



# Sherburne-Earlville

## Nickname Change

### General Information and FAQs

#### What is happening?

In June 2022, the New York State Supreme Court ruled that New York public school districts may no longer use Indigenous nicknames, symbols or mascots.

In April 2023, the New York State Department of Education determined the Sherburne-Earlville Central School District must change its nickname - "Marauders" - because of its previous association with Indigenous mascots and imagery.

Boards of education for approximately 60 New York school districts were given until June 30, 2023 to commit to eliminating the use of Indigenous nicknames, symbols and/or mascots. The deadline to complete this is June 30, 2025.

#### What has SECS D done so far?

The "Marauders" nickname and a variety of Indigenous mascots represented Sherburne Central School for years before it merged with Earlville Central School in 1967. Both the nickname and the Indigenous imagery carried over to represent the merged district.

In 2001, then-NYSED Commissioner Richard Mills urged boards of education across the state to end the use of Native American mascots as, he wrote, they can become a barrier to building a safe and nurturing school community and can hinder the academic achievements of all students.

SECS D complied in 2002, adopting a wolf as its official mascot/logo and removing all Indigenous imagery from the district. The "Marauders" nickname carried on, though, as it had not been deemed inappropriate by the NYSED until this past April.

In light of rulings by the NYSED and the NYS Supreme Court, the SECS D Board of Education has adopted a plan to change the "Marauders" nickname with the help of students, families, and community members.

SECS D already has started to phase out the use of the "Marauders" nickname in district communications and will remove it from anything related to the district as soon as practical (buildings, uniforms, billboards, etc.).

#### What happens if we say no?

Refusing to change our nickname is not an option. If a school district does not comply, the NYSED may take actions against the district as prescribed under Education Law § 306. These actions may include the removal of school officers and the withholding of State Aid.

#### What happens next?

SECS D will hold a Community Forum at 6:00 p.m. February 28 at the Middle School/High School Auditorium to discuss the next steps involved in changing the district's nickname.

The Community Forum will be open to all residents of the Sherburne-Earlville Central School District and will be largely for informational purposes. Those who attend will have an opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas with the SECS D Board of Education and Administration.

Following the Community Forum, a list of potential nicknames will be compiled in March. SECS D students will then vote to determine the new district nickname, which will be announced before the end of this school year.

#### Please note

SECS D adopted official wolf-related logos during a district-wide rebranding effort in the 2021-2022 school year. These logos and our official Branding Guide are online at <https://www.secsd.org/BrandingGuide.aspx>.

Pending the results of nickname voting, further discussion regarding the continued use of these official wolf-related logos may be required.

SECS D's official school colors will remain Maroon and White regardless of voting results.

