

'It's all up to local control'

NATIVE ATTIRE continued
from front page

wrote in the second letter. "We fully support policies allowing students to outwardly wear items that honor their unique cultures."

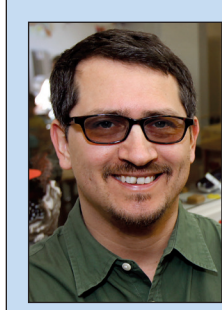
Indian Education Adviser to the Deputy Superintendent April Campbell said the reason for the letter is that Oregon doesn't have a written policy on what students can wear during graduation ceremonies.

"It's all up to local control," Campbell said. "Typically every year we get phone calls from parents or students concerned that they were told that they were not able to wear regalia or eagle feathers. So for the last few years since we don't have an official state policy, Dr. Noor and his predecessor, Rob Sexton, have sent these letters out as a reminder for the districts to encourage them to hopefully do some outreach as well as look at their internal policies and make any adjustments needed."

Campbell said the reason for the state's stance in allowing for expression of a student's heritage and culture is simple from an educational point of view — they are trying to encourage students to go to school and be successful.

Campbell also said they want students to be able to celebrate their educational achievements.

"We have a hard enough time just getting a student to that milestone in their life," Campbell said. "We know we have the highest dropout rate of all ethnicities and so allowing a student to celebrate, I think that is really important. This is a ceremony and it's allowing students to



"I'm disappointed every time we have to rehash the same arguments."

~ Leslie Riggs
Tribal Education Department manager

embrace who they are during that milestone."

Campbell said the policy is for all students.

"You wouldn't tell a student they couldn't wear a necklace with a cross on it," Campbell said. "This is really no different for me."

Tribal Education Department Manager Leslie Riggs said he wishes people didn't have to have the same discussion on the subject year after year.

"I'm disappointed every time we have to rehash the same arguments," Riggs said. "I think anybody graduating from any school should be able to decorate their mortar boards or their cap and gown, and we have a first amendment right to free speech."

Riggs said when he graduated from the University of Oregon with honors in Eugene that he loved looking out over the crowd and seeing the diversity of the graduates.

"There were ethnicities from all over the world," Riggs said of that milestone in his life. "It was fantastic and I thought it was just wonderful. I learned a lot."

Sheridan School District Superintendent Dr. Steve Sugg said the issue hasn't come up in the three graduation ceremonies that he has been a part of since becoming

superintendent.

"If something came up we would certainly work with the student and the Tribe to figure out a way to make sure everybody is happy and felt supported," Sugg said. "Our kids decorate their mortar boards. They decorate those however they want because we don't have any set criteria."

Willamina School District Superintendent Carrie Zimbrick said that she also loves it when she witnesses all the graduates and sees the diversity of her district's students. Willamina's enrollment is approxi-

mately one-third Native American, many of those students are Grand Ronde members or descendants.

"Looking out at our ceremony that is what I think makes it unique and special and something we can all be proud of," Zimbrick said. "We are recognizing that diversity and allowing students to make it their own. Graduation is about the kids and what the kids want to make it for themselves."

Zimbrick said Noor's message was one of encouragement and acceptance.

"It's a ceremony," Zimbrick said. "I think students should be able to make that ceremony personal for them. I believe as a district we recognize that and appreciate that as well. I think it makes our graduation that much more special when students can put their own personal stamp on that ceremony and I think it's important as a community to recognize that and allow for that." ■


Supreme Court denies petition to hear Cowlitz case


WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Supreme Court ruled on Monday, April 3, that it would not hear an appeal regarding the U.S. Department of the Interior's decision to grant the Cowlitz Tribe a reservation 15 miles north of Vancouver, sealing the deal for the Cowlitz Tribe and their under-construction \$510 million ilani casino.


The Grand Ronde Tribe, which fought the Cowlitz Reservation in the courts for many years, dropped out of the legal battle after the U.S. Court of Appeals ruled in July 2016 that the Cowlitz Tribe could keep its 152-acre reservation near La Center off Interstate 5.

However, legal appeals continued from owners of cardrooms located in La Center.

The Supreme Court's ruling lets the Court of Appeals' decision stand and removes the last legal hurdle to the Cowlitz Tribe retaining its Reservation and opening its casino. ■







Tribal Veteran Representative Training


May 9-11, 2017

The VA Office of Tribal Government, in collaboration with the Oregon State Department of Veterans' Affairs, is sponsoring a Tribal Veteran Representative/Tribal Veteran Service Officer Training kindly hosted by The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde in Grand Ronde, Oregon. Training will be held May 9-11, 2017. This 10-credit hour course will cover basic concepts, as well as advance the skills of seasoned advocates in the field. The training is free of charge to those Tribal Veteran Representatives within tribal communities who are helping Veterans and their family members with VA benefits and services.


The training will be held at The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Education Center. Lodging is available at the Spirit Mountain Casino for a discounted rate of \$69.00 per night (before taxes). A block of rooms has been reserved – please mention "CTGR Veteran Service Officer Training" to receive the special rate. For directions and other details visit their website: www.spiritmountain.com.

Please register for the event by contacting **Terry Bentley** at 541-440-1271 or email at terry.bentley@va.gov and provide: name, title, tribe, and email, plus phone number. Terry will send you the agenda and campus map for location of training.


Working Together to Better Serve Indian Country's Veterans



810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 915G
Washington, DC 20420
www.va.gov/tribalgovernment



700 Summer St NE
Salem, OR 97301
Phone: 503-373-2085
www.oregon.gov/ODVA



the medicine game

(The Medicine Game)

LACROSSE CLINIC

Where: CTGR Gymnasium

When: May 6th, 2017 / 10am-2pm


Who can attend: 5th-12th Grade


Only 30 spots available! (Tribal and Community members)

*Lunch provided— Drummers to bless the food

*Presentation on lacrosse culture and history + Healthy lifestyle choices.

Partnering with the Oregon State Beavers!





Contact Harris Reibach to sign up: 503-879-1369

CTGR Recreation Department