

GEORGETOWN DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL MOVES CLOSER TO CHOOSING NEW NAME FOR TEAMS

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After a year and half without a name for its teams and clubs, Georgetown District High School now has four.

The school has announced the four finalists to replace the name Rebels, which was abandoned prior to the 2017 school year. After receiving more than 400 suggestions from students and staff, the finalists are:

- 87s: honouring the history of the school, founded in 1887, in the same way as the Philadelphia 76ers and San Francisco 49ers pay tribute to historical dates

- Greyhounds: Agile runners and one of the fastest dogs, greyhounds can be fierce hunters but are gentle and peaceful within families.

- Gryphons: Representing strength and leadership, gryphons are emblematic of intelligence and boldness.

- Jets: An indicator of speed, jets also convey hope, the achievement of goals and lofty aspirations.

GDHS principal Mike Gallant said the school hopes to unveil the new name by late May or early June.

"Our graduating students have been very clear in telling our student council, and in some cases, me, as well, that they wish to graduate with a nickname in place," he said.

Georgetown teams were previously known as the Rebels, a name adopted in about 1962. Students from that time said the name was chosen because of movies - Rebel Without a Cause - and songs - Rebel Rouser - that were popular at the time.

There was association with the Confederate flag, with many teams at the time taking their team picture with the flag. Though it had been more than 30 years since any Confederate imagery had been used in asso-

ciation with Rebel teams, the school started looking into changing the name two years ago.

Despite protests from some alumni, who collected more than 1,000 names on a petition, the name was officially dropped in the summer of 2017. Since then, teams have simply been known as Georgetown, as they were for the school's first 75 years.

The students embraced a "We Are Georgetown" cheer, which Gallant said the school plans to maintain. However, he said it was the students' desire for a new name that kick-started the process in the fall.

In October, staff and students were asked for suggestions of a name that was "equitable and inclusive, appealing, catchy and representative of who we wish to be as a school community." Among the more than 400 names put forward, some were immediately elimi-

nated (Zac Efrons, The Justins, Glow Worms, Red Pandas). Others were eliminated because other schools in Halton were already using them (Wildcats, Jaguars, Royals). Rebels and various forms of the name (Rebellion, Red Bulls, Revolution) were also eliminated.

The names were pared down to a list of eight in November, and students and staff voted. Though the intent was to narrow the list to four, three clearly emerged as the favourites with 87s, Gryphons and Jets each receiving between 19.7 and 21.4 per cent of the 700 votes cast. Coyotes, Dynamo, Falcons and Wolverines were eliminated.

Phoenix was the fourth-place finisher, though it was well behind the top three, at 9.7 per cent.

"There were some students who came to me to express disappointment with the eight names provided," Gallant said. "We viewed this as an opportu-

nity to spread the word on the value of second chances."

Phoenix was eliminated, and an open meeting was held to discuss names that were overlooked when deciding on the final eight. Students were also allowed to make new submissions. Out of that, three names were put forward for a wildcard round: Gemini, Greyhounds and Rangers.

Another round of voting was held, and again the response was strong, with more than 600 votes. Greyhounds received 41.7 per cent to round out the top four over Rangers (37.9 per cent).

The school is now working with Nike to develop logos and uniforms for the four names. Georgetown District High School (GDHS) will keep its blue, red and white colours.

"We would like to get the concepts into the hands of our student body in early February, and have two rounds of voting (final four, and then the championship) in early March, and mid-April," Gallant said, noting that will depend on the timing of the logos. "Our intention is that GDHS teams will compete under a new team nickname in September of this year."

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