



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RE: SB21-116 Prohibit American Indian Mascots in Colorado

(Denver, Colorado, April, 2021) The American Indian Academy of Denver Board of Directors, stand affirmed and united in our support of SB21-116, a bill prohibiting the use of American Indian mascots by public schools, including public charter schools and Charter School Institute authorized schools as well as public institutions of higher education in the state of Colorado.

The American Indian Academy of Denver (AIAD)¹ is a free public charter school authorized under Denver Public Schools currently serving 102 6th through 8th graders. 47% of our student population is Native American and 48% is Latino (also Indigenous to North America). Next year, AIAD will begin to build out our high school by adding 9th grade. At full enrollment, 6th grade through 12th, AIAD will serve approximately 400 students in the Denver metro area. AIAD is considered an Urban Indian Organization according to 25 USCS § 1603 (29).

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The continued use of Native people and imagery as mascots in sports is rooted in a long and harmful history. These mascots perpetuate racial stereotypes and cultural misappropriation, which negatively impacts the identity and psychological development of Indigenous children².

Furthermore, this form of normalized racism teaches children, at the most impressionable level, that it's acceptable to participate in culturally abusive behavior—creating a negative learning environment for all children³⁴⁵.

For these reasons, the American Indian Academy of Denver stand in full support of our Native and Indigenous families and children, by publicly opposing the continued misappropriation and use of Native mascots in schools and we support their removal from all schools, colleges, and universities in Colorado and support the passage of SB 116.

¹ American Indian Academy of Denver <http://www.aiadschool.org>

² Summary of the American Psychological Assoc. recommending the retirement of American Indian mascots <https://www.apa.org/pi/oema/resources/indian-mascots>

³ Ending the Era of Harmful "Indian" Mascots. <https://www.ncai.org/proudtobe>

⁴ Elimination of Racist Mascots, Toolkit for students and educators <http://www.eliminatoracistmascots.org>

⁵ Resolution 2013-07: Support for the Elimination of Race-Based Native Logos, Mascots and Names, National Indian Education Assn. <http://www.niea.org/resolutions>