

Willis and Chorny spent time discrediting the testimony of the other's professional experts including board certified pathologists and psychiatrists who offered contrasting testimony about the defendant's mental state.

Chorny also told jurors that several years ago, Morrison quit Schenectady County Community College because he believed people were conspiring against him and making fun of him. Chorny recounted that during one of his psychiatric examinations he denied calling 911 after the stabbing even though its on tape and was played during the trial.

"If these are not delusions, then I don't know what they are," she said.

Court upholds ouster of 'Indians' nickname for Cambridge school district

By Robert Gavin Times Union December 7, 2023



The Cambridge school district in Washington County lost an Appellate Division decision in trying to be able to continue to use its 'Indian' mascot. Cambridge school district website

The state's second-highest court on Thursday unanimously affirmed a lower court decision requiring the Cambridge Central School District's Board of Education in Washington County to remove the school's longtime nickname and mascot of "Indians."

In a 5-0 ruling, the Appellate Division of state Supreme Court's Third Department [determined the issue to be moot](#) because of the state Department of Education's amended regulations on May 3 prohibiting all school districts in the state from using an "Indigenous name, logo, or mascot other than for purposes of classroom instruction."

During oral arguments in October, the justices questioned the relevance of Cambridge's case, noting the state had instituted the statewide ban months after the Education Department told the Washington County district it could no longer use the mascot and nickname.

In 2021, Education Commissioner Betty Rosa had ordered Cambridge to stop using the nickname by July 1, 2022. Calling the order arbitrary and capricious, [the school board sued](#) to stay the order -- only to be rejected last year by acting state Supreme Court Justice Sara McGinty.

On Thursday, the Third Department upheld McGinty's ruling.

"Judicial power is limited to active controversies, which do not include situations where the requested relief is no longer available," wrote Justice Andrew Ceresia in the decision. He said the school board's desire to reinstate the name cannot be done "given the aforementioned regulations prohibiting school districts from using Native American nicknames and images."

The school board's position is "no longer tenable," Ceresia stated.

In a statement, the Cambridge school district made it clear it is now moving on from the issue. It posted it [on the district website](#).

"The Board of Education exhausted all avenues in relation to the mascot issue," the statement said. "The board is now committed to moving forward in adopting a new mascot."

The district statement said it plans to take action on a new mascot in January. Over the fall, it said class presidents, National Honor Society and Student Council presidents met, and included student input and conducted surveys to help select a new mascot.

“The first survey asked about ideal characteristics of a new mascot and some potential mascot ideas,” the district said. “The top characteristics were: strength, pride, power, loyalty and wisdom/knowledge. Additionally, the orange and black school colors will remain.”

Cambridge schools had used “Indians” as a nickname for their sports teams, along with a mascot reflecting Native American imagery, since the 1950s, Ceresia explained in the ruling.

Ceresia said in 2001, the state Education Department asked school officials — in districts using Native American nicknames, mascots and logos — to have discussions within their communities to “understand the pain, however unintentionally inflicted, these symbols cause.” The department asked applicable schools to stop using the nicknames and mascots “as soon as practical.”

Cambridge modified its mascot that portrayed the profile of a Native American, but kept the name “Indians.” In 2020, a Native American who graduated from the district petitioned the school board to change the nickname and mascot, calling them harmful to all students. A Native American who lived in the school district countered-petitioned to keep the nickname and imagery.

The school board held hearings and, in June 2021, voted to retire the nickname and mascot. But the next month — after a new member was elected to the board in favor of keeping the name — the board reversed its decision. Parents complained to the school board and the state Education Department, leading to Rosa’s order and the board’s subsequent lawsuit.

Presiding Justice Elizabeth Garry and Justices Stanley Pritzker, Molly Reynolds Fitzpatrick and L. Michael Mackey concurred.