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**Board of Education Approves Policy Update Banning Offensive Mascots**

*Dec. 12, 2013* — Houston Independent School District Board of Education on Thursday took the first step in approving a measure that would prohibit offensive or culturally insensitive mascots.

The proposed policy affects four HISD high schools — Lamar High School Redskins, Westbury High School Rebels, Hamilton Middle School Indians and Welch Middle School Warriors. It would go into effect at the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year.

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.

It was unanimously approved 8 to 0 by the Board of Education on its first reading Thursday night. Trustee Paula Harris had to leave for another engagement and was not at the meeting when the vote took place. Trustees must approve it again in January before it can take effect.

“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.”

Each school will be required to follow district policy in selecting its new mascot.

The board’s regular monthly meeting was held 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.

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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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