

ARHS - Mascot Study Group recommendation

Email from Sean Bevan at 11:00 am on April 16, 2021

Notification from: **Algonquin Regional High School (ARHS)**

Dear members of the Algonquin School Community,

I am writing to share with you news of great importance to all of the members of our school community, from students and staff to their families and our alumni: yesterday, the members of the Short-term Study Group for Mascot Review and I presented our formal recommendation to retire the tomahawk, which has served as the symbol of our school since it opened its doors in 1959. The Study Group, which was composed of 16 community stakeholders, worked since November to develop a recommendation for the Regional School Committee about whether the mascot should be changed and, if so, what the timeline and costs of that change may be. The recommendation, which can be found [here](#), represents the hard work of this dedicated group, and I am deeply grateful to each of them for their contribution of time and energy.

The recommendation outlines several reasons to make the change, and I encourage you to take time to consider each. Ultimately, however, the Group concluded that a school's mascot should unify the school community, communicating a shared set of values. Chosen by students in the then-new Algonquin Regional High School in 1959, the Tomahawk served this purpose, acting as a symbol of school pride and the embodiment of our students' many achievements. But, times and standards change, and our understanding of the impact of this choice has deepened. As such, the Group has concluded that the Tomahawk may be detrimental to some members of our school and community and, as a result, has fostered division, an outcome that is precisely the opposite of the role a mascot is designed to serve. The Group is confident that the process of choosing a new mascot will serve to unify Algonquin students and families in ways that are consistent with the purpose of an institution's mascot. The Group overwhelmingly agrees that this decision reflects our school's deep appreciation for the diversity and dignity of all members of the Algonquin community.

You are welcome to watch the presentation from last night's School Committee meeting by clicking [here](#). The slide deck is [here](#). Materials from the Study Group's meetings are available [here](#).

The Regional School Committee will take a vote on April 28 whether to accept this recommendation. The members of the Regional School Committee are accepting feedback from members of the school community. This feedback will be summarized and shared in advance of the Committee's meeting on April 28. To share your thoughts, please complete [this form](#) by 10:00 am on Friday, April 23.

Sincerely,

Sean Bevan
Principal, ARHS
Chair, Short-Term Study Group for Mascot Review