



American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

November 1, 2013

Via First Class Mail

Dr. Darryl S. Adams
Superintendent
Coachella Valley Unified School District
87225 Church Street
Thermal, CA 92274

Re: Coachella Valley High School

Dear Dr. Adams:

I am writing to you on behalf of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), the country's largest Arab-American civil rights organization. ADC has protected the Arab-American community for over thirty years against defamation, discrimination, racism, and stereotyping.

The purpose of this letter is to express ADC's concern over the use of the term "Arab" as the official nickname, mascot and logo of the Coachella Valley High School. ADC understands the context in which the nickname was initially selected. However, in the 21st Century, such justifications for these actions are no longer tolerable.

ADC is appalled at the use of a caricature depicted to be an "Arab" as the official mascot of the high school. The image of the Coachella Valley High School mascot depicts a man with a large nose, heavy beard, and wearing a *Kaffiyah*, or traditional Arab head covering. It has come to our attention that during sporting events, and school functions, a student dressed as this figure, makes an appearance.

Many videos on YouTube clearly show orientalist stereotyping of Arabs. During half-time shows at sporting events, the "Arab male" comes out to music, while a female dressed as a belly dancer entertains him. Further, the gymnasium has the face of an "Arab" caricature in the middle of the basketball court, as well as around the walls. Outside of the building, an "Arab" on a carpet is depicted, with a woman next to him.

All these are examples of gross stereotyping, which must not be tolerated, and must immediately be addressed. ADC strongly believes that use of the word and such imagery perpetuates demeaning stereotypes of Arabs and Arab Americans. The "Arab" mascot image is a harmful form of ethnic stereotyping which should be eliminated. By allowing continued use of the term and imagery, you are commending and enforcing the negative stereotypes of an entire ethnic group, millions of whom are citizens of this nation.

ADC encourages Coachella Valley High School and the Coachella Valley Unified School District to give this important matter proper attention. As the nation's premier civil rights organization for Arab Americans, ADC extends an offer to meet and discuss this matter further. It is our hope that a swift and amicable solution can be reached to resolve this issue.



American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

You can contact me directly at the office, 202-644-6190, or via e-mail to aayoub@adc.org. I look forward to your anticipated cooperation.

Sincerely,

Aben A. Ayoub, Esq.
ADC Director of Legal & Policy Affairs

CC:

Coachella Valley Unified School District Board Members:

Lowell Kamper, *President of Board*

Manuel Jarvis-Martinez, *Vice President of Board*

Meagan Caress, *Clerk of Board*

Juanita D. Duarte, *Member of Board*

Anna Lisa Vargas, *Member of Board*

Joe Murillo, *Member of Board*

Maria G. Machuca, *Member of Board*

Victor Uribe, *Principle – Coachella Valley High School*

Warren David, *ADC President*

ADC Legal Department

