Thoughts on School Branding Standards

Oliver Olsen, State Board of Education Chair February 8, 2022

Disclaimer: These are preliminary comments, subject to review / discussion by State Board of Education.

High Level Comments



Need to bring closure to mascot issues First and foremost, it's just the right thing to do. Concern that protracted debates about mascots have disrupted important work at local level and are attracting single-issue candidates to school boards.



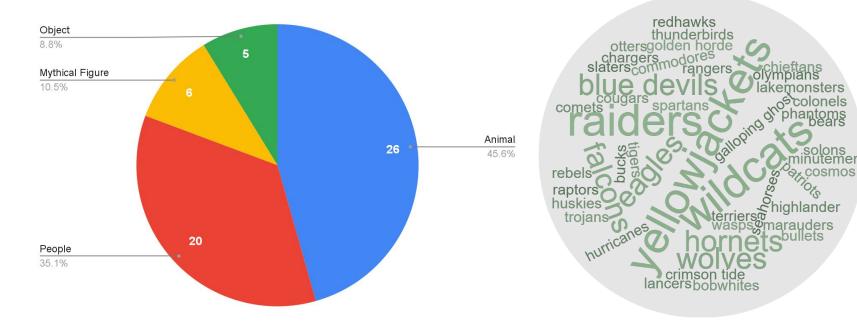
SBE rulemaking capacity constrained SBE has limited capacity and is dependent on AOE for drafting. Significant rulemaking on other issues already in process. Unlikely that proposed mascot rulemaking could be accomplished by December 2022. 3

Mascot rulemaking could disrupt EQS Important work of Act 1 implementation and other EQS updates could be conflated with mascot issue and derail both efforts.



Consider a more direct approach Require all school branding to be approved by the SBE using statutory guidelines. One-time process for SBE to review and approve existing branding, with a default approval if objections are not raised by August 31, 2022

Classification of VT High School Branding



Branding that Characterizes Groups of People

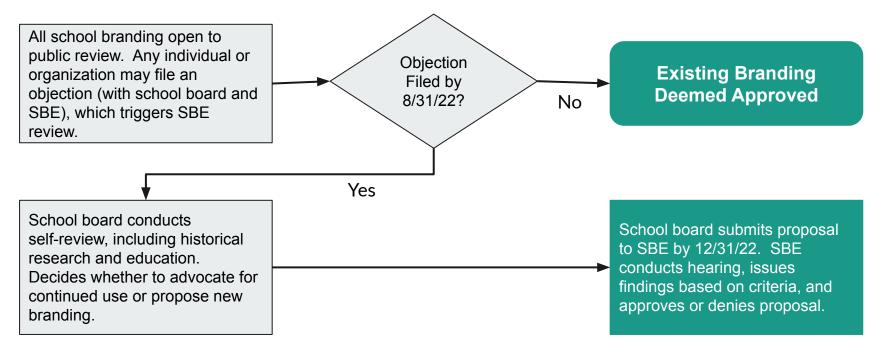
Chieftains	Raiders (3)	Olympians	Highlanders
Rebels	Rangers	Trojans	Slaters
Colonels	Commodores	Spartans	Lancers
Bobwhites	Minutemen	Solons	Marauders
Golden Horde	Patriots		

Branding Based on Objects & Mythical Figures

Crimson Tide	Hurricanes	Cosmos
Bullets	Comets	

Galloping Ghost	Blue Devils (2)	Phantoms
Lake Monsters (Champ)	Thunderbirds	

Potential Process to Approve Existing Branding



Potential Statutory Criteria for Consideration

When granting approval, the SBE must find that the proposed branding does not directly or indirectly reference or stereotype the likeness, features, symbols, traditions, or other characteristics that are specific to either:

- 1. the race, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity of any person or group of people; or
- 2. any person, group of people, or organization associated with the repression of others.

In developing its findings, the SBE must consider the historical context and prior use of the proposed branding.

Other Ideas for Consideration

- Provide transition funding for school districts that voluntarily acknowledge non-compliant branding and propose alternative branding that is approved by the SBE
- Apply these standards to independent schools that accept public tuition (leveraging existing independent school approval process)

Timeline

Late Spring

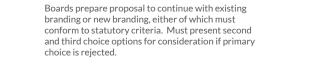
2022

Bill Passage - Public Review Period Starts

Members of the public can petition for review of any existing school branding. Petitions must demonstrate how existing branding is not compliant with statutory criteria.

Aug 31, 2022

Deadline for Proposals to SBE



April 2023

New Branding Takes Effect

Deadline for Petitions

Any branding that has not been objected to is approved by default. For branding where objections have been filed, school boards begin self-review, research, and education.

Dec 31, 2022

SBE Issues Decisions

Issues findings and decisions consistent with statutory guidelines. Chooses second or third preferences if necessary to meet statutory requirements.

Aug 31, 2023

Questions?

