

Board holds first reading on mascot agreement

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

The Oregon Board of Education is one procedural step away from signing off on the first Tribal-school district agreement that will allow Banks to retain its Braves mascot as it moves toward a more culturally acceptable Native American image.

The Board of Education held a first reading on the memorandum of understanding struck between the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and Banks School District on Thursday, Feb. 23, during its meeting held in Eugene.

During the hearing, Department of Education Government and Legal Affairs Manager Cindy Hunt detailed the history of the Native American mascot issue in Oregon for new board members and said that Department of Education staff members have no concerns regarding the agreement.

"I have concluded that the agreement meets the legal requirements



prescribed by state law and am recommending that the State Board approve the agreement," Hunt said.

Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George and Tribal Attorney Rob Greene attended the hearing, as did Banks School District Superintendent Jeff Leo.

George and Greene responded to one question asked by a Board of Education member and the agreement is scheduled to be officially approved at the board's Thursday,

March 23, meeting in Salem.

The Banks School District and Grand Ronde Tribe have been working together since 2015 on the mascot issue after the Board of Education amended its blanket ban on Native American mascots in public schools. The Oregon Legislature mandated in 2014 that school districts be allowed to retain their Native American mascots if they work with one of the nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon to create more culturally appropriate mascot images.

Banks' new image – inverse Bs in the shape of an arrowhead replacing a profile of a Native American Brave – was first presented to the Grand Ronde Tribal Council on Nov. 14. Nike marketing and graphics employees work with Cultural Resources Department Manager David Harrelson and school district representatives to craft the new image.

The new image will gradually replace the old stereotypical image over a five-year period on uniforms, buildings, merchandising and school district stationery.

"It is an honor for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde to partner with the Banks School District on the mascot issue," George said. "It is very important for our culture and our history to be accurately portrayed in our schools. This agree-

ment, while viewed as controversial by some, will help break down barriers and create understanding between our cultures for generations to come. We appreciate the work Banks has done and look forward to continuing our partnership."

The agreement also requires the Banks School District to adopt the Grand Ronde Tribe's fourth- and eighth-grade Native American history curriculum and establish a Native Club at its schools. Leo said that approximately 3 percent of Banks' 1,100 students identify as Native American.

Banks, which is northwest of Portland off of Highway 26, is within the traditional homelands of the Tualatin Kalapuya, one of the myriad Tribes and bands that were forced to move to the Grand Ronde Reservation in the 1850s and confederate after signing three treaties with the federal government.

Public school districts that do not enter into an approved agreement with an Oregon Tribe will continue to be required to change their mascot before July 1. So far, only the Marcola School District northeast of Eugene has officially announced that it is abandoning its Native American mascot and nickname and will adopt a new non-Native American mascot and nickname for its high school. ■

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 DOE _____ Place of Entry _____
 DOS: _____ Place of Separation _____
 Rank: _____ Branch: _____ Honorable: Y / N (circle)
 Deceased: Y / N (circle) DOD: _____ Place of Burial _____

*All applicants must submit a copy of their DD214. If applicant is deceased, a family member or spouse can submit a copy of their DD214. If you are a CTGR Tribal member please attach a copy of your Tribal ID. If you are non-Tribal please attach a copy of a bill/record with your name and address showing you had lived or now reside in Grand Ronde, Willamina or Sheridan. Please send application and all documents to: Grand Ronde Veterans SEB, 9615 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde, OR, 97347. If you have any questions, please call Steve Bobb at 503-876-3118.

Deadline is March 15, 2017
 Any applications received after March 15, 2017, will be kept on file for inclusion to the Memorial in 2018.