



School Branding

Oliver Olsen, State Board of Education Chair
February 8, 2022

Disclaimer: These are preliminary comments, subject to review / discussion by State Board of Education.



High Level Comments

1

Need to bring closure to mascot issues

First and foremost, it's just the right thing to do. Concern that protracted debates about mascots have disrupted important work at local level and are attracting single-issue candidates for school boards.

2

SBE rulemaking capacity constrained

SBE has limited capacity and is dependent on AOE for drafting. Significant rulemaking on other issues already in process. Unlikely that proposed mascot rulemaking could be accomplished by December 2022.

3

Mascot rulemaking could disrupt EQS

Important work of Act 1 implementation and other EQS updates could be conflated with mascot issue and derail both efforts.

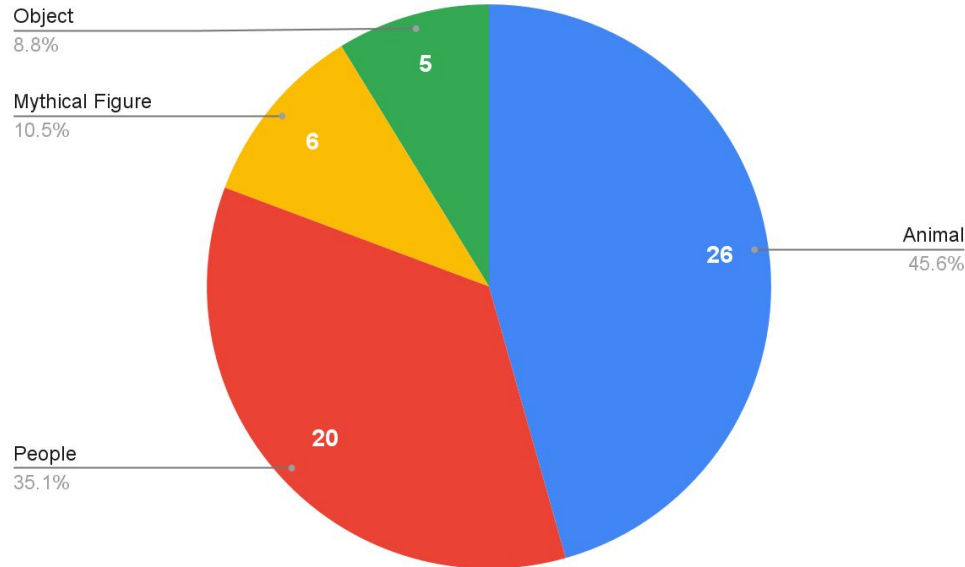
4

Consider a more direct approach

Require all school branding to be approved by the SBE using statutory guidelines. One-time process for SBE to review and approve existing branding, with a default approval if objections are not raised by August 31, 2022



Classification of VT High School Branding





Branding that Characterizes Groups of People

Chieftains	Raiders (3)	Olympians	Highlanders
Rebels	Rangers	Trojans	Slaters
Colonels	Commodores	Spartans	Lancers
Bobwhites	Minutemen	Solons	Marauders
Golden Horde	Patriots		



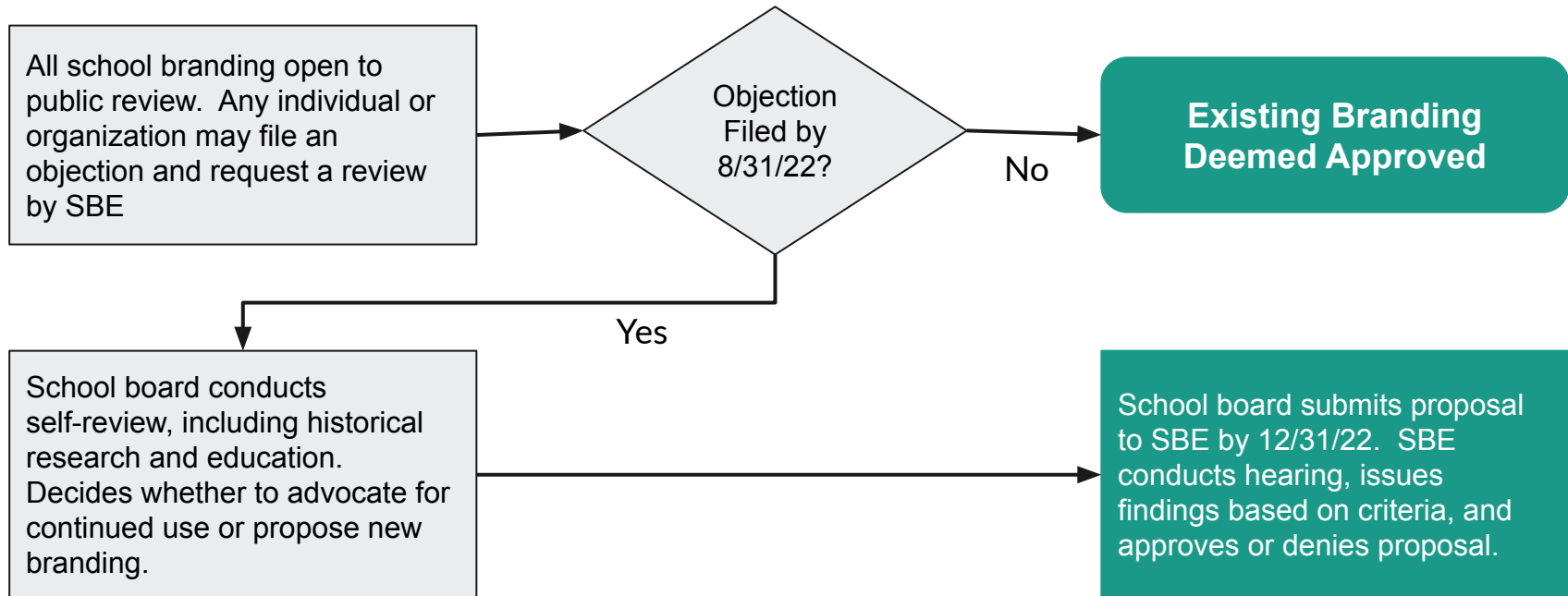
Branding Based on Objects & Mythical Figures

Crimson Tide	Hurricanes	Cosmos
Bullets	Comets	

Galloping Ghost	Blue Devils (2)	Phantoms
Lake Monsters (Champ)	Thunderbirds	



Potential Process to Approve Existing Branding





Potential Statutory Criteria for Consideration

When granting approval, the SBE must find that the proposed branding does not directly or indirectly reference or stereotype the likeness, features, symbols, traditions, or other characteristics that are specific to either:

1. the race, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity of any person or group of people; or
2. any person, group of people, or organization associated with the repression of others.

In developing its findings, the SBE must consider the historical context and prior use of the proposed branding.



Other Ideas for Consideration

- Provide transition funding for school districts that voluntarily acknowledge non-compliant branding and propose alternative branding that is approved by the SBE
- Apply these standards to independent schools that accept public tuition (leveraging existing independent school approval process)



Timeline



Questions?

