

Atchison mascot forum set for Monday

(KAIR)--With the details ironed out, the public forum, focused on the future of the mascots used by the Atchison Public Schools, will be held Monday.

Finalization of the plan was put into place during the September 10 meeting of the Board of Education for USD 409.

The key components of the forum were decided during the August meeting of the school board, including the time and date, as announced by Board President Herb Gwaltney.

“September the 17th, at 5:30. That's when the forum is scheduled,” Gwaltney said during the board's August 13 session. “This is the meeting that the board has requested with the citizens of our school district, and interested individuals, to talk about the mascot.”

At issue is the use of Native American-themed mascots in the district, with the forum to allow public input while, according to the district, serving “as an opportunity to educate and inform the public about the topic of utilizing Native American mascots.”

The forum will be held in the Atchison Elementary School gymnasium as a special meeting of the Board of Education. Serving as moderator will be Brian Jordan, of the Kansas Association of School Boards. Jordan served as moderator in Manhattan, Kansas during a 2016 forum also focused on use of a Native American-themed mascot by the Manhattan public high school.

Procedures for the forum have been put in place, with anyone wishing to speak at the public forum needing to fill out an index card with their name, address, and phone number as they enter the gymnasium Monday evening.

The cards will be collected and turned into the moderator, and then placed in a “lottery barrel” to be drawn from for ordering of speakers.

Comments will also be accepted from those not wishing to speak publicly, and details of the full process for the forum can be found below.

A decision pertaining to the Atchison High School Redmen and Atchison Middle School Braves mascots will not be made Monday night. Instead, that will happen at a future, regular school board meeting.

The forum follows the work of a committee formed by the district in 2016 after

the school district received what Myers called “written communications pertaining to the use of the Redmen mascot.”

The committee’s work included compiling input from its members, including positive and negative affects of maintaining the status quo.

Editor's note: Below is the document approved September 10 by the USD 409 Board of Education which outlines the procedures for Monday's forum.

Purpose:

The public forum is a meeting of the USD 409 Atchison Public School District Board of Education (BOE) where they will receive public comments, input and feedback on the topic of the Atchison High School mascot (Redmen) and Atchison Middle School mascot (Braves). Additionally, this meeting will serve as an opportunity to educate and inform the public about the topic of utilizing Native American mascots.

Background:

In December 2016, the BOE formed a mascot study committee after receiving written communications regarding the use of Native American mascots. The first committee meeting was held January 30, 2017. This committee’s mission and charge was to discuss the topic of our AHS/AMS mascots from a balanced prospective (looking at both sides of the issue) and give advice and feedback to the BOE. The committee also studied many articles and documents related to the use of Native American mascots. The committee’s final report can be found on the district’s website along with the articles and documents that were studied.

Public Forum General Information:

- This is a formal/public meeting of the BOE and all rules/procedures of the Board will be enforced.
- The USD 409 BOE will be in attendance, but will not be making any comments before, during or after the meeting regarding the mascot.
- Atchison Elementary School Gymnasium will open at 5:00 p.m. The public input session will begin promptly at 5:30 p.m.
- Patrons are expected to park in the rear of the building and enter the building through the southwest cafeteria doors (Door M).
- Signs will not be allowed in the gymnasium.
- This is a board meeting and it will be televised just as other meetings are televised.
- Brian Jordan, from the Kansas Association of School Boards, will be the moderator of the meeting.

Process for Patrons to Share Information with the Board:

- Anyone wishing to speak at the public forum will need to fill out an index card with their name, address, and phone number as they enter the gymnasium. The cards will be available at the entrance of the gymnasium
- These cards will be collected and turned into the moderator.
- The cards will be placed in a “lottery barrel” to be drawn from for ordering of speakers.
- Individuals not wishing to publicly address the board can submit written comments or documents in baskets near the entrance of the gym. These will not be read at the public forum. They will be shared with the BOE for consideration after the public forum meeting.

Ground Rules for Public Comments:

- All members of the audience who wish to address the BOE will have a maximum of three (3) minutes to speak and will be timed by the BOE clerk. At the conclusion of three (3) minutes, a buzzer will sound, and the microphone will be muted.
- Speakers will not be allowed to give their unused time to other individuals wishing to speak.
- Individuals will only be allowed to speak one time at the public forum.
- Individuals must speak for themselves and cannot speak on behalf of individuals not in attendance.
- The moderator will determine the order of speakers by randomly drawing names.
- There will be a short break during public comments. Anyone arriving late can add his or her name to speak at this time. The BOE will listen to all who want to speak.
- If a speaker has a handout for the BOE, please put your handouts in the box by the microphone. The Board will receive the handouts at the conclusion of the public input session.
- Audience members will not react positively or negatively before, during or after each person speaks.
- Any persons violating these ground rules will be removed from the public forum.
- After the final person speaks, the BOE will adjourn the meeting.

NO VOTE WILL BE TAKEN ON SEPTEMBER 17 – FORMAL ACTION WILL BE TAKEN BY THE BOE ON A DATE OF A REGULAR BOARD MEETING

USD 409 Atchison Public Schools
Board of Education

Special Meeting – Public Input Session
Monday, September 17, 2018

5:30 p.m.

Atchison Elementary School Gymnasium

Agenda

5:30 p.m. Call to Order - Welcome
Ordering and Approval of Agenda

5:35 p.m. Overview of Procedures for Public Input Session

5:40 p.m. Citizen Comments

?? Adjournment

Many Signals Communications