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## Iroquois school district announces new mascot

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BUFFALO, N.Y. (WIVB) — After a months-long process including two rounds of online voting, the Iroquois Central School District has announced its new mascot: the Red Hawks.

The district began the process of shedding its former “Chiefs” branding after the New York State Board of Regents’ April 2023 decision to [ban the use of Native American names and imagery](#) by schools.

The next step, the district said in a message on its [website](#), will be to use a similar process to choose a logo that will accompany the new nickname. The district is welcoming idea submissions beginning Tuesday through Jan. 31.

Iroquois officials said their mascot committee initially received 343 suggestions for a new name. Those suggestions were narrowed down to a list of 25, then a list of five finalists, to be put up for a public vote which ran from Dec. 18, 2023 to Jan. 5.

Voters selected the Red Hawks moniker over the remaining top four of Inferno, Iron Horses, Otters and Wolves.

The choice to shift from a controversial mascot and embrace the “red hawk” comes with some precedent; the athletics teams at Miami University in Ohio — once known as the Redskins — rebranded as the RedHawks in the 1990s, while the nearby Roberts Wesleyan University in Rochester became the Redhawks after transitioning away from the Raiders in 2012.

In July, West Seneca became the first district in Western New York to change its name and imagery after the ruling. Teams at West Seneca West High School, formerly known as the Indians, are now the Warhawks. Cheektowaga Central and Tonawanda City School District, both known as the Warriors, and Jamestown, which goes by the Red Raiders, also plan to change their names. Salamanca City Central [received special permission](#) from the Seneca Nation to continue using their current “Warriors” nickname and logo.

[Iroquois Schools hosts community meeting about importance of mascot change](#)

After the logo submission window closes, the mascot committee will review the suggestions and cut the list down to 25 before determining the top five. The next public vote is expected to take place in mid-February, with the entire rebranding process set to conclude by the end of March.

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*Justin McMullen is a Western New York native who joined the News 4 team in 2023. You can read more of his work [here](#).*

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