



HEARD Strategy & Storytelling

Contact: Sara Seng
Email: sara@heardstrategy.com

Athol High School Begins Mascot Renaming Project

HEARD Strategy & Storytelling offers pro bono branding services

(December 14, 2020 - Shutesbury, MA) In November, members of the Athol Royalston Regional School Committee voted to retire its “Red Raiders” moniker, name and mascot. The district decided to enlist the services of HEARD Strategy & Storytelling, a marketing and communications services agency, who on social media publicly offered pro bono rebranding services to any Massachusetts high school who made the decision to change their mascot and implemented a plan prior to the end of December.

Since then, HEARD has worked with members of the Athol High School Mascot Subcommittee to engineer a strategy of compiling community input for a period of time, then distilling that data into actionable items. The public commenting period is open December 14 through January 4, 2021. The survey can be accessed at ([link to survey](#)) or on the AHS Facebook page. Physical surveys can be picked up at all ARRS schools and can be dropped off at the AHS school office for consideration.

The subcommittee has also taken the opportunity to educate the student body of racial injustice caused by insensitive mascots by holding multiple student forums where opinions could be expressed. The school also invited in two Native American guest speakers to discuss the importance of this change at this moment in history.

The criteria for nomination as put forth by the subcommittee is “the mascot selection should align with the district vision statement, not spotlight a racial or ethnic group, and be a positive representation of school and community spirit.” The school district’s vision statement reads “The Athol-Royalston Regional School District in partnership with the community provides a safe, innovative, and vibrant learning environment for all students. We foster academic excellence by implementing best practices, improving facilities, appreciating diversity, and requiring accountability.”

The rebranding process, which will take several months to complete, will start with a community survey opening on the Athol High School website and facebook page, to allow any members of the community to voice their opinions on what the new mascot should be. The survey will be closed on January 4, 2021.

###