

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON CLOSED SESSION AGENDA ITEMS

No public comments were received for this portion of the agenda.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

No public comments were received for this portion of the agenda.

UNSCHEDULED ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

1. Kimi Smallen

Dear FUSD,

I am writing today to respectfully request our children's return to fulltime in person learning. My kids as well as many other kids are suffering greatly. My 7th grade son, who has been an exceptional student throughout his entire school attendance, now has B's and C's. While this may seem average, it is certainly not normal for him. I have discussed with parents of at least 3 families whose children are not only doing worse academically, but also suffering with depression and loss of interest in school. All of which are abnormal for these children. School IS about learning, but as a community, we have discovered school is so much more. It is a place for making friends and interpersonal connections that will be with them throughout their lives. Please know how passionately our local families feel about the insufficiencies of distance learning on both an academic level and emotional level and we will continue to push for in person, fulltime learning until this goal is achieved.

Respectfully,

The Smallen Family

2. Missy Tuck

Dear FUSD Board Members,

While I attended Roosevelt High School I have gotten involved in this unfair retirement of the Fresno High Warrior image because we're afraid some individual will come forward and state the Rough Riders name offends them and you'll immediately vote to retire it as well.

How did you come to the insane conclusion that after 130 years as the Warriors it is now racist or offensive?

In my opinion it appears you, the petitioner and others hiding behind these fake groups you used are the actual racists here attempting to remove Native Americans and the images from the public's view.

How can you possibly ask the tax payers in your district to spend over \$400k to remove a 130 year old image when you've failed terribly to check the petitioner, the supporters endorsements and even the actual members of Valley Native Americans for Change.

I assure you this complete lack of investigation will back fire on each one of you who rushed to judgment and failed to inspect any of the evidence you accepted in making your decision. It is falling apart on simple inspection so I assume it will be horrific for you when the attorney puts it under the microscope.

This movement is gaining momentum and may ultimately be your undoing. Many of my friends from Roosevelt are joining the fight and I'm aware other schools alumni are jumping onboard as well.

I would recommend you rescind your votes and hold a stakeholders referendum **(250-word limit reached)**

3. Ryan Griffith

Board Members & Dr. Nelson:

As you must be aware over 20 public comments from identifiable individuals were submitted to this board since Saturday March 6, 2021 to be read at the board meeting today. These public comments relate to keeping Fresno High School's mascot. I anticipate far more letters and public comment to be received in the coming weeks.

I want to ensure these public comments are read and acknowledged at the Board Meeting tonight in compliance with the Brown Act. Therefore, I have attached a letter to ensure compliance with the Brown Act.

Thanks for your time and let me know if you have any questions.

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4. Josette Losurdo

Fresno Unified Board Members,

I believe the Native American image that has been Fresno High's logo for over 130 years is an image of pride and that your vote was unfair, as you did not hear from both sides of the issue.

I attended Fresno High from fall of 1975 and graduated in 1978, I have siblings who attended from fall of 1962 through 1971, and we never thought the image was disrespectful.

Your decision needs to be reversed and the \$400K to \$1 million dollars of tax payer money should be spent on improving the test scores of the students in the Fresno Unified school district and to set up curriculum to teach the kids the history of the Native Americans.

The so-called "social justice" group and the teachers who teach it, need to teach acceptance and not hate. This group needs new leadership or disband from the school.

Josette Losurdo

Class of 1978

5. Tiffany Hurst

Dear Trustees,

I am writing to you in regards to your decision to remove our 131 year old tradition. The manner in which it was voted on was completely misleading and just plain wrong.

I am a Warrior, a proud Fresno High School Warrior Alumni. Ever since I was a child I wanted to be a Warrior. I used to attend football games and see that Warrior image and think to myself, "I will honor that Warrior and wear it with pride someday." And I did and still do today. I graduated from FHS in 1998 and while at FHS I was very involved with student government, played sports and was a cheerleader. I was completely consumed with Warrior Pride. Still to this day I am full of Warrior Pride. That image is more than just an image. That image is a symbol of courage, honor and strength. It is in no way racist or degrading.

As a former student, I feel that our voices have not been heard. Our comments and protest against the change was overlooked completely. And to find out later it wasn't even the Native Americans protesting and advocating for this change is disheartening. You are dishonoring our 131 year old tradition. FHS is known for our traditions. Traditions are what makes us who we are and you are trying to take that away from us.

In my opinion there are plenty of other things the district can focus on than this. Spending more than **(250-word limit reached)**

6. Raymond Hernandez

To FUSD,

I am a FHS Alumni class of 1978; for over 100 years the Warrior Mascot has been one of the Valley's most identifiable Icon figures.

To take it away will be like erasing history; please reconsider your stand.

Thank you

7. Natasha Uhlik-Slebiss

Dear Board Members and Dr Nelson;

As a 1978 graduate of Fresno High School, I am very concerned with the topic of having the Fresno High School Mascot replaced/removed.

The timing of this decision seems rather poor. As our country is struggling with a pandemic, an entity steps forward to take away a precious part of our history in hopes that it will go unnoticed. I noticed, as did many others.

Shame on you the Board members who failed to hear the voices of all those who do not support the removal of the Fresno High Warrior mascot.

I vote, I pay taxes, I live in Fresno County and I pay attention.

Sincerely;

Natasha Uhlik Slebiss, RDN

8. John Crawford

Dear FUSD Trustee Board,

My name is John Crawford. I am a Fresno High School Alumnus from the Class of 1989. My class was the 100th graduating class of FHS Warriors! We were/are VERY proud of that- so much so that the large FHS stone plaque at the entry to Fresno High School was our gift to the school and our posterity.

I, like tens/hundreds of thousands of other people in the past 132 years, have wandered the halls and grounds of Fresno High with great pride in the fact that I am a Fresno High School WARRIOR!

Being of part Native American descent, this was an even greater source of pride to me- I am also Scottish, and I feel a great source of joy in seeing the McLane Highlanders and their mascot!! You see, it's not derogatory or demeaning to celebrate our history by honoring the images, logos, and cultures of the people who helped weave the fabric of what has become the United States of America! You won't hear about people getting offended over a Scot in a kilt because it's celebrated in the Scottish people, much the same as the image of a great Native warrior is celebrated by those of us who are of Native blood.

Now we are being told that it doesn't matter what 131 years of tradition and values has reaped because YOU are hell-bent on destroying our history and legacy due to a TINY, EXTREMELY VOCAL individual(s) who is offended that we **(250-word limit reached)**

9. John Flores

My name is John Flores and I would like to begin first by thanking the Fresno Unified School District Board of Trustees for their attention to this matter. If I can give a little history about myself, I was born and raised in Fresno, attending Fresno schools, and graduating from Fresno High School in 1977. While at Fresno High, I was involved in the music department and served as drum major for the Fresno High Marching Warrior Band my senior year and also served as a member of the Fresno High Senate. I am a graduate of California State University, Fresno, and currently work as a Vice-President of Operations for an agricultural lending corporation in Fresno.

As you can see, Fresno is my life and has always been. With the exception of a couple of years in another state, it is where my wife and I have spent over 40 years together and where we raised our two daughters. In fact, my daughter served as the girls' water polo coach at Fresno High a few seasons ago while in college at Fresno State. Fresno High takes on a special meaning to many of us who have attended there throughout the years. We take special pride to be part of an alumni group that has existed for over 130 years, having shared title of "alumnus" with many famous Fresno High graduates. Many of us continue to get together regularly and, in fact, a group meets every Saturday for coffee across the **(250-word limit reached)**

10. Dan Shay

Hi,

As a graduate of Fresno High School, I am shocked and appalled at the thought of removing the Native American Warrior image. What are you people thinking? Why are you wasting our tax dollars? I haven't met a Native American yet who has a problem with the image.

Our mascot is a part of history, not only personally but as part of Fresno's history as well. It is bad enough that they have been changing the written history, adding falsehoods and removing facts. My family has a history in California pre-dating California becoming a State. One of my grandmothers also attended Fresno High School and was a proud Warrior.

Please do not remove the Native American image. It pays respect to our own Native American's in this area.

Thank you for your time and dedication,

Daniel A. Shay

FHS Class of 1973

11. Gary Nakagawa

Dear FUSD Trustees.

Please rescind your ridiculously, politically, and motivated racist decision to remove the FHS Warrior Image! Why after 131 years are you taking this position? Are you part of the “woke” and “cancel culture”? Because you are acting like it! There are now 623 members in our FB group called: “SUPPORTERS FOR RETAINING THE FRESNO HIGH WARRIOR IMAGE”. While there are some in our group that have not written to you, they would not have joined this group, if they did not believe in this cause. Do you have over 623 individuals wanting the removal of our dear Fresno High Warrior Image? We also have the backing and support of retaining this image by “NAGA” AKA Native American Guardian Association. You made this decision without listening to our side and it shows your bias and did this knowingly. Where is the fairness in this process of removal? Answer, there was no fairness period. For a bunch of educated Trustee’s, you are acting like political hacks. Rescind this decision immediately!

Gary Nakagawa

Class of 1971

Proud to be a “Warrior with our NA Image”

12. Chris Alderson

Hello All,

I am writing to urge you to vote against removing the Warrior mascot from Fresno High School. As a second generation graduate of Fresno High, the Warrior mascot carries significant importance to my family and I. While I can understand the derogatory meaning of a "redskin" mascot or other demeaning mascots, the image of the Warrior symbolizes to me and others: pride, honor and respect. It has significant meaning to many in our community and serves as a historical image that has served the Fresno community proud. I would hope you consider the true definition of a warrior when you consider this. Many of us in the Fresno High district were engaged in struggle and conflict as we went through high school. The warrior image gave us hope and the ability to be a warrior through our daily lives.

Definition of warrior: a person engaged or experienced in warfare broadly : a person engaged in some struggle or conflict

Thank you,

Chris Alderson

Class of 1991

13. Cecilia Patino Funk

FUSD Trustees-

According to a Washington Post poll of Native Americans, more than 90% responded they were in favor of Native American imagery and names being used. They did not consider them derogatory and in fact see them as reminders of their proud ancestry. FUSD's nondiscrimination policy prohibits derogatory images and also references a very long list of citations that support your policy. FUSD has determined that the Fresno High School Warrior image is derogatory. By what definition? Please share with our community which of the referenced citations in the policy

calls for removing a globally recognized, historic image of a distinct and well respected North American.

Native Americans embrace all races as it is known they have historically bestowed the honor and title of Warrior to those who have demonstrated courage and bravery, traits they embody. It is an ethos that transcends race and culture. To remove the Warrior Native American image is a disgrace to Warriors that have walked before us and a form of racism to all now.

You must rescind your decision to remove the image so that true equality is shown to all those who identify as a Warrior. If not, you must hold a stakeholder referendum that permits a fair and transparent debate.

Cecilia Patino Funk
Class of 1979

14. Lori Pastre'

Dear Trustees:

I respectfully request that you rescind the decision to remove the FHS Warrior imagery.

- The Warrior is a historical and iconic image that is currently, and always will be, a proud representation of Fresno High for the entire community, the alumni, as well as the current faculty and students.
- As reported by NAGA (Native American Guardian Association), approximately 85-90% of Native Americans polled were in full support of utilizing Native American imagery as recognition of their heritage for sports and other public platforms. Educate not eradicate.
- An overwhelming majority of FHS alumni are proud of the Warrior image and wish to have it retained.
- The financial impact to eradicate the Warrior image is estimated at a cost of at least \$400,000, and more than likely expected to reach nearly \$1 million.

It is critical in a highly sensitive matter such as this that the entirety of the situation be evaluated in a thorough manner. It is apparent that the appropriate research was not done prior to the Board's decision to remove the Warrior imagery. A democratic society is one in which the majority voice prevails; we cannot afford to allow a small group of radical individuals attempt to dictate what is in the best interest of all those affected. Please allow for a stakeholder's referendum to afford everyone an equal opportunity to express themselves and allow their voices to be heard.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lori A. Pastre'
Native American FHS Alumni, 1981

15. Elizabeth Potter

Hello, I'm writing you today in hopes that you and your colleagues will do the right thing and open schools back up, full time, RIGHT NOW, to everyone who wants to go back. I have 5 Elementary school age kids that have been forced into a distance learning program that was only supposed to last two weeks. It's been a year and the talk of opening back up isn't good enough, it's actually insulting at this point. It seems that the only parents and students with a voice that's being heard, are those that want to stay home wrapped up in their fear. Meanwhile, the rest of us (the

majority) are forced to face the reality that our children are suffering in order to keep those that you've already given the choice to stay home if they want to stay home, at home where they already are! It makes no sense. Either open the schools to those who need and want to be there, or stop talking out of your a** about it.

Sincerely, A fed up parent.

16. Debra Rodriguez

To the Board Members of FUSD,

Please vote against and not for the changing of the Fresno High School's Warrior image. I along with my three siblings and all of my classmates are Warrior Strong. I usually do not get involved and I usually stay silent, but this is too important for me to keep silent about. A lot of my warrior classmates still gather around the front of Fresno High every Saturday morning, rain or shine. We all embrace being a Warrior.

The image is an image of a strong proud Warrior. There is no prejudice or discrimination attached to it. Only those that are trying to get you to change it are the ones that are causing trouble. Please do not waste any more tax dollars on this.

I am and will always be a proud Fresno High Warrior. Class of '79!

Thanks for your time,

Debbie Rodriguez

17. Cheri Perry

I am the parent of 2 students that attend FUSD schools - 2nd grade & 7th grade.

We have been told as parents by Superintendent Nelson that the FUSD School Board is our avenue to voice our concerns, questions, and to partner with the school district. Mr. Nelson has advised that he is "partnering" with parents by using feedback from the FUSD School Board to be our voice.

The FUSD School Board has had closed meetings for months. Parents have not been able to openly participate in school board meetings. Many parents, including myself, have reached out to the School Board and sent letters to ask questions, asked for you to advocate for parents and students to open schools, to and to ask to be provided the opportunity to share our concerns. Emails and voicemails are not an effective method for parents and students to communicate with the board.

Please answer why you are not holding open board meetings and allowing parents to speak openly, as was previously available prior to the Governor shutting down our state last year. Parents and students are frustrated and tired of feeling unheard, marginalized, and having no one advocate on their behalf.

We are asking that you open school board meetings back up to public speaking so that parents and students may address the school board directly.

Thank you,

Cheri Perry

18. Patty Lawrence

To the Board of FUSD

I am requesting that you do not get rid of our Warrior Image of FHS. I am an Alumni, and Proud to be a Warrior and the image to me is to HONOR and show RESPECT to the Native Americans. Their Heritage is extremely a major part of our California History, and we honor them with the Warrior Image. It was chosen for those reasons and is not offensive or derogatory in any way. There are more issues to be resolved by getting the students back into school, so that they can socialize and get better learning instructions from their teachers. If private schools can have in person learning then public schools should get the same consideration. Leave our honored Warrior Image alone, for future generations.

Patty Lawrence (Smith)

PROUD FHS WARRIOR

CLASS of 1976

19. Jennifer Paschal

Is Fresno unified ready to adopt the 3 ft social distant guideline recently released by the CDC? I cannot understand how 2 days a week is sufficient in person education, especially when it's basically "zoom in a room" instruction. I have a kinder who has been in a cohort on Monday's which is now being canceled due to the fact that the teacher is not "volunteering" to teach the Monday cohort. Why is the inconsistent rules being allowed? How can teachers explaining traveling for leisure and not be forced to work from the classroom? This rollout of returning to the classroom is not only embarrassing it's unforgivable. I am a parent who is in favor of 100 perfect return to the classroom, also a parent who is in favor for the right to choose, please do right by our kids, this hypocrisy has gone on long enough.

-Jennifer Paschal

Bullard Region

20. Shaun R. Ardemagni

Dear Board,

I write to you to request that the subject of the removal of the Warrior mascot be brought back to the table for further discussion. I find it very disheartening that the Board voted to remove our beloved mascot based, seemingly, on one man's outspoken protest, a man who did not even attend Fresno High School and cannot possibly know what it means to the alumni who did attend, and consider ourselves Warriors by our individual and collective experiences as Fresno High School students.

Please take the time necessary to reconsider your decision.

Sincerely,

Shaun R. Ardemagni

21. Mike Markarian

Dear FUSD,

I am extremely concerned with the amount of money you are now stating it will take to change the Fresno High Warrior at Fresno High.

I was concerned when I saw you were being petitioned but since you stated there would be no fiscal change I didn't get overly concerned.

Now I've seen articles saying \$400,00.00! This needs to be rescinded. I would have come forward to fight this had I been advised up front of the costs.

Rescind this ridiculous tax payer spending now! This is total fraud to lie to me and others to get your way!

Regards,

Mike Markarian

22. James Tuck

Board Members,

We have come to realize that every single person that ever attended FHS has been unjustly treated by your rash and unreasonable decision to retire a proud Warrior image without any opportunity given to the Alumni.

You failed to give our side proper notification while allowing our opposition to interact with you freely and irresponsibly.

We are learning that nearly every endorsement used is fraudulent and the organizations that supported the petition are also made up of social justice warriors who right campaign letters for multiple cancel culture groups daily.

Why did you not verify any of this? Mr Nelson is nothing more than a political activists as we will prove if we need to.

Please rescind your vote now,

Thank you,

James Tuck

1981

OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMENT ON CONFERENCE/DISCUSSION AGENDA ITEMS

B-15, PRESENT and DISCUSS the 2021/22 Strategic Budget Development

No public comments were received for this portion of the agenda.