

Bethel High School changing mascot from Braves to Bison

A state ban on Native American team names prompted Bethel High School to retire its Braves mascot.

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SPANAWAY, Wash. — Bethel High School is the latest school to adopt a new mascot after Washington state [banned the use of Native American symbols](#) as team names.

The high school in Spanaway adopted the Bison to replace the Braves as its mascot, the Bethel School District announced Wednesday.

In April, Gov. Jay Inslee signed the mascot law, which aims to end the disrespectful use of Native American imagery in schools. Districts have until Dec. 31 to select a new mascot that will take effect by the end of the 2021-22 school year.

The Braves has been Bethel High School's mascot since it opened in 1952.

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A committee of students, staff and community members selected the new mascot after

surveying the community for mascot ideas. The Bethel School District School Board unanimously approved the new mascot this month, according to the district.

“As the committee chose a new mascot for Bethel High, they wanted to step away from the Braves image that was seen as disrespectful, harmful, and stereotypical, while still honoring the past,” the district said in a statement.



Credit: Bethel School District

Ramya Nichols (from left), Rebekah Morales, Karla Chavez, Mia Red Crow and James Lathrop are students who were part of the mascot committee and presented the new Bison mascot to the school board.

The district says the committee liked the idea of an animal that didn’t act as an individual and lived in a community, connoting the image of being stronger together. The district also said bison will be “forever entwined with the plight of Native Americans.”

Bethel High School is putting together a plan to change signage and uniforms as soon as possible, according to the school district.

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Several other Washington schools have also changed their mascots due to the law. Shorewood High School in Shoreline will [retire the Thunderbirds](#) mascot. Columbia River High School in Vancouver [changed their mascot](#) from the Chieftains to the Rapids. The Spokane school board also [voted for new mascots](#) for North Central High School and Garry Middle School, which were previously the Indians and the Chiefs, respectively.

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