS '19

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Gardena Abramowitz <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 18:28:51 -0400
Subject: Mascot
I'm an alumni my vote is to keep the mascot
Gardena Abramowitz
Class of 87

Sent from my iPhone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "'Padmini Narayan' via AB School Committee" <abrsc@abschools.org>
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 22:25:29 +0000 (UTC)
Subject: Change AB mascot
Dear School Committee Members,,

I am writing on behalf of my [REDACTED]

I strongly support the replacement of the Colonials mascot!

I also strongly recommend that AB observe the second Monday of October as Indigenous People's Day as opposed to Columbus Day going forward!

Thanks,
~Padmini Narayan

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 18:22:47 -0400
Subject: Change The Mascot
Dear AB School Committee,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a senior at ABRHS. I am emailing you to urge you to change the mascot. Though I am not a minority at this school, I empathize with my peers who feel personally offended by our mascot: a white man in military uniform. It is a direct representation of colonizers who piloted the mistreatment of Native Americans in the United States. If I have begun to feel uneasy and guilty having the mascot of our school be a symbol of white supremacy, imagine how people with Native roots feel. I don't want to go to a school of which I am ashamed of. Please, hear us and change this mascot.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 18:22:35 -0400
Subject: colonial mascot
Hey there,

I wanted to contribute my outlook on the discourse regarding whether or not AB should change our current mascot, the colonials. As a community, it is our responsibility to ensure that each member feels safe and accounted for. While some people may view the colonial as a symbol of courage, the glaring history of enslavement, rape, and utter disregard for the lives of indigenous peoples on the behalf of the colonists cannot be ignored. To mount this legacy as the representative of our school is widely insensitive to those who come from cultures that have been burdened with the effects of European colonialism, as well as colonialism as a whole. As we become more progressive and attentive to the needs of our community, it is important that our mascot does not instill fear or resentment in the student body.

Thanks, [REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: Abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 18:14:44 -0400
Subject: Mascot change
I want to keep the mascot as colonials

[REDACTED]
10 grade
ABRHS

Sent from my iPhone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Mark Gaeta <[REDACTED]>

To: "abrs@abschools.org" <abrs@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 18:09:48 -0400

Subject: Keep the Colonial!

I'll keep this short. Keep the mascot for what it represents during the time this town was founded and fought for. People who are offended by this are just looking for one more thing to complain about and find fault with.

Enough is enough. I'm all for racial equality and all that goes with it, but ridding the school of their mascot is an "answer" to a problem that doesn't exist. Don't we as a town and a district have more important things to spend our time and tax dollars on!?

Regards,
Mark

Mark Gaeta
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Eleanor Tolley <[REDACTED]>

To: abrs@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 18:04:58 -0400

Subject: AB Mascot

Dear School Committee Members,

My name is Eleanor Tolley and I am a member of the AB class of 2016 writing to let you know that I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot. As an alumni of AB, I am proud to support current students in their efforts to decolonize the Acton-Boxborough school systems, something that my class and many classes before mine should have taken action towards. They are setting an example for all of us and I hope you'll join me in listening and learning from them.

Sincerely,
Eleanor

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "[REDACTED] via AB School Committee" <abrs@abschools.org>

To: abrs@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 18:04:41 -0400

Subject: ab mascot

being an alumni and current resident, i oppose changing changing the colonial name based on implied and assumed reasons for what the mascot stands for instead of the true and real values the mascot represents.

Sent from my iPhone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Christopher Diskin <[REDACTED]>

To: abrs@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 17:55:25 -0400

Subject: Keep Mascot, Chris Diskin, 1992

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Serena Han <[REDACTED]>

To: abrs@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 17:56:31 -0400

Subject: Mascot Removal

Dear School Committee Members,

My name is Serena Han, and I am a member of the AB class of 2020.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot, as I believe it is a necessary step toward recognizing the historical erasure of crimes committed against indigeneous peoples and will help our community move forward on the right foot.

Sincerely,
Serena Han

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 17:52:25 -0400
Subject: Change the Mascot
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2022.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
she/her/hers
A World of Difference Peer Leader
ABRHS
Class of '22

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 17:43:54 -0400
Subject: [REDACTED] grade 10 keep the mascot

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Oleg Volinsky <[REDACTED]>
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 17:33:17 -0400
Subject: regarding AB Mascot petition
Hello,

I am a town resident and a parent of a current [REDACTED] student.

I oppose the petition to retire the "Colonial" as the AB Mascot.

Here are the reasons:

1. The current petition is incomplete and does not propose an alternative mascot. If students do not like the mascot they should bring to the table a viable alternative, and have the support for this alternative. Retirement and replacement of the mascot should be a single petition. It cannot be done in multiple steps. It is unfair for the petitioners to leave the problem of selecting a new mascot to others.
2. The current petition does not recognize the costs that Acton and Boxborough citizens would have to bear if the mascot retirement petition is approved. There should be a process established to identify related costs and for funding these costs.
3. The petition does not adequately address the local context of the mascot origin. The mascot represents specific local origins which are associated with patriotism, bravery, and sacrifice. The petition does not recognize these points.

Finally, the petition has brought up a lot of bullying from supporters of the petition. I have seen open minded, caring, educated members of the community being called "racist" for opposing this petition. I have seen bullying of students who questioned the petition's premise. It should have been a deliberative process for real conversation. Instead, it has been very offensive and

discouraging. The committee should address this and take this into account as you are considering the petition, and counting votes from the community and students.

Best regards,
Oleg Volinsky
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Julie Timbol [REDACTED]
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 17:25:50 -0400
Subject: Keep mascot name, Julie Timbol

Please keep Colonials!

- Julie

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 17:23:10 -0400
Subject:
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2021.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 17:22:53 -0400
Subject: Change the Mascot
Dear School Committee Members,

Recently there has been discussion regarding the Colonial mascot. At first, I did not understand the initiative to change the mascot. Although colonialism is inherently problematic, I did not see a worthwhile benefit in changing it. However, after educating myself, I believe it is important to rally around a mascot that represents the entire student body—something a "Colonial" fails to accomplish. I encourage you all to approach this issue from a level head, considering the impact of your decision, as it means more to the students than you.

My name is [REDACTED], and I am a member of the Class of 2021. I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot. Stand for the students you represent. Thank you.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 17:20:08 -0400
Subject: Mascot change please and thank you
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2021.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "Laura N. Krieger" <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 21:08:59 +0000
Subject: Mascot
Dear Members of the School Committee,

I respectfully ask that you postpone a vote about the AB mascot.

The political and social environment is so hostile and divided right now that many people, especially students, are unable or unwilling to engage in civil discourse.

There have been incidents where people who have spoken in favor of keeping the mascot have been publicly vilified by adults and peers. There cannot be learning and widespread buy-in under these conditions.

Our community and kids need to see and experience a democratic process, rather than what we are seeing and experiencing as a country.

Please allow time for this to happen, and perhaps help further facilitate discussion and process.

Thank you,
Laura Krieger

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone
Get Outlook for Android

----- Forwarded message -----

From: James Scammon <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 17:12:56 -0400
Subject: "Colonials"

Dear Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee,

I understand that tomorrow evening, you as a body will consider a petition to change the name of the Acton Boxborough mascot. When I think of Colonials, I think of patriots who fought for independence from an oppressive government, not the continuation of British colonization. I understand that the lives of indigenous people were lost as a result of the conflicts with the settlers. However, their intent was not to overtake native people, but to live side by side in this great land. This is what I was taught in Acton-Boxborough school system.

My ancestors migrated from Europe to the northeast in 1630, then fought for our freedom during the Revolutionary War. I grew up in Acton Center down the street from where three Acton residents are buried under a monument that memorializes their legacy. Would you advocate removing that monument or the one at Old North Bridge where they died fighting for your freedom?

For those who have had the privilege of representing the towns of Acton and Boxborough we all took pride in representing all of the patriotism of our forefathers.

Issac Davis, John Hayward, David Forbush, Oliver Emerson, John Davis, Abner Hosmer, Joseph Barker, Seth Brooks, John Heald, Phillip Piper, Joseph Reed, John Robbins, James Fletcher, were all Colonials... Perhaps you live, work, shop, or went to a school on a street in Acton named after one of these men because no one wanted to forget what they did for this country.

I encourage you to reject the petition for a mascot name change and use the opportunity to reinforce the incredible sacrifices that these Colonials made for your freedom.

Thank you,

James E Scammon
AB Class of 1978

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 17:12:16 -0400
Subject: KEEP MASCOT
[REDACTED]
Grade 12

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 17:11:45 -0400
Subject: KEEP THE MASCOT

I think that AB should keep the mascot as the Acton Boxborough Colonials. I am an 8th grader at the RJ junior high school and I am planning on playing football next year for the highschool and I don't want to be the big birds.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 17:11:29 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot
[REDACTED] freshman

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Susannah Malloy <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 17:07:54 -0400
Subject: Colonial Mascot
Dear School Committee:

I have reviewed the pro and con arguments for retiring the Colonial mascot. This is a complicated issue with strong arguments on both sides.

I watched the October 6 Acton Board of Selectmen meeting, Selectmen Benson suggested that the A-B School Committee pause on this issue. He suggested that ABRHS staff further educate students on the history of Acton and Boxborough during the Colonial time period and the role that Acton and Boxborough residents played in the Revolutionary War.

I totally concur with Mr. Benson's suggestion.

I urge the School Committee to not take a definitive vote to retire the Colonial mascot at this time. More education and discussion on all sides is needed.

Thank you.

Dear Acton-Boxborough School Committee,

I don't believe we need to go back to a part in history and make modern day changes based on early settlers' actions of the 1600's and try to draw some parallel to modern day racist issues. Neither gun laws nor issues regarding racism should be judged today based on what happened in the 1600's. Although the early history of the Colonials is not something to be proud of, we do not honor that here. We recognize and honor the term colonials as men and women who fought to protect their home from the British. They fought for the land Acton-Boxborough calls home. I feel it is right to continue to honor the brave, tough, and courageous men and women who fought for our freedom. Without their sacrifice, this country wouldn't be what is today. This is like the old gun laws that used to exist. The laws back then were antiquated and had many problems. But today's rules are much different. We honor new laws that apply to the second amendment. Same can be said about the term colonials. The early history was bad, and the negative side of the colonials is not who we are. The towns around us all carry a unique name. Patriots, Warriors, Buccaneers all have a positive history and a negative history. Nobody is perfect but we remember them for their positives. Which are men and women fighting for freedom of this land. I vote to keep the mascot and continue to honor the Colonials.

Andrew Bruce

(Alumni Class of 2020)



[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 17:01:16 -0400
Subject: Mascot Removal
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2022.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Best,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Andrew Bruce [REDACTED] >
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 17:01:11 -0400
Subject: Mascot Vote
My response and my vote on the mascot,

Andrew Bruce
Alumni class of 2020
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 17:00:56 -0400
Subject: Mascot
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 22.
I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:59:27 -0400
Subject: Mascot

Save the mascot!! 2nd generation colonial here. The best part of living in this area is meeting people on vacation and describing I am from Acton, MA- Revolutionary War! Battle of Lexington and Concord! The colonials stand for 'anyone can do anything they set their mind to'. A group of FARMERS won a war against a trained army. If that doesn't inspire you to put your best foot forward everyday, I don't know what does.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "Tang, Alice" <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 20:58:46 +0000
Subject: RE: Changing the School Mascot From a Concerned Alumni

Hello,
I hope this email finds you well.

I am emailing in regard to changing ABRHS' school mascot.

The Acton-Boxborough mascot is currently "The Colonial," which pays homage to the colonists who founded the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the 17th century.

Not only does it glorify colonialism, but the "Colonial" mascot also disregards the generational pain and suffering that European colonists inflicted upon Black and Indigenous people of color in their quest to colonize the Americas. Colonialism brought slavery to the Americas and white Europeans used the social construct of race to justify it.

The mascot glorifies the horrific actions of these people, condoning the mass genocide of indigenous peoples brought on by the colonial era. Even if not the original intention, the impact of this mascot is one that signifies that colonial values are synonymous with the values the AB community holds. Considering the intensely racist and problematic values of the colonists, AB should NOT align themselves with these ideologies.

As someone who has graduated from Acton Boxborough, the implications behind our mascot are shameful and should be changed immediately.

Please listen to concerned members of your community who are expressing discomfort with the school mascot.

According to others, if having "The Colonial" as a mascot is "not a big deal", then there should be no issue in changing it because other valued members of our community feel uncomfortable by an inherently racist mascot.

Thank you,
Alicia Tang
ABRHS Class of 2018

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Nikki Akali [REDACTED]
To: abjsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:58:36 -0400
Subject: Mascot Removal
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is Natasha Akali and I am a member of the AB class of 2020.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
Natasha

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "'Jack Olson' via AB School Committee" <abjsc@abschools.org>
To: "abjsc@abschools.org" <abjsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 20:58:14 +0000
Subject: Mascot Change
Dear AB School Committee Members,

My name is Jack Olson and I graduated from AB in 2018.

10/19/2020

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Mail - Fwd: Mascot emails unredacted #8.2

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot for all the reasons ABSEJ have previously outlined for you.

Thank you.

Best,
Jack Olson



Colonial

Tony Ammendolia [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>

Wed, Oct 14, 2020 at 4:35 PM

Dear Acton Boxborough Regional School Committee,

10/14/20

I am an old Colonial. I attended Acton Boxborough schools, beginning in 1960, from grades 4 through 12. During that time, I had the ultimate AB Colonial Educational Experience. I could not wait to get to high school. As a student, I participated in Athletics, the Arts, and the Colonial Marching band. Over the last 20 years I have served AB as a Physical Education Teacher and Coach of many sports. I have also facilitated and developed other successful programs for our students at ABRHS. I have loved every minute of this experience!

I am rounding third now in my life's journey. I do not generally get involved in these types of things. However, I find it necessary to send my thoughts to you regarding the Colonial.

I know that Raymond Grey and William O'Connell had a plan to create a school system where the community would be very proud. It is easy to see that they have accomplished that goal. All we need to do is look at the care our students have received and the achievements they have attained. This plan has been working for the last 60+ years. I was fortunate to see it and experience it, first hand.

My belief is that when the AB School District was created, the school committee and administrators wanted to honor the character of our Colonial ancestors by accepting the Colonial as the mascot name. The Colonial was an important means to help develop school spirit. It was the binding inspiration of our community. Our association with our Colonial Icons of Davis, Hosmer and Hayward made us all very proud. We loved our community, we loved being a Colonial. Many still do. If given more time, I believe thousands would sign to support the Colonial.

I believe there is something very special here in Acton and Boxborough. It is a legacy like no other in the world. We have been preparing and striving for excellence since 1775. Over the years, thousands of our students have prepared in academics, the arts and athletics on the very grounds Davis prepared his men. Their Colonial spirit is the legacy that links generations together.

The Acton Boxborough School District is the cornerstone of our two communities. The AB Colonial Education Experience is second to none. The Colonial was and is a big part of what Grey and O'Connell had envisioned. The Colonial is the fabric of our school spirit and has served as an inspiration to thousands of Acton Boxborough students and families.

The words Colonial and Colonialism have different definitions. I ask that we do not assume that they mean the same thing.

To many the word Colonial represents a period in history. A period where the people were hard working, determined, mentally & physically tough, morally sound, well prepared and willing to fight for freedom. Our Colonial men died fighting for that freedom. In my view, the Colonial should be honored and respected forever.

I have raised my family here. I am looking forward to seeing my grandchildren as the third generation of our family to wear the Colonial name proudly.

Please vote to keep the Colonial.

Sincerely,

Anthony Ammendolia
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:57:55 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot [REDACTED] Junior, ABRHS

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:55:49 -0400
Subject: School Mascot
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2022. I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot. I believe the mascot glorifies colonialism and ignores the trauma of Indigenous peoples, and changing it is the first step in creating positive change in our community.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:56:10 -0400
Subject: Save the colonial mascot

It is my personal belief that we should preserve the history of our town and the brave minute men who fought off the British rule and gave us our freedom. The cost as well to change everything would be horrible. Please save the colonials mascot.

----- Forwarded message -----

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0?ik=8b1034423e&view=pt&search=all&permmsgid=msg-a%3Ar2732804878090379639&simpl=msg-a%3Ar2732804...>

From: [REDACTED] >
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:54:25 -0400
Subject: Keep School Mascot- [REDACTED] 9th grade, ABHRS
Hello ABRHS,

My name is [REDACTED] and I'm a 9th grader at the AB high school. I would like to keep the school mascot.

Sincerely, [REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:55:04 -0400
Subject: Mascot change
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2022.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:54:05 -0400
Subject: Support to change the mascot

Hi,
I'm [REDACTED] and I'm in grade 10. I want to express my support for changing the mascot and encourage the members to support this change too. In a community with so little Native representation, it's important to listen closely to those who speak up. In order to respect Native communities, we must listen and understand that the colonial mascot, though meant to represent the specific minutemen who lived in Acton-Boxborough and the surrounding regions, actually represents colonialism as a whole, and therefore also mass murderers, destruction of culture and genocide that only ended in the 1970's. This isn't something I want representing my school and neither should you. Furthermore, deciding that the colonial should continue being the mascot paves the way for and allows the normalization of other, unrelated, racist and insensitive action to occur within the AB community. This is not a debate about a 'drawing,' a 'cartoon' or 'just a mascot,' but about the future for your students, your black students, your Asian students, your indigenous student who some of you have seem to forgotten still exist in AB, and for the future of any student of color. Thank you,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:53:23 -0400
Subject: Keep the Colonial, [REDACTED] Grade 10
Keep the Colonial, [REDACTED] Grade 10

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>

10/19/2020

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Mail - Mascot emails unredacted #7.1

Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:51:02 -0400
Subject: Remove the Colonials Mascot
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2021.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Thank you,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Sean Seymour [REDACTED]
To: "abrs@abschools.org" <abrs@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:50:14 -0400
Subject: Keep colonial
Keep colonial, Sean Seymour, 2020 graduate.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "Humphreys, Gail" [REDACTED]
To: "abrs@abschools.org" <abrs@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 20:50:10 +0000
Subject: mascot change
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is Gail Humphreys and I am a member of the AB class of 2018.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonial mascot.

Sincerely,

Gail Humphreys

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrs@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:48:51 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot - [REDACTED] Grade 7 RJ Grey
Hello,

My name is [REDACTED] and I'm in 7th grade at RJ Grey Junior High. I believe that the AB Mascot, Colonials, should stay as it is and not be changed.

Thank you.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Natalie Maggs [REDACTED]
To: abrs@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:48:48 -0400

Subject: Mascot

Listen to your marginalized students, or you are not our school. Do the right thing, be on the right side of history, and change the mascot.

Natalie Maggs

Class of 2018

ABS4EJ

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]

To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:48:17 -0400

Subject: Mascot Change

Dear School committee members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of AB class of 2023. I strongly support the removal of the colonials mascot.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]

To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:47:48 -0400

Subject: Removal of the Mascot

Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the ABRHS class of 2023.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials Mascot.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]

To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:47:57 -0400

Subject: Mascot Change

Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of '21.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Mikayla Caruso <[REDACTED]>

To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 20:47:24 +0000

Subject: Replace the AB Mascot

Hello,

My name is Mikayla Caruso, and I am an AB alum, class of 2016. I believe that the colonial mascot represents racism and celebrates the genocide of the Nipmuc peoples. It is for that reason that I believe the mascot needs to be retired. In the Acton-Boxborough School District, we should make sure everyone feels represented and safe. As a very minor step towards a less racist, more inclusive community, the mascot needs to be replaced. We want AB to be a place that people of all different races, genders, religions, and sexualities can call home. With the Colonials mascot, we are representing a white, colonialist agenda of genocide and discrimination. The mascot is not what we, as a community, stand for and it needs to be replaced.

Thank you for your time,
Mikayla

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:47:45 -0400
Subject: Removal of Colonials Mascot
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2022.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:44:39 -0400
Subject: Mascot Change

Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2024.

I strongly support the removal and more positive change of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:46:17 -0400

Subject: Colonial Mascot

Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of '21.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Philip Galati [REDACTED] >

To: abjsc@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:41:48 -0400

Subject: Keeping the mascot

First off, we should *keep* the mascot. It's not a symbol of genocide and oppression. The Colonial is the quintessential freedom fighter image for the strong men from Massachusetts who died fighting for this country's freedom. There are bigger problems the school should be focusing on.

Second, is the voice of the students. I've heard that the emails you have received from students that support changing the mascot are in a vast majority. Remember to also listen to the parents. They are role models, guardians, and most importantly, **taxpayers**. These students won't pay a dime if the school does a complete overhaul of all of its branding. The jerseys, the scoreboards, the school merchandise, everything. The parents will have to burden all of it. And the parents deserve to have their voice heard, too.

Lastly, on the subject of money. There are MUCH more pressing issues that the school should be allocating its money and resources to than this "problem." I lost a friend to suicide during a deeply emotionally unstable part of my life. I was still maturing, and I had to deal with trauma that no student should have to deal with. The worst part is that it was completely avoidable. Whatever happened to "one life lost is too many?" And we lost, what, 7 people in a span of just over 2 years? It's unacceptable how little the school has done for its students' collective mental health years after these deaths. And it's pathetic. I hope this school starts prioritizing things, and maybe, just maybe, the students wouldn't dread waking up for classes every morning.

Sincerely,

Philip Galati

Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Class of 2020

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]

To: "abjsc@abschools.org" <abjsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:41:58 -0400

Subject:

Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 21.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]

To: AB School Committee <abjsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:40:07 -0400

Subject: Keep Mascot: [REDACTED]

ABRHS School Committee Members,

Today's tumultuous times have brought to light many issues regarding equality. One of these issues has hit our community in the recent weeks regarding the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School mascot: the Colonial. Living in Acton for the 18 years of my life, I have been immersed in the rich culture that is a product of not only our town's, but our state's rich history. Throughout my years I have been to parades and gatherings to remember those who paid the ultimate price for something that they believed in dearly. Not only did these events bring together complete strangers, but they served as a way to teach generation after generation the values of our nation's founders. Independence, perseverance, and opportunity drove the strong men and women who were once Massachusetts farmers to mobilize and prepare to make the ultimate sacrifice. Standing up for their own beliefs, against all odds, they defeated the tyrannical British government and gained this independence. These values were at the core of society throughout the fight for freedom and they are ones that are still with us today. Preserving these beliefs has taught people how to better themselves and preserve the United States as a great nation.

The Acton-Boxborough Mascot represents these core beliefs and reminds students to implement these specific values of our founders in their everyday lives. Our founders sacrificed themselves to better the lives of generations to come and having a mascot to represent this reminds the students that things were not always handed to people in the past. Our ability to exercise our rights given to us by the system that began with the fighting spirit possessed by these "Colonials" are ones that we see playing out in our everyday lives. The freedom to have a democratic nation, the freedom of speech, and the freedom of religion are just some of many of the gifts we were given by the men and women who pushed for a cause they believed in. This fighting spirit and perseverance held by our founders is represented in our community by our mascot.

My peers who are trying to remove the mascot seem to have forgotten or disregard the values that our mascot represents. I think that a vote should take place so that every Acton-Boxborough Regional High School student gets the opportunity to have their opinion heard.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]

To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:38:32 -0400

Subject: Mascot Change

Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2021. I strongly support the removal of the Colonials Mascot.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]

To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:35:55 -0400

Subject: Pro Mascot Change!

Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2024.

10/19/2020

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Mail - Mascot emails unredacted #7.1

I VERY strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Sam Newcombe [REDACTED] >
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:37:40 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot - Sam Newcombe ABRHS Class of 2020
Please keep it

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] via AB School Committee" <abrsc@abschools.org>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:32:30 -0400
Subject: School mascot
Keep mascot, [REDACTED] 11 grade, acton Boxborough

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Julie Yao [REDACTED] >
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:34:36 -0400
Subject: Do the right thing - CHANGE THE MASCOT
Julie Yao
AB Class of 2016
Author of the petition

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:29:51 -0400
Subject: Keep Colonial - [REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Julie Yao [REDACTED] >
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:32:02 -0400
Subject: Author of the Mascot Change Petition
Good Afternoon,

I graduated from AB in 2016 and from Barnard College, Columbia University this May in 2020. I wrote the petition with the help of an AB Classmate, Ben Fanucci-Kiss.

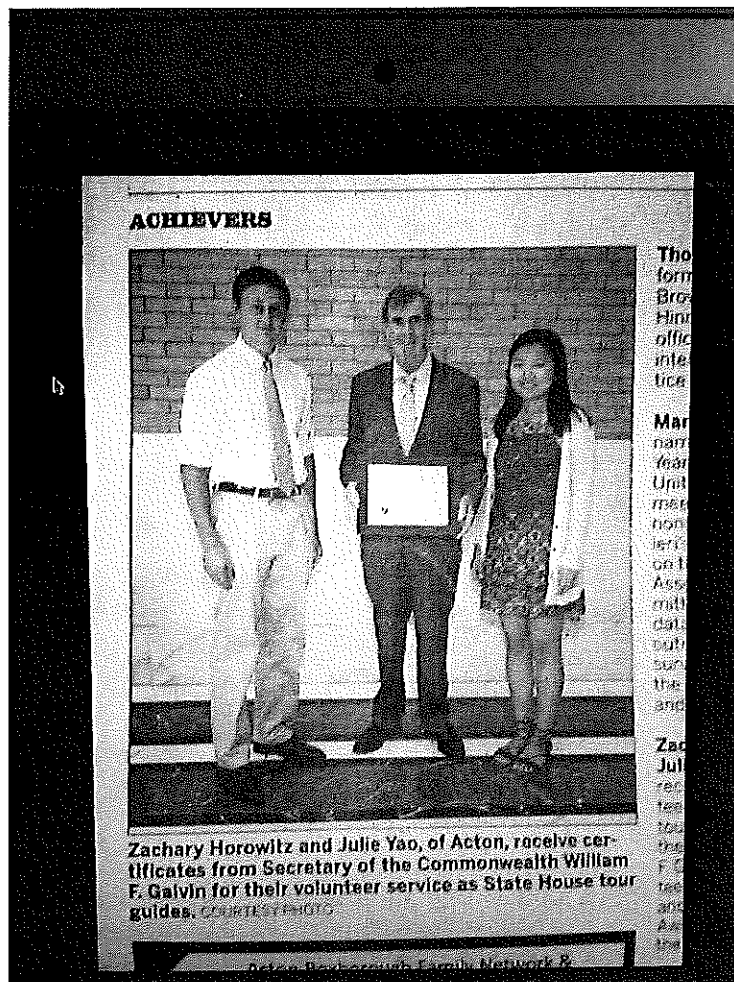
I believe it is time to change the mascot **NOT** because I host any hatred toward our history (see below for a picture of me getting recognized at the State House by State Secretary Galvin for my years of volunteering as a summer tour guide at the State House), but because I believe it is time for us as a community to recognize the **TRUTHS** of our history. The Colonial mascot glorifies one part of U.S. and world history that is only worth celebrating for white people of European heritage; for the rest of us that are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, it is genocide, colonialism, and the basis for

hundred of years of systemic racism. As we fight for a more inclusive future for all of us, for a future that is truly anti-racist, all symbols of oppression, including the mascot, must go.

Seeing the overwhelming support for the mascot from an **overwhelmingly white** crowd hurts. As a person of color who has a lot of joyous memories of Acton but also a lot of traumas from years of being a person of color and immigrant in a predominately white town, I am really hurt by these white people's general lack of empathy toward the sufferings of their fellow Americans and humans. They are acting like we don't live here or our history/presence don't exist. I am hurt, but not more than I am tired. I have already moved to New York City after college. Seeing everything that has unfolded in this fight to change the mascot only serves as a remainder of why I moved and why I am never coming back.

I'm writing to let you know that Acton Boxborough is crushing the American Dream of a young first-generation immigrant. I'm tired of trying to make my plea palatable to you. Please do the right thing. We are asking for so little.

Best,
Julie



----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: abrcs@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:29:17 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot- [REDACTED] 12th grade, high school

Sent from my iPhone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:28:45 -0400
Subject: SUPPORT CHANGING THE MASCOT
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2026.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:28:45 -0400
Subject:

Dear School Committee members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2023. I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:28:36 -0400
Subject: Keep mascot-[REDACTED]r junior

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "[REDACTED] via AB School Committee" <abrsc@abschools.org>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:28:19 -0400
Subject: Mascot Change
Dear School Committee Members,
My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2022. I strongly support the removal of the colonials mascot.
Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:25:17 -0400
Subject: mascot change
Dear School Committee members,
My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the class of 2021.
I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.
Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:24:59 -0400
Subject: Mascot Change
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a part of AB class of 2022.

I strongly support the removal and replacement of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "[REDACTED]" via AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:22:09 -0400
Subject: Mascot needs to be changed!

Dear Members of the School Committee,

My name is [REDACTED], I am a senior at Acton Boxborough Regional High School, and I strongly support removing the Colonial mascot. The fact that the colonials committed mass genocide IS enough. Thankyou.

Sent from my iPhone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:24:25 -0400
Subject: Mascot change
Dear School Committee Members,
My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2023. I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot
Sincerely, [REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Melissa LoPorto <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:21:28 -0400
Subject: Mascot
Dear School Committee,

My name is Missy LoPorto and I am a Acton community member. I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot and the students who petitioned for this removal.

Thank you,
Missy LoPorto

Sent from my iPhone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:21:56 -0400
Subject: Keep Colonials
Keep Colonials
[REDACTED], Senior

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Emory Peng <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:18:50 -0400
Subject: AB Mascot
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is Emory Peng and I am a member of AB Class of 2019.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot, and I hope the Committee will move towards making the mascot something that is not offensive but inclusive and representative of everyone in the AB community.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Emory Peng

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Alexander <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:17:49 -0400
Subject: Mascot Change
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is Alexander Bispham and I am a member of the AB class of 2018.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
Alexander Bispham

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:15:28 -0400
Subject: Removal of colonial mascot
Dear school committee members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of AB class of 2022.

I strongly support the removal of the colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:17:21 -0400
Subject: Mascot Change
Dear School Committee Members,

I'm [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2021.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Best,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "'Kazuo Yoshizaki' via AB School Committee" <abrsc@abschools.org>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:10:52 -0400
Subject: Mascot call
Hi,

I'm so concerned about this movement in this country now. If we start abandoning this sort of naming, we should really know what this country had done to the first nations. America took away this land from the first nations, so what the first nations really want is this land. Just changing the mascot is hypocritical for them. Now, are we ready to give the land back to the first nations and to go back to where we were from? - It's impossible! As long as it's impossible, we should not behave hypocritically. Breaking and removing Columbus statues, or removing "Gone with the Wind" from HBO, etc are also hypocritical. It just does not make sense.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] via AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 20:10:14 +0000 (UTC)
Subject: The Mascot NEEDS TO BE CHANGED
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is Roxanne Bispham

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot. The community can't normalize racial injustice by keeping this mascot. I am disgusted that this is still in question.

Sincerely,
Roxanne Bispham

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:09:17 -0400
Subject: Mascot change
Dear school committee members,
My name is [REDACTED], I am a member of the class of 22.
I strongly support the changing of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:08:02 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot [REDACTED] grade 12 Abrhs
To whom this may concern,

On behalf of the student body, I feel strongly that we should keep the mascot. Our colonial is not the one who murdered and raped indigenous people. Our colonial represents moral for our country and fighting to be free. As a community we all obviously agree that there are many problems in acton. Changing the mascot is the least of our problems. We don't want to change who we are when there is no problem to begin with. Forever and always I will be a colonial.

Thank you for your time,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:07:26 -0400
Subject: Change mascot
Dear School Committee Members,
My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2022.
I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.
Sincerely, [REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:06:53 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot [REDACTED] ABRHS
Hi

I think we should keep the mascot.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:06:22 -0400
Subject: AB Mascot Change
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2021.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:06:38 -0400
Subject: Mascot Change
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of AB class of 2024. I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: ajpitt12 <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:05:56 -0400
Subject: Keep mascot - AJ Pittorino - Class of 92

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:05:13 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot-[REDACTED] 8th grade, RJ Grey Junior High School
Let's keep the colonial, the colonials fought for us so I fight for them.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:04:41 -0400
Subject: Save Acton-Boxborough Mascot!
Dear School Committee Members,

I would like to keep our mascot. Colonials, including many from our very town of Acton, gave their lives to give birth to this great country. It is this very freedom that the Colonials won that allows us to pursue equality, diversity and inclusion in our lifetime. Our freedom should not be taken for granted -- and the contributions of the Colonials who won that freedom should not be dismissed. I believe the students, staff, and community members who would like to keep the mascot care just as much about equality, diversity, inclusion and freedom. I have heard a student say that they did not voice their opinion because they saw others who would like to keep the mascot being verbally attacked by those who want to change the mascot. I do not believe that under 500 people represent our entire community.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this issue.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "Ryan Brady" via AB School Committee" <abrsc@abschools.org>

To: abrsc@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:02:01 -0400

Subject: Mascot

I want to keep the mascot

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Cainwyn Leung [REDACTED]

To: abrsc@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:00:59 -0400

Subject: Rejection of Mascot Removal

Dear school committee members,

I am Cainwyn Leung. I graduated from AB in 2017. I strongly urge you not to remove our beloved mascot- the colonial. Just because ABSEJ threatens with such strong and detestable words- which cannot be further from the truth, you should not remove the mascot without serious considerations. Do not listen to mob rule, our society is better than that. We cannot remove history from all aspects of our lives; there will be nothing left.

Sincerely,
Cainwyn Leung

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@abschools.org>

To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:00:01 -0400

Subject: KEEP COLONIALS MASCOT, [REDACTED] class of 24

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@abschools.org>

To: abrsc@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:58:06 -0400

Subject: Mascot Change

Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED], and I am a member of the AB class of 2022. I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@abschools.org>

To: abrsc@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:57:26 -0400

Subject: Keep Mascot

Keep the mascot.

Sent from my iPhone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Allyson Reinert [REDACTED]
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:56:57 -0400
Subject: Support of Mascot Change
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is Allyson Reinert and I am a Class of 2020 graduate from AB. I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Thank you.
Allyson

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "Shah, Yesha Manish" <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 19:57:03 +0000
Subject: Colonials Mascot
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is Yesha Shah and I am a member of the AB class of 2019.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
Yesha Shah

Get Outlook for iOS

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:56:13 -0400
Subject: School Mascot
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2022.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:54:56 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot!
Hello

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a freshman at AB High School. I have heard there is a vote to keep the mascot and I would like to vote in favor of keeping it.

Thanks

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
 To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
 Cc:
 Bcc:
 Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:55:38 -0400
 Subject: Mascot Change
 Dear Members of the School Committee,

My name is [REDACTED], I am a Senior at Acton Boxborough Regional High School, and I strongly support removing the Colonial mascot.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
 To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
 Cc:
 Bcc:
 Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:53:57 -0400
 Subject: Keep Mascot - [REDACTED] 10th grade, ABRHS
 Hi AB school Committee,

The subject of the email seems pretty self explanatory. I'd be happy to provide any elaboration if needed.

Thanks,
 [REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "Dr. Dawn G. Bentley" <[REDACTED]>
 To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
 Cc:
 Bcc:
 Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:53:05 -0400
 Subject: Response to Request for Comment on Colonial Mascot
 Dear Members of the ABRSC,

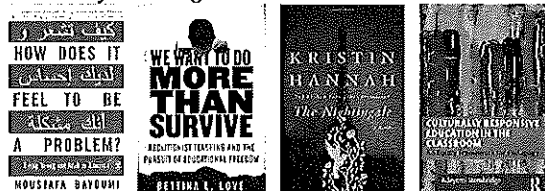
Please see attached letter. Thank you for your consideration.

Dawn G. Bentley, Ed.D.
 Assistant Superintendent for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
 15 Charter Road
 Acton, MA 01720
 (978) 264-4700 [REDACTED]
 Pronouns: She, her, hers

"Teachers should meet students where they are and take them someplace else... and have them carry who they are along with them." (Sonia Nieto)

Currently reading:





Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
15 Charter Road • Acton, MA 01720
978-264-4700 • www.abschools.org

Dawn G. Bentley, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

October 14, 2020

Dear Members of the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee:

In mid-September, you reached out to the community “welcoming public comment as [you] consider a petition to retire the Colonial as the official mascot of the District” following a petition from the Acton-Boxborough Students for Equity and Justice (ABSEJ). Since then, you have received hundreds of responses from concerned citizens, alumni, and current staff and students about whether or not the District should eliminate the Colonial mascot. I certainly don’t envy your position as you weigh all of this feedback and consider next steps.

Thinking about this question through the lens of my role in the district as the Assistant Superintendent for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, I spent time talking with alumni, students, and colleagues about their thoughts around the mascot (both for and against a change, as Chairperson McKinley challenged the community to do). I also read about the etymology of the word “colonial” (as both a noun and an adjective), articles about school mascot changes in the last twenty years, and new (to me!) sources about New England history.

As a result of this learning, I alternatively framed this debate around a different question: *Why should the District **keep** the Colonial mascot?* This brought me to consider this [online petition](#) (with nearly 2350 signers) in favor of the existing mascot. As I read the approximately 100 comments posted in support of the Colonial, they seem to fall into two main buckets. The vast majority are from individuals concerned about erasing the “rich history” of the town (specifically Acton). These posts include phrases about “our founding fathers”, “brave men”, “the creation of the United States,” and a handful also likened a potential recall of the mascot to “cancel culture.” The second type of comments (mostly from ABRHS graduates/longtime Acton Residents) express a sense of school pride and camaraderie, with some expressing a desire for the Colonial mascot to live “forever.” One enthusiastic signer even markets “Heritage, Not Hate” [Colonial tee shirts/swag](#) (which technically could fall into either bucket). However, there are a few outliers, including one individual (most certainly a local taxpayer) who wrote, “I better not have to pay for new sports equipment that doesn’t [say] Colonials” and two others who simply noted that there isn’t a compelling case to change the mascot. Therefore, in response to the question of why the District should keep the mascot, it seems that those in support of the Colonial have basically established two reasons: first, keeping the mascot will ensure that the history of Acton is not erased or forgotten; and second, retaining the Colonial will guarantee that AB students will continue to maintain a sense of pride in their activities, teams, and school/District.

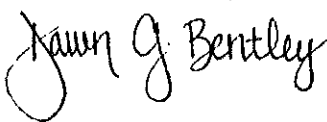
In response to the petitioners’ first reason, the notion that keeping the mascot will ensure that Acton’s history from its incorporation in 1735 to present day is not erased or forgotten is misguided at best. In this thinking, the Colonial has been

conflated to 'stand for' everything that Acton ever has been and ever will be. When the District was incorporated in 1955, the residents were 99% White. To narrowly constrain Acton's history to a single time period within the Colonial era neglects the amazing diversity represented in Acton's residents today, who are 25% Asian, 3% multi-race, 3% Hispanic, 2% Black, and 70% White¹. Additionally, our students (enrolled in Acton elementary schools) will continue to learn about Acton's history in second grade, and they will learn about it again when it's taught through the lens of the American Revolution in any U.S. History course they take at the high school and beyond. Only now, our educators aim to ensure that they learn a more accurate version of our local history, including the fact that almost all of the thousands of books written about colonial New England conveniently exclude the fact that slavery flourished here, (with Native Americans serving as the primary source of non-white labor²) and that there was at least one slave owner in Acton³. The District is committed to ensuring that the students in front of us today learn non-whitewashed history that is centered around historically marginalized groups, while also including the important roles White male Actonians like Isaac Davis played in the 1700s and beyond.

The second reason petitioners shared for keeping the mascot, that AB students would be able to maintain school spirit is confusing to me. As many of you know, I am an ABRSD alumnae and a District employee. Anyone who visits me in Central Office today can see the place of pride my framed ABRHS diploma and varsity letter have on my wall. Both represent the respect and gratitude I have for our District in its role in shaping who I am today. Neither of these artifacts mention the Colonial mascot, yet the AB "pretzel" logo and District seal clearly represent ABRSD. My decision to engage in high school activities had nothing to do with the Colonials mascot. I didn't join the National Honor Society because I thought it would make me a better Colonial. I didn't cheer for the football team because they were the Colonials. I did these things because I had a sense of school spirit, was proud of being a part of AB, and would do anything I could to support and encourage my peers. We could have had any mascot, and I would have been- and continue to be- immensely proud of my high school, my clubs and activities, and my community.

When the Colonial mascot was gradually adopted by ABRHS teams in the late 1950s, it certainly wasn't chosen to intentionally degrade a person or group, but rather to honor our local history. But today, over sixty years later, there are a number of individuals in our community who are telling you that they find the Colonial mascot offensive. And while some might argue that every mascot in existence may offend someone, the bigger argument is whether keeping the Colonial mascot supports or erodes our District's stated value of inclusion. In my role, I center students in my thinking and decisions. So I think that the question before you is actually one for the students we send out to represent our District in clubs, sports teams, and activities: Are each and every one of you who represent our District proud to wear a uniform with the word "Colonials" embroidered on it? And if that answer is 'no' for even one student, then that should be a compelling enough reason.

Yours in Education,



¹ 2018 U.S. Census - <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/actontownnm10000excounty/massachusetts/MA/POP645218>

² Newell, Margaret Ellen. *Brethren by Nature* (p. 5). Cornell University Press. Kindle edition.

³ Acton Historical Society - <https://www.actonhistoricalsociety.org/blog/category/acton-town-history>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:52:26 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot- [REDACTED], 10th grade, ABRHS
Keep the mascot.

Thanks,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "Pappas, Chris" <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 19:52:02 +0000
Subject: ABRHS Colonials name/mascot change

To whom it may concern,

My name is Chris Pappas and I graduated from ABRHS in 1982. Not only did I grow up in the town, I was born in the first home my parents ever purchased located at 1 Fairway Road, South Acton. Because I grew up in my birthplace like nearly all of our founding fathers, I have exceptionally strong feelings and emotions associated with the town. Another personal nuance that the committee will find interesting, at the age of 8 my family made the move from South Acton to 39 Hayward Road which was the home of Captain Isaac Davis.

I'll get right to the point because I'm sure you've been inundated with many emails on the subject. I don't understand the offensive characteristics associated with the Colonial image because quite simply, it represents strength & freedom. If someone interprets the image as anything other than the strength, courage and will of the settlers to carve out their own existence and fight for what they believed in, then quite frankly, the individual(s) who find it offensive are creating something that isn't there. Thanks to the founding fathers (the colonists), anyone has the right to express their feelings, but to strip away the mascot is to deny **most** (not all) of ABRHS's alumni the image which is the foundation of their pride. Truthfully, in this day and age it's not difficult to find someone who is offended by something and believes it important to express their feelings, however, to be cold and insensitive, so what? Does it mean we should negate our history and the lessons learned through good times and bad? Of course not.

If the committee decides to replace the Colonial image with another mascot, my suggestion is to have no mascot at all because someone will be offended by whatever is chosen.

Thank you for the time.

Sincerely,

Chris Pappas

Chris Pappas

Senior Territory Manager

Rand-Whitney Container LLC

One Rand-Whitney Way, Worcester, MA 01607

www.randwhitney.com

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]

To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:51:48 -0400

Subject: KEEP COLONIAL [REDACTED] Grade 11, ABRHS

This is absurd that this is even in debate, have a little bit of school pride and dignity. If anyone knows what's right the mascot will remain the same.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Katherine Gu <[REDACTED]>

To: <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:49:48 -0500

Subject: Changing the AB Mascot

Dear School Committee Members,

My name is Katherine Gu, and I am a member of AB's class of 2020.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonial as the AB school district mascot. I believe that this mascot not only glorified the genocide of the native lands that we inhabit, but also continue to perpetuate the whitewashing of our US history education. The lands that the colonists conquered and stole from the Native Americans were sacred to the indigenous peoples, who tied their faith to their ancestors whom they laid to rest in present day Acton-Boxborough. The forcible removal of Native Americans from their land was in some ways synonymous to the persecution of Puritans in England, who crossed an ocean to escape, just to deprive the indigenous peoples from their faith. While I acknowledge the violence from both sides, I'd urge you to think empathize with a group of people, who were not just forced off their land, but also deprived of their religion and ripped from their spiritual lifeforce.

These are parts of American history that were omitted in the two years of US history I took at AB and were facts that I could obtain by pursuing higher education. The erasure of the history surrounding the origins of our country is what pushes the dangerous narrative of white supremacy and the exclusion of people of color in our community and beyond.

I'm sure you all are getting copious amounts of emails from past and current students, so I'd like to thank you for reading this message. But hopefully, you, and our future generations, could understand that Wintrop's "city on a hill" narrative that we all have learned and lived by was accomplished by erasing the violence that early colonists and Americans enacted on indigenous groups all over the US. Although changing our mascot is a symbolic gesture in creating social justice

reform, I hope that it can become a symbol to our educators to start teaching the history that isn't written by the victors and the consequences of creating our great nation.

Best wishes,

Katherine Gu

----- Forwarded message -----

From: josh h [REDACTED]

To: abrsc@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:51:11 -0400

Subject: KEEP MASCOT

I grew up in Wayland and married my wife who grew up in Boxborough.

We now live in Acton and have two in the school system ([REDACTED]).

I've known them as Colonials my whole life -

My children have known them as Colonials their whole lives.

This has gone too far, the name is not offensive and should not be changed, period.

Thank you.

Josh Harting

--

stop

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Ritika Koirala <[REDACTED]>

To: abrsc@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:49:20 -0400

Subject: Mascot Removal

Dear School Committee Members,

My name is Ritika Koirala, and I am a member of the AB class of 2020. I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
Ritika

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "Aaku A." <[REDACTED]>

To: abrsc@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:49:22 -0400

Subject: Mascot Removal

Dear School Committee Members,

My name is Aakarsha Ashok Kumar, and I am a member of the AB Class of 2020. I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
Aakarsha

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Samuel Chen <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:48:16 -0400
Subject: Mascot Removal
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is Sam Chen, and I am a member of the AB class of 2020.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
Sam

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Lucy Niyazova <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:49:04 -0400
Subject: AB MASCOT CHANGE
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is Lucy and I am a member of the AB class of 2018.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Thank you,
Lucy Niyazova

----- Forwarded message -----

From: ike kim <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:47:39 -0400
Subject: In support of the petition to retire the Colonial mascot
Hello,

I am the father of two children currently attending AB schools and I am writing in support of retiring the district's mascot. Although I'm sure that the mascot originated from a place of pride and as a celebration of our region and local history, it does not reflect who we are today. Our evolving understanding of history as a multi-perspective view of past events and their consequences - not simply a record written down by victors and the rich and powerful - and the ongoing national struggle to confront racism in American make this conversation both timely and unavoidable, and I am glad for it.

I have heard many people suggest that changing the mascot is akin to denying our past, or worse, an insult to our forefathers that denigrates the heritage of our town and the memory of those who sacrificed so much to establish our great country. In fact, it is because of our founders and their willingness to fight for their belief in democracy and democratic civil discourse that we can have this very conversation! Imagine early settlers of our nation insisting that others not question the power and role of the King of England because of the historical status and role of the crown.

Let's show the school-age children and the citizens of our community that holding a critical eye to the past helps us learn, prepare, and build a better future for all of us. Let's reflect our shared desire for a strong, inclusive, and respectful community by acknowledging the history of the district's mascot, opening the dialogue for its replacement, and in doing so, model the American values of inclusion, equality, and respectful civic discourse for our children, our community, and our country.

Thank you
Ike Kim

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Diana DeMarco Brown [REDACTED]

To: abrsc@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:47:24 -0400

Subject: Reconsider our "colonial" mascot

As a citizen of Acton and a parent of a child in our school system, I would love to see us have a mascot that better reflects our school system's values.

In the same way that AB recognizes Indigenous People's Day rather than celebrating Columbus Day, it is now time to revisit using a colonial as a mascot. There is no way to separate a colonial from the baggage of the negative impact that colonization had on indigenous people and continuing to have such a mascot seems at odds with other choices the school system has made to be more inclusive.

Now that we know better, let's do better and have a mascot that we can all be proud of.

Respectfully,

Diana Brown

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Esha Gangolli <[REDACTED]>

To: abrsc@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:46:13 -0400

Subject: Please change the AB mascot

Dear School Committee,

I am an Acton resident of over 17 years and the parent of a current ABRHS student as well as an AB alumna.

I have to whole-heartedly support a change in the current AB mascot. I am in support for the following reasons:

- This is a student-led initiative. If students, particularly those of color, are telling us that having the current mascot is racist, then we should listen.
- The whole argument about the importance of the Colonials, while rooted in historical fact, also whitewashes (in the most literal sense) the role of the tribes that came before them.
- 'History' is not a compelling reason to hold on to outdated symbols of power and oppression.

Please help make Acton a town that is equally welcoming to all communities. Thanking you in advance,

Warm regards,

Esha

Esha Gangolli

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]

To: abrsc@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:47:15 -0400

Subject: Colonials Mascot Removal

Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2021.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Dear Chairperson McKinley and Members of the Acton-Boxborough School Committee,

We are writing as a collective group of alumni in support of the action proposed by the Acton-Boxborough Students for Equity and Justice group to retire the Colonials mascot.

While we are proud of our legacy as ABRHS students and athletes, we feel it is imperative for the school community to take bold action to dismantle racist symbols and systems, and to set an example for ABRHS students, alumni, and the community as a whole. It is time to remove a mascot that glorifies, whether overtly or implicitly, the tumultuous history of our region and represents a singular identity. We feel the mascot should be replaced with a symbol that more accurately reflects and celebrates the ever-increasing diversity of our community.

We are moved by the thoughtfulness and tenacity of current ABRHS students who have initiated this movement, and look forward to their participation in the process of selecting a new mascot who more appropriately represents the study body and community at large.

With respect,

Sarah Little Turner - Class of 2002, Current
ABRHS Faculty Member
Teresa Little, Class of 2014
Andrew Bunyard, Class of 2002
Jennifer Horonjeff, Class of 2002
Rebecca Crimmin, Class of 2002
Lauren Klein, Class of 2002
Cassandra Paine Spies, Class of 2002
Elizabeth Meade Warren, Class of 1996, Current
ABRHS Faculty Member
Annalise McDonald, Class of 2014
Becky Gordon, Class of 2014
Laura Kissane, Class of 2014
Julia Marcotte, Class of 2014
Cassandra Berger, Class of 2002
Shahjehan Khan, Class of 2002
Calvin Metcalf, Class of 2003
Emily Roessel, Class of 2002

Sam Aquillano, Acton Resident
Alexis Bunyard, Class of 1999
Kristen Lynch-Stouffer, Class of 2002
Kathleen Decker, Class of 2002
Emily Gardel, Class of 2002
Emily Nivison, Class of 2014
Elizabeth Sirois, Class of 2014
Danielle Harris, Class of 2014
Sonia Patel, Class of 2014
Samarth Gupta, Class of 2014
Hannah Williams, Class of 2002
Coralina Garibotto Ludden, Class of 2002
Ryan Little, Class of 2000
Patrick Little, Class of 2005
Christine Chmura Farber, Class of 2002
Genevieve Procter, Class of 2008
William Allen, Class of 2002

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Natalie Dawn <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:44:22 -0400
Subject: Mascot Removal
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is Natalie Dawn and I am a member of the AB class of 2020.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
Natalie Dawn

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:44:07 -0400
Subject: Mascot change request
To whom it may concern,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am in 8th grade. As someone who has attended AB for 8 years now, I know that diversity is an aspect that AB is very proud of. I believe that our current mascot "The Colonial" advertises a different message that doesn't accurately reflect the values and beliefs of this community. I respect that the colonial is an important figure in US history. I also understand that many people in our community highly value tradition, which is reasonable but I also know that change is an extremely important part of any community, especially for the better. Overall changing the mascot won't be a huge change in this community, however, I believe that anything that hurts or excludes anybody, that is able to be changed, should be. Thank you for your consideration.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Deepika Prakash <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 19:44:08 +0000
Subject: Please change the current Colonial Mascot

Hello,

Thank you for your time in serving on the school committee and also for reading this email.

I am writing to request that the current colonial mascot be changed to reflect the truly inclusive and safe environment we are aiming for in Acton, Boxborough. As a person of color it has always bothered me to see it represent our community (it doesn't).

Change is hard, however when changes are made for the betterment of the community, it is a GOOD sign. Please change the mascot!

Thanks,

Deepika Prakash

Acton resident since 2001

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Anjali Raman <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:43:02 -0500
Subject: Mascot Removal
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is Anjali Raman and I am a member of the AB class of 2020. I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
Anjali Raman

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:41:57 -0400
Subject: KEEP COLONIAL
KEEP COLONIAL

[REDACTED]
grade 11

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:38:25 -0400
Subject: THE MASCOT NEEDS TO CHANGE
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2021

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:37:18 -0400
Subject: mascot change
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2023.

I support the removal of the Colonials Mascot. I believe the mascot glorifies colonialism and ignores the trauma of the indigenous people, and changing the mascot is the first step in creating a positive change in our community.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Meghan Blute-Nelson [REDACTED] >

To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:38:23 -0400

Subject: Support for Changing the AB Mascot

Dear School Committee Members,

I am writing, with my husband Ben Nelson, to express our strong support for the petition to change the school mascot. We both agree that the Colonial mascot does not align with the values of antiracism and social justice that AB promotes.

Best regards,

Meghan Blute-Nelson and Ben Nelson
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]

To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:37:16 -0400

Subject: School Mascot Change

Dear school committee members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2021. I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot. As a school district, we need to show that we support change that will help us be a more inclusive group to all.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@abschools.org>

To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:34:45 -0400

Subject: Mascot

Keep mascot, [REDACTED], grade 11

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >

To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:33:50 -0400

Subject: School Mascot Change

Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of '22.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:33:06 -0400
Subject: KEEP MASCOT - [REDACTED] - 7th grade - RJ Grey Junior High

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Barry Jeanson <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:32:13 -0400
Subject: Colonials Name
To whom it may concern:

I grew up in Acton and I still live in Acton. I went to Gates elementary, middle & high school in Acton.

I still support the Colonial name and mascot 100%.

I do not believe this should be changed.

--

My Best,

Barry Jeanson

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:32:31 -0400
Subject: Keep Colonial
[REDACTED] 7th grade

I've been playing sports in basketball, baseball, football, lacrosse for years now and I've always played under the name AB Colonials except for this pass year in football we merged with westford. I don't want to change the mascot.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Anupama Sriram <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:32:05 -0400
Subject: Change the mascot!
Dear school committee members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am part of the class of 2018. I strongly support the movement to change the school mascot from the Colonial. So many AB students are people of color, and to have pride in a racist icon is impossible. Everyone deserves to feel proud of the school they attend.

Please, do the right thing and listen to students, current and past. We want change!

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:31:26 -0400
Subject: KEEP MASCOT [REDACTED] - 5th grade - McCarthy-Towne

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:29:53 -0400
Subject: School Mascot Change
Dear School committee members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB Class of 2022.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:23:46 -0400
Subject: Mascot Change
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2024.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot. I believe the mascot glorifies colonialism and ignores the trauma of indigenous people, and changing it is the first step in creating positive change in our community.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:23:31 -0400
Subject: Keep colonial mascot
Hello,

I want to keep the colonial mascot, [REDACTED] Grade 12.

Thank you,

Dear Members of the School Committee:

We are members of Educators Committed to Anti-Racism, Equity and Social Justice (ECARES), a cohort at the high school seeking to create a safe and equitable environment for students in all aspects of the educational experience. Accordingly, we are writing to support the Call to Action proposed by AB Students for Equity & Social Justice (ABSEJ) regarding the removal of the Colonials mascot.

As so eloquently stated by ABSEJ in their email to AB Admins dated July 11, 2020, the Colonials mascot does not represent our AB community, whose influence and presence on native lands caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Indigenous people. By making this change, the district would be taking real beginning action in direct support of our goal to foster an actively anti-racist school environment. These changes acknowledge the devastating legacy of European exploration, colonization, and exploitation in the Americas, particularly the impacts on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, who suffered genocide and other grave injustices, and whose descendants continue to experience the effects of structural racism and systemic inequality today, here in our own community as well as all over the country. We would be honoring the Nipmuck and Pawtucket peoples, the native inhabitants of the land known today as Acton, Massachusetts, as well as the Black peoples who were ripped from their African homelands and brought here through the transatlantic slave trade.

Since the murder of George Floyd, people around the country have mobilized through the Black Lives Matter movement. We have witnessed the removal of Confederate symbols and statues, the elimination of racist mascots in public schools (including at least three in the Massachusetts school districts of Walpole, Nashoba, Winchester), and policy changes and reform to combat racism in a number of institutions, organizations and industries.

As one of the top school districts in the state, ABRSD must continue to be a model for other districts by doing what is right and just during this defining moment in history. We join ABSEJ in appealing to you to eliminate the use of a mascot that represents racism, ethnic violence, and genocide with the goal of replacing it with one that celebrates the diversity of our community and aligns with our school's values. The school committee has voted to replace the Columbus Day holiday on the second Monday of October with Indigenous Peoples' Day to commemorate the humanity, histories, and cultures of Native Americans, and removing the mascot is in line with this previous committee vote. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Educators Committed to Anti-Racism, Equity & Social Justice:

Betty Baker	Lindsay Rosenman	David Brusie
Susan Ervais-Bohmiller	Anna Secino	Amy Houle
Dan Goldner	Elisabeth Ryden	Mee Byun
Jacky Gottesman	Tina Vanasse	Patricia Garrison
Megan McGrath	Jen Moss	Jen Gabel
Su Nugent	Cathy Foster	Sarah Turner



Mascot emails

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:23:06 -0400
Subject: keep mascot- [REDACTED] 9th grade abrhs

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:21:38 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot - [REDACTED], Grade 10, ABRHS
Please keep the mascot!

[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:21:18 -0400
Subject: keep mascot- name, 9th grade abrhs

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:21:00 -0400
Subject: Keep the mascot

I am [REDACTED] of the 2023 class, I believe we should keep the school mascot. I think that with all the other stuff that is currently happening in the world, other people only want to change it because it's a trend. Why didn't they want to change it years ago? I think that's it's ridiculous to change the mascot because of something that happened hundreds of years ago.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:20:58 -0400
Subject: AB Mascot

Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2021.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot as both a physical and symbolic step towards increased inclusivity and equality within the AB community.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Corinne Steinhilper <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 19:19:33 +0000

Subject: Colonials

Please don't change the name Colonials. If you want reasons contact me.

Corinne Steinhilper [REDACTED]

Get Outlook for Android

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >

To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:18:54 -0400

Subject: Mascot change

Acton Boxborough School Committee;

I oppose the change to the AB mascot that will be voted on this week by the School Committee. I'm a senior at AB and also play on the girls Varsity Field Hockey and Lacrosse teams. I am upset about this proposed change, along with most of my teammates. Our sports teams and mascot are part of our identity. We are the ones that walk around school with logo sweatshirts and sports uniforms on game days, and organize the Colonial Crazies spirit psyches. We have witnessed from those that want the change, bullying and ridiculing behavior on social media. Those promoting change have called this a done deal and they feel they have the support from the School Committee to act this way, towards the many sports kids and others who want the mascot to stay.

I have stood proudly shoulder to shoulder at Acton BLM rallies in Kelly's corner this past spring supporting my community. I believe there is racism in our criminal justice system, where all people should be treated equally, but are not. But now, this same group has decided to take away the AB mascot with a dotted line to the Colonials, and built a case that it's somehow related.

I don't understand why the school committee, school system or administration at the high school is taking directions from an organization outside its jurisdiction. The mascot change has a negative and depressing effect on my group of friends and teammate, but nobody cares about what we think. Most peers won't even write letters because they were told the mascot is gone.

This has been very upsetting. Who will decide on a new mascot? An outside special interest group? The Equity and Justice group at the high school? Will anyone ask the opinion of the students who actually wear the AB Colonials clothing? This is very disappointing for my last year at AB, and during a pandemic that you would take away our school mascot based on what a small group wants.

As a member of the AB Field Hockey and AB Lacrosse team, I am proud to wear a uniform with Colonials on it.

Thank you,
[REDACTED]

2021

--

2021

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:17:50 -0400
Subject: Mascot
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2023.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:16:08 -0400
Subject: Mascot Removal
Dear School Committee Members,

Thank you for taking community opinion into consideration with regard to the Colonials mascot. I strongly support removing the Colonial as the mascot for ABRHS. As an Indigenous person and mother of three AB students, I believe it is the only ethical thing to do.

[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:14:31 -0400
Subject: KEEP MASCOT- [REDACTED] /Senior

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:14:14 -0400
Subject: Keep mascot- [REDACTED] - junoir- acton boxborough highschool
Keep the mascot!

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Stephanie PBJ <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:12:02 -0400
Subject: mascot

Please do the right thing and change the mascot. The school should be a place of inclusion and acceptance, not divisiveness and racism. Now is the time!!!

----- Forwarded message -----

From: '[REDACTED]' via AB School Committee" <abrsc@abschools.org>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:11:49 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot- [REDACTED] 12th grade ABRHS

Sent from my iPhone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Owen [REDACTED] >
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:10:45 -0400
Subject: The Colonials
To Whom it May Concern-

I request consideration that the name "colonials" not be changed. As a retired military officer I believe, and hope others see, that a colonial is viewed as a patriot and not as a person who took something. By definition a colonial is someone who lived in a colony; what we were, part of our proud history, just as were the 13 original colonies.

Owen Beaudoin, '90

Sent from my iPhone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Mark Bourgeois [REDACTED] >
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 19:10:31 +0000
Subject: Colonial mascot

To whom it may concern,

My name is Mark Bourgeois, and I graduated ABRHS in 1980. I grew up in Acton and played football for the AB Colonials for 4 years. I am sending you this email in hopes that my thoughts about changing the mascot for the Acton Boxborough Colonials be considered. I may not currently live in Acton any more but I have several nieces and nephews that have chosen to bring up their families in the school system.

I want you to know that I am strongly opposed to removing the Colonials name for the school sports teams. I have always taken pride in representing the Colonials on the football field, as a student, and now as an alumni. I have always seen the mascot as a representation of the revolutionary heroes that gave their lives so that we could live in a free democracy. These revolutionary colonials fought to give us the right to have debates like these so that everyone can express their opinions and have healthy discussion. I hope that's the result of having this question raised, and that Acton Boxboro students remain Colonials.

My only other comment is that given the challenges that we face today, is the high school mascot really a top priority? It seems like tackling this at this time appears tone deaf to the real issues that we face in the world today. It seems like the

school committee's time would be better spent on managing the impact of the current pandemic, and keeping the students and staff safe as possible.

Thank you for considering my opinion.

Mark Bourgeois

Berry Global Health & Safety Statement:

With our number one value of Safety in mind, and in an effort to ensure a healthy environment, Berry respectfully requests that individuals not visit our facilities if they have:

- Any flu like symptoms – i.e. a fever, sore throat, headache, runny nose, etc.
- Been in contact with someone who is suspected or confirmed as having COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- In the past 14 days travelled to or from a geographic region that has an elevated threat of COVID-19, such as China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, Japan, Thailand, Iran, and Northern Italy.

If you are planning a visit to one of our facilities, and are experiencing one or more of the aforementioned symptoms, we ask that you please contact your host regarding: rescheduling the visit, sending an alternate, or participating in any meetings via phone or online if possible.

Disclaimer

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: "Anna Veasie" via AB School Committee" <abrsc@abschools.org>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:10:15 -0400
Subject: Keep the mascot
Keep the mascot!!!!!!

Sent from my iPhone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Sam Martin <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 19:08:55 +0000
Subject: AB Mascot Name Change - Please Reconsider

Hello AB School Committee,

I am an AB graduate of '93 and a supporter of the town and school system. I am a big supporter of the BLM movement as well as other social and racial injustices (Washington Redskins, etc) however this cause, while in the right spirit, largely misses the mark. I understand some of the negative associations of colonization across various countries in the world as well as regions in the US, however the town of Acton's Colonial mascot has no history, connection with this or association to intolerance or injustice; just the opposite in fact – it is in reference to the good hardworking people who settled the

lands around Acton like Isaac Davis, Hayward and others who fought the tyranny of taxation without representation of the King George Monarchy of Britain. The school motto "don't tread on me" is symbolic of this as well. The context of the term and history of the town are crucial to this point.

So when you go to vote on this matter, please consider that approving this name change is not only misguided, but an affront to true disenfranchisement like the Native American people (Redskins), and other direct instances of prejudice and racism.

Respectfully,

Sam Martin AB 1993

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Terra <[REDACTED]>
To: Racial Justice for Black Lives <[REDACTED]>
Cc: abrsco@abschools.org
Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:08:39 -0400

Subject: Re: pro-mascot people changed their petition language

Dear School Committee, it's my understanding that the save-the-mascot petition is being promoted all around the country by pro-colonist monument types. Please disregard comments/signatures from people who do not live in town. I'm not sure how I feel about alumni, but I would be very disappointed if organized groups from outside of town sway your decision...

Terra

This email is private property, not to be correlated/shared or machine analyzed without my permission, which I withhold.

On 10/13/2020 11:54 AM, Terra wrote:

No clue.

I noticed some names I recognize on the Fbook page, but I don't want to start naming names. I feel like the petition speaks for itself.

Some years ago, I took a course on colonial "law", and it was really about looting. It was about another country "deciding" that they "owned" the land and then sending in armies to "take" the land. The idea of a peaceful settlement is nice, but was a rare exception. The land was taken by threat of violence.

Anyway, that's all I have to say for now. I hope the School Committee does the right thing...it's time to retire these fantastic notions of history that were constructed by white people without input from the people they hurt [and continue to hurt].

Terra

This email is private property, not to be correlated/shared or machine analyzed without my permission, which I withhold.

On 10/13/2020 11:49 AM, Racial Justice for Black Lives wrote:

Saying this was a war for land is far from the reality. Who wrote that petition?

On Tue, Oct 13, 2020 at 11:34 AM Terra <[REDACTED]>

wrote:

Dear School Committee members...

I feel it my duty to inform you that pro-mascot people have changed their petition language. It is customary that when you change the language significantly, that you start gathering signatures again.

The original language and the current-modified language were provided to me, and I'm forwarding this to you in the attached.

For your convenience, offensive language is underlined. It appears that the modified language is meant to get YOUR support. The underlined language in the file "mascot, pro-mascot original petition language" gives an important understanding of the mindset of the petitioners... that it's OK to kill people if it's fighting "for land". In their modified petition language, they do not address the offensiveness of colonialism and all that it stands for. The modified petition language appears to be "only" about the mascot and about championing independence from England, whereas the original language appears to be aimed at justifying colonialism's ravages.

Please note that the claim that Indigenous Peoples started the so-called Indian-American War is yet another offense upon Indigenous Peoples, who were defending THEIR land.

Bottom line, I hope you ignore their petition, and get rid of this offensive mascot.

Bullying should never be celebrated. What colonialism did was far worse than bullying. We need to call it what it is. OK, celebrate individual people. But do not continue to celebrate a whole class of people as "worthy", especially when it's already been stated by Indigenous Peoples that they are offended by the symbol.

--

Terra

This email is private property, not to be correlated/shared or machine analyzed without my permission, which I withhold.

--

Email: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] >
Phone Number: [REDACTED]

Mission statement

*Racial Justice for Black Lives (RJ4BL) is committed to raising awareness of racism, injustice, and violence against Black lives, and to advocating *
*boldly** for actions leading towards systemic change. *

Goal

Our goal is to create a society that is equitable and just, in which every Black person has the right to economic, health, and environmental security, a meaningful political voice, and a sense of belonging in the community. By working together to create Black joy, we all benefit and we build a community of mutual respect, togetherness, and love.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]

To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:08:19 -0400

Subject: Mascot Change

Hi, I'm a student at AB and I think the mascot should be changed because it represents and celebrates colonization.

Thank you,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >

To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:08:13 -0400

Subject: Change the School's Mascot

To whom it may concern,

Please change our school's mascot. The colonial represents violent imperialist practices that have wreaked havoc on the lives of people of color across the world, and continue to do so systemically today. We cannot continue to glamorize these practices with our mascot. It's important to me that the mascot changes so that my hometown and former school community makes itself a place where people of color feel truly included and supported

Thank you,
[REDACTED]

ABRHS Class of 2020

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "Brady, Carolyn" <[REDACTED]>

To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 19:06:17 +0000

Subject: Keep Mascot - Carolyn Brady Class of 1992

Regards,

Carolyn Brady

Senior Manager Customer Service

One Wall Street

Burlington, MA 01803

USA
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Carolyn.brady@sekisui-dx.com

www.sekisuidiagnostics.com



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----- Forwarded message -----

From: Owen <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:05:40 -0400
Subject: Colonials
Request to not/not change the name of the Colonials.

Sent from my iPhone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 15:03:45 -0400
Subject: change
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2021.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:59:30 -0400
Subject: keep mascot [REDACTED] 9th grade

Sent from my iPhone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:57:04 -0400
Subject: Mascot Change
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2023.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot. I believe the mascot glorifies colonialism and ignores the trauma of the indigenous people, and changing it is the first step in creating positive change in our community.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Barrett Genovese <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:55:49 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot - Barrett Genovese, ABRHS class of 2020

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "[REDACTED] via AB School Committee" <abrsc@abschools.org>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:53:40 -0400
Subject: Keep Colonial Mascot
My name is [REDACTED] I am in 7th grade at RJ Grey. I am writing because I would like to keep the mascot I have attached a letter that supports my opinion.
Thank you,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Nicole Harting <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 18:53:39 +0000
Subject: KEEP MASCOT

Please keep the Colonials

Former AB Alum and current parent to [REDACTED]

Nicole Harting
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] via AB School Committee" <abrsc@abschools.org>

To: abrsc@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:52:09 -0400

Subject: Keep Mascot - [REDACTED], 10th ABRHS

September 28, 2020

Dear Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Members,

As invited, we, the undersigned, respectfully write in opposition to the petition to the Committee that purports to request the retirement of the official "Colonial" mascot of the High School and District.

John Adams, who was an American statesman from Massachusetts and who served as this country's second president, once proclaimed that the "[a]buse of words has been the great instrument of sophistry and chicanery, of party, faction and division of society." Here, the petition brought forth is exactly that: an abuse of words that seeks to divide a school community. Those that seek to retire the "Colonial" assert that it "sets the stage" for, what they claim, are "present day racial divisions" and is not "representative of who we are or what we stand for as a community." We respectfully disagree. A "colonial" is defined as a "member or inhabitant of a colony". Indeed, to many in this very community, the colonial is a unifying symbol of American resilience, sacrifice and bravery that allows and encourages one to stand up to those who seek to defy liberty and justice for all.

"The name Colonials is being stripped of its own historical meaning and wrongly treated as synonymous with 'colonialism'. Not only were the colonials not a manifestation or celebration of colonialism, they were the very symbol of resistance to colonialism. They fought the British Empire to secure self-rule...[Colonials] are, by definition, the antithesis of colonialism." (Jonathan Turley).

At the beginning of the American Revolutionary War, local colonists, including Captain Isaac Davis, James Hayward and Abner Hosmer, answered the call to arms against the tyrannical and oppressive British and gave the ultimate sacrifice for the very same freedoms which today allow those to submit their petition. The idea that one cannot separate the idea of a "colonial" from certain claimed sinful actions of some colonists is little more than fallacy. Rebranding the school's mascot does nothing to fix the asserted injustices of the past nor does it change

history. Instead, changing the "Colonial" mascot allows only for historical revisionism and seeks to undermine the values under which this community and its schools were founded,

including independence, freedom, preparedness, training, and the willingness to fight against oppression.

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District adopted the "Colonial" mascot when the regional district was established. The "Colonial" is a part of this school district's history, which, significantly, is located at the footsteps of the birthplace of the American Revolution. To many alumni, the "Colonial" represents their legacy of being a part of a resilient student body. Today, for its current students, it cannot be reasonably claimed that cheering for the "AB Colonials" at a sporting event or dressing up in all gold to join the colony of "Crazy Colonials" is tantamount to cheering for or supporting racial divisions. To claim so, is simply an abuse of the word "colonials".

Thank you for your consideration.

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]

To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:52:06 -0400

Subject: KEEP MASCOT

please keep the mascot

[REDACTED]

Grade 7

RJGrey

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]

To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:47:34 -0400
Subject: AB Mascot
Hi,

I am writing to inform you that I think that our current mascot should be changed as it is offensive to many students at AB. Mascots are supposed to represent school communities as a whole, not offend some students and uplift others. Our school claims to work towards equity and justice for all students, and I think that this is the perfect opportunity to showcase that by changing the mascot to something that is representative of ALL students, and that is something that ALL students can be proud of.

Thank you,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >

To: abrsc@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:47:25 -0400

Subject: Removal of Colonials Mascot

Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 2021.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]

To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:46:59 -0400

Subject: Keep Mascot

[REDACTED] 7 grade at Rjgrey Junior High School

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "'Ravi Ramachandran' via AB School Committee" <abrsc@abschools.org>

To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 18:46:49 +0000 (UTC)

Subject: AB Schools Mascot Decision

To The AB Regional School Committee,

I understand that the Committee is considering a proposal in front of them re. the AB Schools Colonial mascot. As a parent of both a former and a current AB school student, I would like the Committee to consider **changing the mascot.**

As a school district that has always prided itself in being progressive and giving its students the best in class education, the school, its students, teachers and administrators need to change with the times and not be stuck in the past. If that past as reflected in the Colonials mascot is hurtful or causes students to not feel engaged with the AB school in which we all take a great pride in, then changing the mascot is a small price to pay in my humble opinion.

I hope the Committee will give due consideration to this opinion and to those of the students, parents and educators during their deliberations on changing the mascot.

With kind regards,

Ravi Ramachandran

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:42:16 -0400
Subject: Mascot Change
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of 21.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Christopher Bishop [REDACTED] >
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:37:19 -0400
Subject: Colonials Mascot
Members of the school committee,

As a resident of Acton whose children will one day attend ABRHS, I am shocked that anyone in our town could be pushing to keep the current, shameful mascot. While several good suggestions have been made in online discussions over the past months, nearly any change would be an improvement. Try this out: "The Acton Team Name TBD" - sounds pretty lame, to be sure, but it also does not celebrate the reprehensible views and actions of those genocidal fundamentalist extremists who first 'civilized' this land by murdering its inhabitants. I'm confident that the modern residents of Acton would prefer a mascot that promotes decency instead.

Sincerely,
Christopher Bishop

----- Forwarded message -----

From: L J <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:34:58 -0400
Subject: Request to change the mascot name
Dear school committee,

I am a Black person and I have a black kid in the AB school system. As you know, the town of Acton and Boxborough are evolving to a more diverse place. Knowing the history of our current mascot, it no longer represents the school community. I encourage the committee to consider the negative impact of the name on BIPOC and replace it with a name that will not create a psychological fear to this minority groups.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:34:09 -0400
Subject:

Please change the mascot. Everyone defending the mascot has taken it to a level that is absolutely disgusting proving more reasons why it should be changed. It is offensive to poc and if that is not enough for you guys to change it then i don't know what is. I may be white which means that this does not directly affect me but I'm not an idiot and i can see and feel the pain it brings students at our school. You want this to be a safe and inviting community for all people? Well do what is best and change the mascot. Everyone deserves to feel safe in this school and that is not the case right now. The comments i have read from people trying to keep it have been blatantly racist and that is not what our school should represent. Do what is right and bring about change. It starts here and now. All i can say is that I personally can't wait to leave the school if nothing is done about this. It's getting ridiculous.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] >
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:34:02 -0400
Subject: Keep the mascot, [REDACTED], Grade 10

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Rebecca Wilson <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:33:57 -0400
Subject: Change the School Mascot
Hi there,

I'm a AB grad (class of 2007) and current mom of three living in Acton. My oldest child attends [REDACTED]. I remember well the racism prevalent at AB when I attended, and think that it's time to make some change. I support removing and replacing the current school mascot.

Thanks,
Rebecca Wilson

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:33:34 -0400
Subject: AB Mascot
Hello Acton Boxborough School Committee,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a senior at AB. The debate about the mascot was brought to my attention when I joined ABSEJ a few weeks ago. It is with the information given to me from them and prior knowledge, that I urge you to retire the colonial mascot and replace it with something less controversial. I know there is a lot of speculation and debate around

this topic. To many of you colonialism might not represent oppression and mass genocide but the birth of a democratic society. Your ancestors may have fought at the Old North Bridge for the freedoms we have today. But for those students, teachers, and other personnel who's ancestors were victims of slavery, rape, and murder the colonial mascot represents something evil and cruel, that one should fear. When sports teams walk out onto their perspective fields and compete under the colonial name they are defeating or "colonizing" the other teams. This unveils a sort of sick metaphor because similarly, the Native and African Americans were colonized and defeated by the colonials. I know there was a lot of bloodshed on both the colonial and Indian sides throughout history but what I ask you fixated on in this debate is how this school district is making individuals uncomfortable with the mascots representation. Do your part to make AB an inclusive and safe environment by choosing a mascot less controversial that everyone in this district is proud to support.

Thank you,

P.S.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:30:40 -0400
Subject: Mascot
Dear School Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the AB class of '22.

I strongly support the removal of the Colonials mascot.

Sincerely,

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:30:38 -0400
Subject: change

Hi,
My name is [REDACTED] and i am apart of the class of 2022. I strongly support the removal of the colonial mascot.
Best,

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Drew Loucks <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:26:58 -0400
Subject: Mascot
To whom it may concern -

As a proud AB alumni I have learned that there is a motion to change the school mascot.

Colonials (just like the patriots) were brave men and women who fought for our independence. They were the first to the north bridge, and many lay dead in Acton for freedom of our great nation. AB should be proud of their legacy and not wash it away. I am not sure of the argument against this but find it hard to believe we can't find many more positives than negatives in their history for what they did for Acton and the country. We should stand for the symbol of The colonial which is one of liberty and freedom - ideas I think everyone can get behind no matter your race, religion, or demographic. Moving away from this legacy would be a mistake and would teach the kids at AB the wrong message about our history. Not all the men and women were perfect but their what they fought for - freedom from tyranny - is something everyone

should value.

Thanks,

Drew

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Megan Keaney [REDACTED] >
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:25:40 -0400
Subject: Mascot Name
I agree to change the name.
Megan Keaney
Class of 1995

Megan K Hayes

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Racial Justice for Black Lives [REDACTED] >
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:25:32 -0400
Subject: Time to Remove the Colonial Mascot
Dear School Committee Members,

We appreciate the time and energy it must take to receive all these emails from the community.

As a local racial justice organization centered in being inclusive and just, we believe that it is absolutely the right thing to remove the Colonial mascot. Indigenous people have expressed pain and hurt stemming from an oppressive mascot, so it is time that we center the folks who are impacted by this issue.

We do not believe that fond memories of football counter the current suffering of Indigenous people, especially since the root of this suffering comes from the Colonials pillaging, murdering, and raping the Native people.

Sincerely,
Racial Justice for Black Lives

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:21:57 -0400
Subject: Keep mascot-[REDACTED] 9th grade abrhs

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:21:25 -0400
Subject: Mascot

Me and many other students, especially the ones who play sports at this school, want to keep the Colonials as our mascot. Many of our alumni also believe it's disrespectful to our town and our town's history to change it. Without the Colonials we wouldn't have this country where you can speak your own mind. We are the only country to have the legal right of free speech with nothing that can take that away. No laws saying that you can't speak your idea. We are lucky to live where we are. The people who want to change our mascot because the Colonials were very racist towards the

Natives, don't really care about the natives thoughts on the matter. Most of the students that are leading it probably just want to show colleges that they are leaders in the community.

The mascot, Colonials, isn't praising the racism. It is praising the sacrifices they made for there freedom. The difficulties they went through to gain the freedom from the British. Millions of people have come to America seeking this freedom thanks to our Colonials and the later founding fathers, creating such a good foundation called The Constitution.

My final thoughts would be to consider the other opinions that others may have.

We are proud Colonials!

Thank you for listening.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:21:24 -0400
Subject: Keep mascot-[REDACTED] 9th grade ABRHS

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:18:41 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot-[REDACTED], 11, ABRHS
Dear AB School Committee,

The first Colonial to die in the American War for Independence was Crispus Attucks, an African-American man shot by British Redcoats in the Boston Massacre. He is our Colonial Mascot, and a perfect rallying point for all persons of our community, and which stoutly depicts the ideology and views of this school.

Thank you!

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:13:41 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot-[REDACTED] Senior ABRHS
Hello!

My name is [REDACTED] I am currently a senior at Acton-Boxborough regional highscool.

I wanted to share the significance that the mascot has on the student athletes. I am currently committed to play lacrosse in college and I have played on the girls varsity lacrosse team for 4 years. To play under the name Colonials means more than you may think.

I have been a part of the school system since kindergarten, and my parents would constantly bring me to football games and lacrosse games. I had looked forward to the day where I could represent my school as those who did before me. The history this mascot has on our athletics program is undeniable. The walls of the gym are covered in banners that say our name, and alumni have photos of themselves wearing the name colonials across their chests that they proudly show to others. Being an athlete isn't only for the game, but also to honor those who played before you, to carry on the long tradition. I am proud to call myself a colonial, as years of my hard work had paid off to get me to this moment. Many student athletes go on to play in college, and even professional sports, they always come/ look back to reminisce on how they got there as a Colonial. This year so far there are 19 students who plan to play in college. As athletes we bring in so much money to our system, from ticket sales, to fundraising events. With changing our mascot, it will only hurt our school system.

The cost of changing our name will be tremendous. There are countless things that need to be changed to erase our tradition and history: Scoreboards, the track needs to be painted, uniforms will need to be bought for every athletic program, and many more. The impact this will have on our athletics is so large. As for alumni who donate to these

programs and keep them alive, many have said that they will forgo donating. Programs would need to be cut. Unnecessary money would need to be spent to erase something that doesn't need to be erased. On behalf of all athletes, we are mad. To wear conicals for years, and represent those who gave their lives up for the founding of our country means a lot to us. We would not be able to call ourselves American without them.

We cannot erase our history.

[REDACTED] ABRHS class of 2021.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:14:29 -0400
Subject: mascot

Dear school committee i strongly believe you should go through and change the mascot. The colonial represents the colonists who came her in look of freedom but then ruthlessly stole land from the native Americans living here already. They didn't just steal land they also committed mass genocide enslaved and raped many of the native people. This is not what i want to be representing my school im supposed to be proud of my school but how could i when we are praising people who did such terrible things to innocent people. Yes i know that's history but retiring the mascot is NOT getting read of or trying to erase it. Its simply realizing that our mascot can be very offensive to many of our staff and students. I also feel as though it does not fairly represent our school. We have a diverse school with all kinds of ethnicity and genders so why should we be represented by a white man?

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:13:24 -0400
Subject: Change the Mascot

As a student of Acton-Boxborough Regional High School, I demand that the AB mascot be changed.

[REDACTED] Grade 11

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "Fox, Cam" [REDACTED]
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 18:12:48 +0000
Subject: Change

As a resident of Acton and on behalf of human rights,

We DEMAND for the ABRHS mascot to be changed!

This is a time of change. Changing the mascot would be a step in the right direction as a community.

Regards,
Cam Fox
Former AB Student

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "'Joseph Clifford' via AB School Committee" <abrsc@abschools.org>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:10:01 -0400

Subject: Do not change Colonial mascot

We To whom it may concern,

>

> As a proud alumnus of the Acton-Boxborough school system, I would like to express my opinion that it would be against good judgement to change the school mascot. While I understand why this is being considered and I respect the opinions of the groups who raise this for discussion, I am convinced this is not the answer to the issue they are trying to address.

>

>

> Joe Clifford (class of 1998)

Sent from my iPhone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]

To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:07:59 -0400

Subject: keep mascot - [REDACTED], grade 10, Abrhs

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]

To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 12:37:10 -0400

Subject: KEEP MASCOT- [REDACTED]n/Senior

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Tristen Litterio <[REDACTED]>

To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:05:24 -0400

Subject: Get rid of the mascot

Hello,

My name is Tristen Litterio and I graduated in 2014 from ABRHS. I support AB Students For Equality and Justice's effort to get rid of the mascot.

Thank you for starting this important conversation and I hope you follow the trend of getting rid of harmful mascots.

Best,

Tristen Litterio

----- Forwarded message -----

From: ANDREW MARTINO <[REDACTED]>

To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 14:03:56 -0400 (EDT)

Subject: Retire the AB Colonial Mascot??

Hello, I am writing as a proud 1992 graduate of ABRHS. I understand the School Committee is considering a vote to remove the Colonial as the school mascot. I respectfully disagree with this proposal. The "Colonial" is a term that residents of Acton/Boxborough should be proud of. It represents the heroic settlers that fought British oppression at the outset of the Revolutionary

War. It is my opinion that those that would like to link this symbol to racism and oppression are not informed of the proud history that exists in our community.

I also understand some would label my opinion as racist or insensitive.. Quite the contrary, I welcome diversity and friendships with all! None the less, I think replacing such a great mascot is a mistake! Although I no longer live in Acton, I remember my days growing up in town (25years) as the best time of my life! I hope things haven't changed too much.. It was a great place to live!

Thank you for letting me express my opinion. I really hope the Committee considers the importance of history in making such a decision!

Regards

Andrew Martino
ABRHS Class 92

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "Loebs, Emily" <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 18:01:01 +0000
Subject: Keep Mascot - Emily Loebs, Alumni 2012

Information Classification: ●● General

For what it is worth, I stand to keep the mascot.

Best,

Emily

Emily Loebs, CAPM

State Street | Funding and Collateral Transformation – Business Execution & Strategy Lead | One Lincoln Street, Boston, MA 02111
[REDACTED]

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Go green. Consider the environment before printing this email.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Matthew German <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 18:00:49 +0000
Subject: Keep Mascot- Matt German, University of New England.

Hello ABRHS school committee,

Not sure if this matters, but I truly believe that the Colonial mean so much more than it's being associated with. The mascot has meant patriotism, hard work, and the original soldier of this amazing country for as long as it's been at AB. We need to represent the great men and women that founded this country, and stay reminded of their contribution to the foundation of this country.

Thank you, Stay Safe,

Matt German

This e-mail may contain information that is privileged and confidential. If you suspect that you were not the intended recipient, please delete it and notify the sender as soon as possible.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Becca Solomon <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 17:53:25 +0000
Subject: AB mascot change
Dear School Leadership,

The Acton-Boxborough mascot is currently "The Colonial," which pays homage to the colonists who founded the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the 17th century. Not only does it glorify colonialism, but the "Colonial" mascot also disregards the generational pain and suffering that European colonists inflicted upon Black and Indigenous people of color in their quest to colonize the Americas. Colonialism brought slavery to the Americas and white Europeans used the social construct of race to justify it. The mascot glorifies the horrific actions of these people, condoning the mass genocide of indigenous peoples brought on by the colonial era. Even if not the original intention, the impact of this mascot is one that signifies that colonial values are synonymous with the values the AB community holds. Considering the intensely racist and problematic values of the colonists, AB should NOT align themselves with these ideologies.

Sincerely,
Becca Solomon

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Sarika Chawla <[REDACTED]>
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:53:08 -0400

Subject: Change the Mascot
Hello,

I would just like to reiterate my position that the mascot should be changed to a symbol that is more reflective of AB's diversity and is not representative of racist, genocidal figures.

Sincerely,
Sarika Chawla, ABRHS Class of 2019

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "ryan shorey" via AB School Committee" <abrsc@abschools.org>

To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 17:47:37 +0000 (UTC)

Subject: Mascot Name Change

It has come to my attention that there is a movement underway to change the name of the Mascot for Acton Boxboro. Somehow, the name colonial has become an issue that must be addressed in order to preserve some self righteous feeling for those pushing for this change. I have always been proud to be an AB alum and owe so much for the education I received while I was there. I was truly prepared for the real world when I left. Open debate and differing views were championed rather than chastised. We were all different, but we were AB, a perfect microcosm for the American dream. While it may be in vogue to remove or change parts of our history and to not offend, it sends us down a slippery slope. Should we change the town name? Acton after all is named after a suburb of London, and is a painful reminder of the British empire. This is obviously sarcastic, but highlights the point I am trying to make. Please do the right thing and leave the Mascot as is. Be the academic institution you were in 2003 when I walked the halls and don't fall prey to those, who set out to rewrite our history to one they would find more palatable.

Ryan Shorey
Class of 2003

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]

To: abrsc@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:46:50 -0400

Subject: Change the Mascot

My name is [REDACTED] and I support changing the Acton Boxborough Mascot.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]

To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:44:16 -0400

Subject: Change the Mascot

Change the mascot, please finally let the indigenous community in Acton know their voices are heard.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Emily Hersh <[REDACTED]>

To: abrsc@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 12:41:02 -0500

Subject: Change mascot, Emily Hersh, Class of 1992

I am all for changing the mascot!

Thank you,
Emily Hersh

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Darryl <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrs@abschools.org" <abrs@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 17:40:51 +0000
Subject: Change of Colonials and Mascot

Hi

I am a 1973 graduate and student athlete of Acton Boxborough.

I am definitely not in favor of the proposed name and mascot change which is currently under review.

Thank you

Coach Darryl Schwartz

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrs@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:40:09 -0400
Subject: Keep school mascot - [REDACTED] - 9 - ABRHS

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: abrs@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:40:17 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot-[REDACTED], 2022, ABRHS

Sent from my iPhone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "[REDACTED]"
To: AB School Committee <abrs@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:39:55 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot - [REDACTED], 10th Grade, ABRHS

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrs@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:34:31 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot - [REDACTED], 11, ABRHS

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Brian Clancy <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrs@abschools.org" <abrs@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 17:37:12 +0000
Subject: Keep the Colonials

As a longtime resident I would like to point out that we need to keep history. We were part of the 13 Colonies. And it's residents were called Colonials.

Let the truth free you and keep a small minority from over running the majority for their bigger agenda...whatever that may be.

Thank you

Brian D. Clancy VP

Monument Mortgage Co.

NMLS #20731 MA,NH & ME

91 Hartwell Avenue

[REDACTED]
Lexington, MA 02421

Fax 781-240-5835

BrianC@Monumentmortgage.com



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----- Forwarded message -----

From: Jack Maddox [REDACTED]
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:33:45 -0400

Subject: Please Read- From AB Alum Vote NO change to "Colonial"

To the Acton Boxborough Regional School Committee,

My name is Jack Maddox. I graduated from AB in 2017 and I am currently a senior at Clemson University. I am reaching out to share my concern with regard to the vote that will take place over the possible change of the AB mascot. As a long time Acton resident that attends an out of state school, I take pride sharing my passion for my hometown and the history that is attached to Acton. When people ask where I am from, I do not say outside Boston, Massachusetts. I am proud to say I am from Acton, Massachusetts. I take pride in the historic part that Acton played in the advent of our nation. The region where we live is rich with positive history of the brave men and women that stood up for something they believed in and something that was honorable. Local towns such as Concord and Lexington possess mascot names such as "Minuteman", a synonym to that of "Colonial". These are in place to commemorate NOT the term "Colonialism" but simply an individual who stands up for something they believe in. I find no offensive nature with the title "Colonial" if one truly is familiar with the real meaning and purpose of the mascot. Those who seek to find an issue with the name are ignorant to the history that makes this region of the United States so special. I find it troubling that this is seen as an issue, and I see it as a lack of respect to the true positive history that took place in our town. The story of the Men of Acton and Captain Isaac Davis DO NOT deserve to be seen as imperialist but as American heroes that laid down there lives for Acton to become the prosperous town that it is today. If the committee votes to change "Colonial", as a proud AB alum, I will have a hard time ever associating myself with the school district ever again and I am joined in this dissent by numerous classmates. This is unfortunate because I loved everyday that I could represent AB in the classroom and on the sports field. Many individuals that have come before us have epitomized "Colonial Pride" and have gone on to do amazing things. This common spirit will be eliminated through this unnecessary action. It is my hope that the committee will take my concerns and the concerns of others into account and vote NOT to change the mascot that we all hold dear.

All the best,

Jack Maddox
AB class of 2017

Go AB!
First to Fight!

--
Jack L. Maddox
Clemson Football

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: "abrs@abschools.org" <abrs@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:32:42 -0400
Subject:
Keep mascot. [REDACTED], 11th grade, high school

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Robert Abare <[REDACTED]>
To: "abrs@abschools.org" <abrs@abschools.org>
Cc: Kevin Gallant <[REDACTED]>, Larry Abare <[REDACTED]>, Lou Abare <[REDACTED]>, Ray Gallant <[REDACTED]>
Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:32:43 -0400
Subject: AB "Colonials" - A new name?

Dear Acton Boxboro School Committee Members,

This is Robert "Bobby" Abare, a proud graduate of the AB class of 2005 whom also went on to graduate with a BA in Political Science from Yale University in 2009. I write to you with the utmost respect for the Acton-Boxboro school system and a continuation of support for the AB schools and their interscholastic athletic programs and academic progress. Put simply, Acton is one of the best school systems our state has to offer. As far as I know the school continues to perform well and is exceptional in preparing students for college and professional life soon thereafter. I know it was a good and fortunate experience for me to have grown up in Acton and am grateful for the opportunities it has afforded me since.

Though I am now a current resident of the town of Littleton, I am aware of Acton's scholastic and athletic achievements and continue to follow from afar through friends and family members within the town. Though I must admit I do not feel the same connection that I formally did while living in the town for 20+ years, I am nonetheless an steadfast supporter of the student-athletes, the faculty and have family members and friends whom I've kept in touch with or have coached within the towns athletic programs. I am a proud AB alumni who will always have positive remarks about my time in the school system. Though the academic rigor was intense at times, I think it undoubtedly prepared me well. Moreover, the support of the community in general has been a source of inspiration for me when trying to form better communities in which we live today. In many ways, my twenty years at Acton-Boxboro couldn't have been better and I believe, in some small way, I was able to contribute in positively influencing the community in the past several years. I hope to continue being a supporter of athletics for Acton and the surrounding towns and would appreciate opportunities to serve the community in the near future.

This being said, it has been brought to my attention, through media outlets and the general public, that Acton is considering changing the name of the "Colonial" Mascot. While I understand the reasoning for perhaps the need to move away from ideas of Colonialism, the Colonial itself has always stood as a proud symbol of the Colonial heritage, for which the town was founded many years prior to the formation of an organized school system. More recently though, with reference to the history of the school, the Colonial is, in my mind, a symbol of our athletic excellence and all that is good at AB. It's a symbol of the fun athletic programs and the ambitious nature of competition. To change the name would be, in many ways, disrespectful to the many students and student- athletes who felt a symbolic meaning to the Colonial name and we're proud to be an AB Colonial.

Upon further reflection of the meaning of the Colonial and drawing upon my Political Science and historical knowledge, the name can imply Colonialism, or literally " the policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically." With reference to this meaning, one must consider how we can more accurately portray the meaning of our Colonial mascot. To me, the name "Minutemen" or "Minutewoman" may be a more fitting title for the towns athletic Mascot - particularly revering in a more modern definition, "a person ability to quickly organize and independently serve the greater good of ones community with respect and honor for its citizens and townspeople. To bring together the community for the good of all its people."

For me, the "Minuteman" or "Minutewoman" definition provided above would seem to provide significance to our towns history while also bringing relevance to today's modern society and the need to have, which the town of Acton already does, an inclusive and an overall, supportive school system. The Minuteman would further strengthen this resolve and a definition, like the one mentioned, would focus on how the Minutemen is focused on bringing the community together.

As such, and without further pretense, I thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. Please kindly consider keeping or bringing more significance to the AB Mascot name.

Go AB!

Bobby

--

Robert T. Abare
Zebra Sports - Gameday Operations Specialist

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:30:29 -0400

Subject: Keep Mascot - [REDACTED] 9th grade, Acton Boxborough Regional High School
My vote is to keep our school mascot. I think I formatted this right.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Paul Trischitta <[REDACTED]>

To: abrsc@abschools.org

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:30:13 -0400

Subject: Name Change

ENOUGH!!

DO NOT CHANGE THE NAME AND GIVE INTO BRAINWASHED YOUTH WHO HAVE NO CLUE WHAT THEY ARE TALKING ABOUT!

Thank you,
Paul Trischitta
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]

To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:27:26 -0400

Subject: Keep Mascot

Voicing to keep the mascot. The argument against it is reaching to summarize history and claim the mascot represents genocide, while it clearly shows a revolutionary war figure.

[REDACTED], Junior at ABRHS

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Luke LaForest <[REDACTED]>

To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 17:25:53 +0000

Subject: Keep Mascot - Luke LaForest, Class of 2019, Acton-Boxborough

There is no reason to change our historical mascot that represents how are our towns of Acton and Boxborough were built. The bottom line is without the colonials none of us would be HERE. It would be disgraceful and dishonorable if our mascot was changed.

...

|





Mascot emails

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Austin Laymance <[REDACTED]>
 To: abrsc@abschools.org
 Cc:
 Bcc:
 Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 10:25:30 -0700
 Subject: Colonials mascot
 To Tessa McKinley and the School Committee,

As a proud ABRHS alumni, I am against retiring the Colonial as our dear school's official mascot.

For me, the Colonial has always represented the brave men and women who fought for American independence and stood up to an oppressive monarchy.

Acton led the way for the freedom and liberty we still enjoy to this day. The three men who died fighting for this same freedom and liberty still have their remains under the Davis Monument. Those men were Colonials. To change the mascot would be to demean their great sacrifice.

The student group who wants to retire the Colonial as mascot argue, "our current mascot is not representative of who we are or what we stand for as a community." However, I strongly believe the Colonial mascot does represent what we stand for as a community. The group cites its support for BLM, which is in part about standing up to the establishment. That's exactly what Colonials did in fighting back against the British.

In acknowledging the issue's complexity, we must also use our brains a little and acknowledge the following;

- a. Mercedes-Benz, BMW and Volkswagen (Hitler's dream car) all have ties to Nazi Germany.
- b. Hugo Boss literally designed shirts for the Nazis because he was an actual Nazi.
- c. Old Disney movies are historically filled with racist imagery and stereotypes.
- d. U.S.A. Today's parent company (E.W. Scripps and Gannett) was linked to the slave trade.
- e. Aetna and New York Life Insurance insured the lives of slaves and reimbursed slave owners when their slaves died.
- f. Henry Ford was a leading anti-Semite. Same with Coco Chanel.
- g. Adidas, Nike, Gap, Urban Outfitters and Victoria's Secret all still use products made in sweatshops and with child labor.

I could go on and on and on and on and on, but if you need more examples, let Google be your friend. The list of companies and institutions with non-ideal backgrounds is longer than America's history itself. Yet, Mercedes found a way to get over its Nazi ties. Disney is still Disney. Nike literally makes the AB football jerseys.

As American people, we universally forgive in the name of the Ford Expedition that I personally drive or the movie that I play on the Disney Channel for my nephews or the newspaper that I buy when I'm in an airport or my Aetna health care or my New York Life Insurance policy.

Every single one of us, including the young men and women that attend ABRHS, make little concessions all the time when it comes to our moral compasses and when/where we decide to use them.

For some reason, this has become a line in the sand moment, but I have to ask why?

If I can acknowledge the existence of the mascot's ties to the beginnings of slavery in America, then why can't we also acknowledge the significant number of people who view the Colonial as a positive symbol?

Doesn't that history matter, too?

I'm all for these kids fighting the good fights ... all of them. I just don't view this situation as fighting the good fight as much as it's applying misplaced pressure for sport. I don't believe these kids have been swayed by their teachers. No, I give them way more credit than that. They haven't been hypnotized. Instead, these are frustrated young men and women that want to fight back ... against anything they can get their hands on. The mascot has been sucked into the fray, perhaps even deservedly so.

Let's be clear - the history deserves to be discussed.

Yet, there's a difference between having a discussion and trying to render something so personal to so many as completely useless moving forward.

While it's commendable that our young students are looking for ways to support BLM, retiring a beloved school mascot is not the answer. They say they want to bring the fan base together, but this would only fracture it. I feel the fan base can rally in support of keeping the mascot.

If love, acceptance and equality are the end goal, then it's time to get together and find a better answer because what's currently happening isn't it.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

James Austin Laymance ABRHS Class of 2009

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:25:04 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot
[REDACTED]

Grade 12
ABRHS

Sent from my iPhone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:23:22 -0400
Subject: Keep mascot-[REDACTED] 12-ABRHS
Please vote to keep it!

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:20:14 -0400
Subject: Keep mascot [REDACTED] grade 12 ABRHS

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]

To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:20:04 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot- [REDACTED], 9th grade ABRHS

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:20:13 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot

[REDACTED], Grade 12, ABRHS

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: "Abrsc@abschools.org" <Abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:18:44 -0400
Subject: KEEP
[REDACTED]
Senior

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:18:25 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot- [REDACTED], 11, ABRHS

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Finn Murray <[REDACTED]>
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:16:37 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot-Allumni

Make the right choice. This is town history we are talking about. The colonials and militiamen who fought for our town reflect the fighting spirit of Acton and is exactly why so many are so proud to be from here. There must be an effort to separate the horrible acts of so many colonists from the brave men and women from our town who fought for America's freedom. I hope you will take ALL voices into account in this matter.

Sincerely,
Finn Murray

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:16:15 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot- [REDACTED], 2023 Acton Boxborough Regional High-School

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:15:51 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot - [REDACTED], 11th grade - AB High School

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:14:13 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot-[REDACTED] Senior; ABRHS
Colonials were those who lived in the colonies. Synonyms for the word are patriots, minuteman, and even loyalists. Clearly, no one has said anything about those, so why is the colonial any different. Colonials are MEN AND WOMEN who lived here.

Colonialism is the process of coming to a new land and taking the land over. Many countries in the past have practiced this: European nations, Japan, and probably the tribes in Africa too.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: "abrsc@abschools.org" <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:09:13 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot-[REDACTED] 9th grade ABRHS
Save our mascot!

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:08:17 -0400
Subject: DO NOT CHANGE MASCOT-[REDACTED] ABRHS, 11th grade.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:05:02 -0400
Subject: Keep Mascot Name [REDACTED] Grade 10 School ABHRS

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: "Abrsc@abschools.org" <Abrsc@abschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:00:28 -0400
Subject: KEEP MASCOT-[REDACTED] (senior)
I vote to keep the mascot!

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: Abrsc@abschools.org
Cc:
Bcc:

10/19/2020

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Mail - Mascot emails unredacted #6.2

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:00:32 -0400

Subject: KEEP MASCOT [REDACTED]/Senior

Sent from my iPhone

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]

To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 13:06:45 -0400

Subject: Keep Mascot - [REDACTED] 11th, ABRHS

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