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**Board of Education to Consider Policy Update Banning Offensive Mascots***HISD also scheduled to honor outgoing Trustee Larry Marshall for his service*

*Dec. 11, 2013* — Houston Independent School District Superintendent Terry Grier on Thursday will recommend the Board of Education take the first steps in approving a policy update that would prohibit offensive or culturally insensitive mascots.

The proposed policy would affect four HISD high schools — Lamar High School Redskins, Westbury High School Rebels, Hamilton Middle School Indians and Welch Middle School Warriors. The measure must be approved on Thursday and then again in January after its second reading.

The new policy would allow schools to respectfully retire their existing mascot while also acknowledging the important role their related traditions and symbols have played in their community.

“The time has come for the Houston Independent School District — the most vibrantly diverse school district in the nation — to acknowledge that some decisions made generations ago need to be reconsidered. Traditions are important. But kindness matters more,” Grier said.

“HISD must retire, respectfully, school symbols that no longer reflect the values of who we are — inclusive, sensitive, forward-thinking and committed to instilling character and social awareness in our youngsters.”

If passed in December and again in January, the policy update would go into effect at the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year. Each school would be required to follow district policy in selecting its new mascot.

Also on Thursday, the Board of Education and district officials will pay tribute to outgoing Trustee Larry Marshall, who is leaving the district after more than 50 years in public education.

Marshall first joined HISD as a teacher in 1955. After working his way up the ranks, he retired as deputy superintendent in 1991. He was elected to the HISD Board of Education in 1997 and served 16 years over four terms before deciding not to seek re-election this year.

Though this is his last board meeting, Marshall will remain an active board member until his successor — incoming District IX Trustee Wanda Adams — is sworn into office on Jan. 16, 2014, the first meeting of the new year.

A farewell reception for Marshall will be held immediately prior to the Board of Education regular monthly meeting.

**The board’s regular monthly meeting begins at 5 p.m. on Thursday, December 12, 2013, in the board auditorium of the Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center, 4400 W. 18th Street. Click** [**here**](http://www.houstonisd.org/domain/7947) **to view the full agenda.**

            The board meeting will be carried live on HISD’s website and on the HISD Channel, which can be found on Comcast Channel 18 or AT&T Channel 99.

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The **Houston Independent School District** is the largest school district in Texas and the seventh-largest in the United States with 282 schools and nearly 210,000 students. The 334-square-mile district is one of the largest employers in the Houston metropolitan area with more than 25,000 employees.

**For more information, visit the HISD Web site at** [**www.houstonisd.org**](http://www.houstonisd.org/)**.**

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