

MHS student council recommends wolf as secondary mascot

Manhattan High School student council president Lily Colburn recommended the Manhattan-Ogden school board Wednesday make a wolf the school's secondary mascot.

The board still needs to approve the mascot before it becomes official. If approved, the wolf will serve as an additional mascot to Indians, the school's primary mascot.

The student council and MHS administrators made the wolf recommendation despite a plurality of votes for no additional mascot.

Colburn said 505 students voted for no mascot, 448 voted for wolf and 441 voted for bison.

Although "no mascot" received the most votes, Colburn said 63 percent of the vote went to one of the two mascot options, while 37 percent voted for none. Because of that, she and MHS Principal Greg Hoyt chose to recommend the wolf to the board to approve as the secondary mascot.

Colburn said each of the three times the student council held a round of voting, a majority of students either voted to create a secondary mascot or voted on one of the options for a mascot.

"We saw an increase every single time in students who were interested in a physical mascot," she said. "We saw an increase from 58 percent to 63 percent of students in our (final) two rounds of voting."

Hoyt said a majority of students had already chosen to create the second mascot before the final round of voting and the student council decided to recommend the wolf despite "no mascot" receiving the most votes.

"(When) Lily and I discussed the final vote, we determined to include the option 'no mascot' just in case a majority decided that they didn't want a physical mascot if the only choices were a bison and a wolf," Hoyt said in an email Thursday. "That didn't happen. Although 'no mascot' received more votes than either the wolf or the bison, the historical date of the votes, including the last vote, is that the majority of the students wanted some form of a physical mascot.

"Hindsight is 20-20," he added.

Darrel Edie, board president, commended the Colburn and the student council for taking on the project and reporting the recommendation to the board on time.

"You guys did a great process in a very short period of time," he said. "You are to be commended on everything you've done on this issue."

The school board previously approved a recommendation to create the secondary mascot when it chose to retain the Indians name and image. Board members elected to let students choose the alternative mascot.

The purpose of the secondary mascot is to give the students a physical mascot they can rally around at events. It's intended to be similar to the KC Wolf mascot that appears at Kansas City Chiefs football games.

Edie reiterated if the board approves the wolf secondary mascot, the school teams will still be named the Indians and use the school's chieftain logo as the school image.

"We are still the MHS Indians, just like the Kansas City Chiefs, but we will possibly have an on-field mascot based on their recommendation," he said.