

Atchison's Redmen, Braves, mascots approved for removal

(KAIR)--Two Native American-themed school mascots, including Atchison High School's "Redmen" and the Atchison Middle School's "Braves" become a matter of history, following action of local school leaders Monday.

The Board of Education for the Atchison Public Schools of USD 409 voted unanimously to drop the controversial mascots during their regular monthly board meeting Monday evening.

The decision followed a lengthy process that included public comment sessions, input from district patrons, educational leaders, and those with close ties to the Native American communities.

Board member Sean Crittendon moved for the change, with his motion immediately seconded by board member Diane Liebsch.

Crittendon, in making the motion, said moving on from the mascots was in the best interest of the District's students.

Liebsch and Board Member Dr. John Eplee said they felt it was important for the School District to put the mascots to rest, citing the recommendations of numerous psychological studies which conclude the negative impacts caused by mascots based on ethnic groups, or nationalities.

The latest School Board review of the mascot issue, leading to Monday's vote for removal, follows a similar process, begun in 2016, that ended with a 3-2 vote of the School Board, in November 2018, that kept the mascots in place. That vote followed a motion also made by Crittendon, and seconded by Liebsch, calling for removal. Eplee was among the three Board Members who voted in opposition of the motion, at that time, keeping the mascots in place.

Now that removal of the mascots is approved, the question being posed by the public, as seen through social media posts made Monday night following the School Board's decision, is what names will be chosen to replace the long-standing mascots.

That question has no immediate answer, with the Board of Education not yet establishing a timeline for the future process necessary to select two new mascots for the two district schools.

