



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

15 Charter Road Acton, MA 01720

978-264-4700

www.abschools.org

Peter J. Light

Superintendent of Schools

To: Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee
From: Peter Light, Superintendent of Schools
Date: April 29, 2022
RE: Final Mascot Recommendation

After significant work over the course of this year by our Student Working Group and Mascot Screening Subcommittee, I am pleased to provide the final recommendation for your consideration as the new official mascot of the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools to be:

The Acton-Boxborough (AB) “Revolution”

The fight for positive change and equity never ends; it is the voice of the people: a Revolution. It acknowledges our past, but speaks to our future. We are innovators, barrier breakers, and difference makers. A Revolution represents a show of ingenious strength, challenging, outsmarting, and overwhelming the status quo.

Discussion:

In October 2020, the Acton Boxborough Regional School Committee voted to retire the “Colonials” as the mascot of the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools. The school committee solicited and heard public comment from over 700 individuals through a combination of live and email testimony leading to this decision. It is evident from our community’s response during the process and in the intervening year and a half, that the Colonials represented for many in the Acton and Boxborough communities a significant source of pride and connection to our history. It is evident that many of our students also saw and continue to see the “Colonials” as a source of pride and similar connection, while many others did not. After deliberation on the issue and in recognition of the complex identity of the “Colonials” as both a source of pride for many, and a symbol of oppression for others, the School Committee ultimately voted to retire the mascot. In retiring the mascot, the District continues to recognize that the “Colonials” served our District and community as its mascot for many years, and those who were proud “Colonials” will be “Colonials” forever.

In September of 2021, the School Committee established a Mascot Screening Subcommittee with the charge of:

- Receiving a recommendation from the high school and junior high school student bodies through the student representatives to the subcommittee,
- Ensuring that students, staff and community members had an appropriate opportunity to engage in the process,
- Ensuring that the recommendation from the student body is aligned with the Mission, Vision and Values of the District,
- Returning to the school committee in Spring 2022 with a proposed mascot.

To develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships.

The subcommittee was composed of 17 members and included representation from students, staff, alumni, booster organizations, youth sports, and parents/community members at-large. In parallel, the high school established a Student Working Group to lead the development of a new Mascot. Both groups met throughout the year and solicited considerable feedback from stakeholders.

Initially, our Student Working Group sent a survey to our students, staff, alumni, and community to solicit initial ideas for a new mascot. The survey was sent to nearly 20,000 unique email addresses and posted to social media in multiple forums. There were over 2200 responses to this initial survey and it generated more than 400 unique suggestions.

Our students then worked as a group, with consistent feedback from the Mascot Screening Subcommittee, to analyze the initial data and synthesize a list of finalists from the ideas that were generated. This analysis and the deliberations of the Student Working Group, resulted in four finalists to be recommended to the community for additional feedback. These finalists were: "United," "Nor'Easters," "Revolution," and "Stingers."

Our students then solicited additional feedback from students, staff and the broader community. The Student Working Group determined that students and staff would be provided with a ranked choice system for voting and an opportunity to provide written comment and the broader community would be provided an opportunity to provide written comment. This survey was then distributed in a manner similar to the initial survey and resulted in over 1500 responses from students, almost 500 staff, and over 3700 community members.

Our Student Working Group then met after April Vacation and deliberated over the course of two days on a final recommendation. After vigorous discussion and debate, the Student Working Group came to unanimous consensus to recommend that we be *The Acton-Boxborough Revolution* or *A-B Revolution*. The recommendation of the Student Working Group was then presented to the Mascot Screening Subcommittee on April 27, 2022 and the Subcommittee voted unanimously to recommend this to the school committee.

We want to recognize that throughout the renaming process, we continued to hear from community members about their strong ties to the "Colonials" and a sincere wish for the "Colonials" to be reinstated as the mascot. The Screening Subcommittee recognized on multiple occasions these sentiments and wishes to acknowledge the individuals within the community who hold this passion for being a "Colonials" and reaffirm our value and respect for these individuals and their commitment to the history and traditions of the community. Ultimately, revisiting history to restore the prior mascot was not within the scope of the group's work, and was not a consideration for moving forward.

Thanks and Recognition:

Many times over, members of the Mascot Screening Subcommittee expressed deep admiration and respect for members of the Student Working Group and the faculty who advised them. Specifically, the subcommittee recognized the inherent challenges of selecting the new mascot given the wide range of community beliefs about the retirement of the "Colonials." The committee holds deep admiration and respect for our students in their ability to navigate a difficult dynamic, acknowledge what has been a rich history of our community for many, while simultaneously recognizing the changing nature of our student body and looking to the future. We are deeply proud and grateful for all of the energy, passion, wisdom and perseverance that these young people and the faculty displayed.

I would also like to thank and recognize the members of our Mascot Screening Subcommittee for their enormous contributions throughout the process:

To develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships.

Our Three high school students
Julie Driscoll (AB Track and Field Boosters)
Jessica Towl (Parent/AB Youth Lacrosse Board Member)
Janika Dillon (Parent/Community with Relevant Professional Experience)
Christopher Lynett (Parent/Community with Relevant Professional Experience)
Steve Martin, (Athletic Director)
George Arsenault, (Director of Performing Arts)

Chris Nyland (Parent/Community with Relevant Professional Experience)
Meg Spring (Alumnus - Athletics, Arts, Student Govt.),
Ben Bloomenthal (School Committee)
Andrew Schwartz (School Committee)
Chris Russo (AB Friends of Music - Boosters)
Ru Sweeney (Coach, Faculty member)

Action:

By unanimous vote of the Student Working Group and the Mascot Screening Subcommittee, we recommend for your consideration that the new mascot of the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District officially become:

The Acton-Boxborough (AB) “Revolution”

The fight for positive change and equity never ends; it is the voice of the people: a Revolution. It acknowledges our past, but speaks to our future. We are innovators, barrier breakers, and difference makers. A Revolution represents a show of ingenious strength, challenging, outsmarting, and overwhelming the status quo.

We respectfully request a vote of the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee at your meeting on May 19, 2022.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Mascot Screening Subcommittee,

Peter Light
Superintendent of Schools

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL
36 Charter Road, Acton, Massachusetts 01720

To: Superintendent Peter Light and the ABRSD School Committee

From: Steve Martin, Jim Marcotte, and Joanie Dean

Date: April 29, 2022

RE: Mascot Recommendation

On behalf of the Student and Staff Mascot Working Group which was comprised of 16 students and 8 staff members from both the junior high and high school, we recommend **Revolution** as the mascot for both Acton-Boxborough Regional High School and RJ Grey Junior High School.

Since November 2021, the Student and Staff Mascot Working Group met almost weekly. We began by establishing a set of values that we committed to throughout our process. We held our ourselves to the ideals of being inclusive, community-minded, student-driven, consistent with District Mission, Vision, Values and Beliefs, creative, spirited, and pride-inspiring.

In January, we sent out a survey to the entire community requesting possible mascot ideas. After thoughtful analysis and discussion, we were able to narrow the choices to four and sent out another survey in April. We used this second survey data to frame our final discussions. The discussions were thoughtful and passionate. Additionally, it was inspiring to observe as the students came to a consensus around our choice.

We thoughtfully developed a description of the concept of Revolution and what we believe it signifies for AB. We ask that it be at the center of the work going forward. It is:

The fight for positive change and equity never ends; it is the voice of the people: a Revolution. It acknowledges our past, but speaks to our future. We are innovators, barrier breakers, and difference makers. A Revolution represents a show of ingenious strength, challenging, outsmarting, and overwhelming the status quo.

We would like to thank the Superintendent, the Mascot Screening Subcommittee, and the Director of Special Projects for their support during this entire process.

Sincerely,

Steve Martin, Athletic Director

Jim Marcotte, RJ Grey Principal

Joanie Dean, ABRHS Principal

To: AB Mascot Committee
From: Andrew Shen, Director of Special Projects
Date: April 25, 2022
Re: *AB Mascot Finalist Voting and Feedback Surveys - Overview and Initial Report of Results*

Outreach and Distribution

The AB Mascot Finalist Voting and Feedback Surveys were open for students, staff and the public to participate from April 4, 2022 to April 22, 2022. The survey was closed at 5pm on April 22, 2022.

The Survey (and online survey link) was initially distributed to the AB community through the following methods:

1. An email to all current parent/guardian email addresses listed in the District's student information system
2. An email to the school email accounts for all current AB students in grades 6 through 12
3. An email to all current AB staff members
4. An email to alumni email addresses provided by the High School (approximately 7,000+)
5. Requests to the town managers in Acton and Boxborough to distribute the survey and invitation via their respective mailing groups
6. Posting on AB's Twitter account
7. Posting on AB's Facebook account
8. *We have received anecdotal information that the link to the survey was then subsequently shared and forwarded by individuals to others via social media and personal accounts.*

Reminders were sent via a combination of the above methods on April 14, 2022.

Description of Survey Instruments

Three separate survey instruments were utilized to collect submissions from constituent groups within the community:

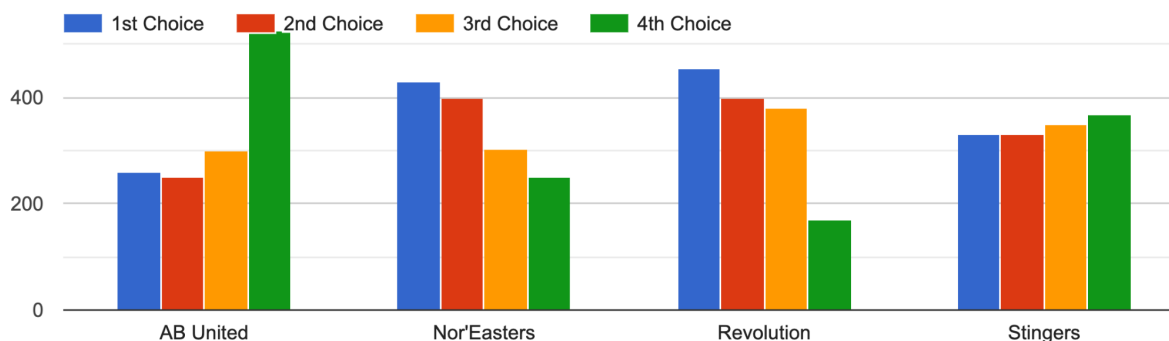
- A Google Form was created for current students in grades 6-12. This platform provided us with the necessary controls to ensure that each student (via their AB Schools account) was limited to one entry, an important feature for ranked choice voting.
- A Google Form was created for all AB staff. This platform provided us with the necessary controls to ensure that each staff member (via their AB Schools account) was limited to one entry, an important feature for ranked choice voting.
- A SurveyMonkey survey was created for the Acton-Boxborough community, and was shared with the general public. This survey provided members of the community the opportunity to offer feedback on each of the four finalists, but not ranked voting.

Survey Results Organized by Instrument

Submissions by AB Students

- Current AB students in Grades 6 through 12 were invited to participate
- 1531 votes were submitted to the ballot
- Each submission was allowed to provide a ranked choice, from 1st to 4th, but not required to select every option (in other words, a submission could have selected a first choice and left the rest blank)

Please rank the different options from the one you like most (1st) to the one you like least (4th). You are not required to put a vote in for all of the options. The mascot you can just rank that mascot in spot one.



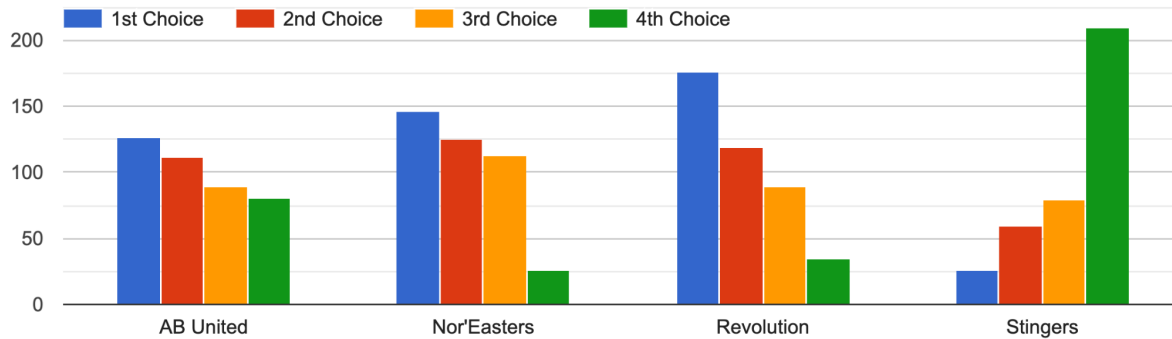
	<u>1st Choice</u>	<u>2nd Choice</u>	<u>3rd Choice</u>	<u>Fourth Choice</u>
AB United	260	250	301	525
Nor'Easters	431	399	304	251
Revolution	453	398	380	170
Stingers	331	332	349	369

	<u>1st Choice</u> <u>4pts per vote</u>	<u>2nd Choice</u> <u>3pts per vote</u>	<u>3rd Choice</u> <u>2 pts per vote</u>	<u>Fourth Choice</u> <u>1 pt per vote</u>	<u>TOTAL</u> <u>POINTS</u>
AB United	1040	750	602	525	2917 (4th)
Nor'Easters	1724	1197	608	251	3780 (2nd)
Revolution	1812	1194	760	170	3936 (1st)
Stingers	1324	996	698	369	3387 (3rd)

Submissions by AB Staff

- All current AB staff were invited to participate. Any staff member with an AB Schools account was able to submit one entry into the survey. This includes, but is not limited to, classroom teachers, administrators, office staff, bus drivers, paraprofessionals, and support staff.
- 483 votes were submitted to the ballot
- Each submission was allowed to provide a ranked choice, from 1st to 4th, but not required to select every option (in other words, a submission could have selected a first choice and left the rest blank)

Please rank the different options from the one you like most (1st) to the one you like least (4th). You are not required to put a vote in for all of the options. The mascot you can just rank that mascot in spot one.



	<u>1st Choice</u>	<u>2nd Choice</u>	<u>3rd Choice</u>	<u>Fourth Choice</u>
AB United	126	112	89	81
Nor'Easters	146	125	113	26
Revolution	176	119	89	35
Stingers	26	60	79	210

	<u>1st Choice</u> <u>4pts per vote</u>	<u>2nd Choice</u> <u>3pts per vote</u>	<u>3rd Choice</u> <u>2 pts per vote</u>	<u>Fourth Choice</u> <u>1 pt per vote</u>	<u>TOTAL</u> <u>POINTS</u>
AB United	504	336	178	81	1026 (3rd)
Nor'Easters	584	375	226	26	1211 (2nd)
Revolution	704	357	178	35	1274 (1st)
Stingers	104	180	158	210	652 (4th)

Feedback from Community Members

- The community was invited to participate in the mascot selection process through a survey that invited them to provide feedback on each of the four finalists.
- 3,718 entries were submitted to the survey instrument, though approximately 25 did not submit specific feedback on each option, and likely used the instrument to submit a comment
- The purpose of this survey instrument was to solicit feedback from the community on all four of the options, rather than a ranked choice activity.

- Each submission was allowed to provide feedback for each of the four options, and to potentially submit the same feedback for more than one option. For example, a participant could submit “Love it” for all four options (or none of them).

Note: for the community survey participants were asked to indicate how they would choose to identify, and that they could enter as many as may apply. Unfortunately, the survey instrument was not set to allow participants to indicate more than one option and could not be changed once entries were submitted. As a result, the data collected in this area is limited and required participants to select only one option. With this in mind, the below are the results from that question:

Parent/Guardian of Current AB Student	1713	46% of respondents
Community Member in Acton or Boxborough	214	5.76% of respondents
Current Coach/Advisor	25	.67% of respondents
Alum of AB	1766	47.5% of respondents

	<u>Love It</u>	<u>Like It</u>	<u>No Strong Feelings Either Way</u>	<u>Don't Like it</u>	<u>Please, No</u>	<u>Total Submissions</u>
A-B United	557	773	591	705	1066	3692
Nor'Easters	791	933	508	684	779	3695
Revolution	1095	1010	507	466	614	3692
Stingers	159	344	452	983	1747	3685

