

March 17, 2025

Dear Dickinson Public Schools Family,

At Dickinson High School, our students are at the heart of everything we do. They are the reason we celebrate, the reason we push for excellence, and the reason we must always look toward the future.

After much thoughtful discussion and input from students and staff, we have made the difficult but important decision to retire the "Midget" mascot at the end of this school year and begin the search for one that better reflects the spirit of DHS.

We want to start by saying we understand that this decision may be difficult for some, especially those with strong memories and emotional ties to the Midget mascot. For many in our community, this mascot has been a source of pride, achievement, tradition, and identity, and we recognize how meaningful it has been for alumni and families who have rallied behind it for decades. We ask for your understanding as we move forward, knowing that we are letting go of something that may represent you and your experiences. We don't take that lightly.

While this mascot is an important part of our history and has represented school spirit for many years, it no longer brings the unity and pride we hope for in our school. A mascot should be a symbol that unites us all—something every student, staff member, and alumni feels comfortable standing behind.

Why Are We Making This Change?

Our Students

At the core of this decision lies our students. It's important for everyone to feel proud to represent DHS, both at home and away.

Many of our students have expressed discomfort when traveling or participating in competitions. We have teams that cannot share the mascot's name at state and national events and organizations that have missed out on national recognition due to our school mascot.

Writing Our Story

Changing the mascot is not a new conversation for our community, but there are potential legal concerns that we can no longer ignore. Achondroplasia (a form of skeletal dysplasia) is a disability protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Our district could face potential civil lawsuits. We can choose to be proactive and make this change thoughtfully or wait until it's no longer our decision to make.

The Meaning of Words Evolve

We understand that for many, the Midget mascot is deeply rooted in tradition and pride. However, we must recognize that just because something was once considered acceptable doesn't mean it still aligns with values today. Over time, words and symbols can take on meanings that were not originally intended. While the mascot may have once symbolized strength, spirit, and unity, it is now associated with negative connotations.

Who Is Involved in This Decision?

While this topic touches many in our community, the responsibility for making decisions about our school's identity rests with the leadership closest to our students, staff, and daily activities at DHS. After thoughtful conversations with students, coaches, staff, and others in the community, we stand behind this decision.

How Will We Choose a New Mascot?

We are committed to engaging our students and community in the process. Soon, we will gather suggestions from students and the community for new mascot ideas. Once finalists are selected, students in grades 5-12 will vote on the new name and design.

Will This Cost Taxpayers More?

We want to reassure everyone that this change will not result in a large rebranding expense. While we have some items featuring the current mascot—such as athletic uniforms, the gymnasium floor, and some equipment—these are items that will naturally be updated over time.

For example, the gymnasium floor and athletic jerseys are on a scheduled rotation as part of the regular replacement cycle. We plan to roll out these changes gradually, ensuring a smooth and cost-effective transition. These yearly costs are budgeted for within our existing budgets and athletic teams.

Where Can You Learn More?

We invite you and your family to an information session on Wednesday, March 19, at 4 pm in the DHS Auditorium. Students and staff can also attend a session at 8:30 am. We will also have the information available on our website later this week.

At the end of the day, this decision is about our students. It's about making sure every student at DHS can wear our colors and rally behind a mascot with pride, both on the field and in the classroom. Thank you for supporting them, for supporting our school, and for helping us move forward—together.

Sincerely,

Jeff Brandt
DHS Principal

Guy Fridley
Activities Director

Dr. Marcus Lewton
DPS Superintendent

