

Н. Бубен (ГУО «Лицей № 1 г. Лиды»)

Т. В. Хитрун (научный руководитель)

SCHOOL SYMBOLS: BEAUTIFUL IMAGES OR CORE PRINCIPLES AND ASPIRATIONS OF A SCHOOL

Symbols are important in human communication and representation as they allow us to convey complex ideas, emotions, and beliefs. They play a significant role in shaping cultural identities and fostering a sense of belonging within communities. In education, schools use symbols such as emblems, mascots, colors and many others. Understanding the significance of these symbols provides insight into their historical importance and impact on shaping school identity. This can explain the **relevance** of our research.

The **purpose** of our research is to study and conduct a comparative analysis of symbols in Belarusian, British and American schools.

For our research, we selected three schools: Lyceum No. 1 in Lida, Belarus; St. John's School in Sidmouth, United Kingdom; and Lawrence Middle School in New Jersey, USA.

The **object** of the research is school symbols.

The **subject** of the research is the information conveyed in symbols of the chosen schools.

The **hypothesis** is that school symbols represent an institution's values and culture, creating a sense of national identity and a shared language for students, teachers, and alumni.

In order to test our hypothesis, we set the following **tasks**:

1. to reveal the essence of the concept of symbolics, its types and functions;

2. to identify the attitude of the students to symbols in their schools;
3. to analyze national, social and educational symbols in Belarusian, British and American schools, compare them and identify similarities and differences;
4. to prove that school symbols are much more than mere images or words. They reflect the core principles and aspirations of a school, reminding everyone within its community of what it stands for.

The **methods** used in the resent research include survey, study of literature and Internet sources on the topic, analysis, comparison, generalization.

The **structure** of the thesis: introduction, two parts, conclusion, references. We put the aim and the tasks in the introduction. In the first part of our research we have delved into the essence of symbolics, its types and functions, we have revealed the historical significance of school symbols and defined their types and functions. In the second part we have identified students' attitudes towards symbols in their schools, analyzed the national, social, and educational symbols of Belarusian, British, and American schools, compared them, and highlighted similarities and differences. In the last part we make conclusions.

The practical aspect of our research began with conducting a rapid survey on individuals' attitudes towards school symbols. The research conducted included surveys among lyceum graduates (67 people) and current students (107 pupils), as well as American (37) and British (48) students. The majority of respondents (98%) expressed the belief that school symbols are important in fostering unity, reflecting core values, history, and ethos. Understanding and awareness of school symbols varied among respondents, but overall, the research highlighted the universal significance of school symbols in shaping school culture and enhancing the educational experience.

After the survey was conducted we made a comparative analysis of school symbols in the chosen schools. Our research began by examining and comparing such school symbols as the coat of arms, anthem, flag, motto and school uniform. We have identified the symbols that are present in the schools and uncovered their significance and impact within the selected schools.

	Lyceum № 1 Lida, Belarus	St John's School, Sidmouth, UK	LMS, New Jersey, United States
Coat of arms	Yes	Yes	Yes
Anthem	Yes	Yes	No
Flag	Yes	No	No
Motto	Yes	Yes	Yes
School uniform	Yes	Yes	No (only elements)
Symbols of houses (profiles)	No (5 profiles)	Yes (4 houses) Each has its own emblem, colour, traditions	Yes (3 houses) Each has its own emblem, colour and motto

The analysis of school symbols in the lyceum has shown that it has unique symbols, including a coat of arms featuring Lida Castle, a globe representing noble intentions, and a book symbolizing a thirst for knowledge. The lyceum flag has red and blue stripes, connecting it to the city of Lida. The lyceum anthem expresses love for the school and highlights qualities like curiosity and kindness. School symbols are used in various events, and the school uniform promotes unity and equality among students. The uniform includes a mandatory vest in blue for regular days and red for special occasions, representing the school and city flag colors.

Having analyzed symbols in St. John's School in Great Britain we made a conclusion that it has a unique emblem with a seashell symbolizing its coastal location, and colors that represent justice, joy, and purity. The school is part of the International Education System, with a motto meaning "We do everything with wisdom". Students wear a general and sports uniform in blue, red, and white, and are assigned to one of four houses named after saints or founders. The school has an anthem dedicated to St. John and uses the national flag of Great Britain at official events.

After analyzing the symbols of Lawrence Middle School in New Jersey we identified that it has its own unique symbols too, including a coat of arms with a red cardinal symbolizing inspiration. The school motto is "Reach for the stars" and students are required to show respect for the U.S. flag each morning. There is no school uniform, but students wear red, black, and white uniforms for sports events. The school is divided into three houses with their own emblem, color, and motto - Draco (red), Phoenix (black), and Orion (white). Each house promotes different values such as wisdom, honesty, and integrity.

The analysis of symbols in three schools reveals both similarities and differences. Each school has a coat of arms and a motto, representing their values and history. The emblem and the motto help maintain traditions and create a sense of belonging. While not all schools have a strict uniform policy, elements of it are still present, promoting unity and discipline. Additional symbols like flags and anthems contribute to the school's identity and community.

The success and progress of students at a school are important factors that contribute to its reputation. Our research focused on how schools showcase student achievements, with findings showing that schools prominently display this information on boards of honor and online platforms.

We have found out that all the chosen schools celebrate student successes and share them with others, which boosts motivation and self-esteem. These symbols also encourage students to strive for new goals in academics, creativity, and athletics.

After conducting our research and drawing conclusions, we have developed the following **recommendations** for the use of symbols in our school:

- to create unique symbols for each of the profiles and set up special stands where individuals can explore the distinct characteristics of their chosen profile, discover opportunities for university admission in that field, and connect with successful graduates who have excelled in their careers;

- to design clothing items for teachers (bags, umbrellas, badges, etc.) with the school logo to create a unified style and image for the school community;

- to develop notebooks, pencil cases, and stationery with the school logo to strengthen the connection with the educational institution, support identity, and commitment to the school's values;

- to establish a unified sports uniform with the lyceum logo to strengthen team spirit and foster a sense of community, contributing to the enrichment of the overall sports culture of the educational institution.