

Atchison mascot vote set for July

(KAIR)--Despite questions from the committee tasked with making the change, and last minute comments from the public making requests ranging from reversing the decision to expediting the process, the Board of Education for the Atchison Public Schools of USD 409 remain on track to name a new district wide mascot next month.

That follows an update provided to the school board Monday evening, provided in part by Atchison High School Principal Lacey Warren, focused on the mascot committee's work, including public survey results and potential mascot names. The mascot ultimately selected will replace both the Atchison Middle School's "Braves" and the Atchison High School's "Redmen" mascots. The school board in April voted unanimously to retire those mascots due to cultural insensitivity toward Native-Americans.

One member of the public pushed for the name "Trailblazers," which Warren said, according to research by students, does not fit the district's non-discriminatory policy. Two other members of the public requested that the decision to retire the "Redmen" name be reversed. Another asked that the matter be expedited, and a mascot named, to avoid what she called a potentially toxic atmosphere.

Questions from the mascot committee, as presented to the school board, included questioning the timing of the process, with high school Head Coach Jim Smith, a supporter of the Redmen name, and a member of Monday evening's meeting's audience, requesting a slow down of the process.

However, following board discussion, it was agreed upon by board members that due diligence has been performed, with the committee working as requested by the board. The update regarding the committee's work broke down the votes acquired through community surveys, with the new mascot to be utilized district wide, under a red and gold color scheme, with "Phoenix" selected as the top choice by 5 of the 7 groups surveyed.

A vote by the school board, solidifying the choice, is expected during next month's regular meeting.