

Interscholastic Sports (Philosophy)

Athletic programs should be as beneficial as possible for student participants. Such programs should complement the total educational environment. This policy shall serve as the philosophical framework for athletic participation at the middle school, freshman, junior varsity and varsity levels. For purposes of this policy, philosophy shall be defined as the set of fundamental beliefs that serve as a foundation for reaching sound, consistent decisions and guidelines.

Broad decisions related to high school athletic programs shall be made by high school administrators with input from coaching staff as appropriate. The principal and the administrators who assist shall be responsible for interpreting Board philosophy and administering Board policy. It shall be the principal's duty to see that programs are complementary rather than conflicting. The principal shall also be responsible for seeing that the interests of students, professional staff, parents and patrons are protected. Principals shall have the right to delegate their authority but they shall not relinquish their responsibility for the smooth operation of individual programs for the school as a whole.

Interscholastic athletic programs are not required nor are they part of the basic instructional program, they contribute significantly to the physical, mental and emotional development of students. Participation in activities is a privilege, not a right. The Board also recognizes the positive effects that excellent programs have on the school and community. Excellence is considered to be a blend of factors that include respectful attitude toward opponents and selves, cooperation with teammates and coaches, performing up to individual and group potential, playing by the rules of the sport, maintaining physical and mental control, the quality of the effort made to win, winning graciously and accepting defeat with dignity. The Board believes that if the elements of an excellent program are in place, winning will be a natural consequence if student talent and coaching ability surpass those of opposing teams.

Because strong views are prevalent in the community that athletic competition is a beneficial influence in the lives of youthful participants, it shall be the policy of the district to involve as many students as possible without jeopardizing athletic excellence. The Board shall fund girls' sports on an equitable basis with boys' sports and shall permit and encourage coeducational teams when the particular sport is determined suitable as a coeducational activity.

The value of participation shall be kept in mind for middle school, freshman and junior varsity players. Involvement provides students with the benefits of association with coaches and other athletes. Being involved also provides the opportunity to develop latent talents.

Athletic programs should be adapted to meet the needs of middle school, freshman, junior varsity and varsity students. Program aims shall vary somewhat for each level and these should be made clear to students, coaches, parents and patrons. The main factor that changes as students mature is the utilization of developed talent versus developing talent. The constant factor, regardless of age, shall be the definition of program excellence.

Conflict with academic programs

Every effort shall be made at all levels to prevent conflicts with academic programs. If possible, high school games shall not be scheduled on nights before school days. Practices shall be extremely well organized so students get home in time to study and have time with their families. Study opportunities shall be available to athletes waiting for their turn in the gymnasium. If games are played on school nights, scheduling shall be planned to prevent traveling long distances.

Sportsmanship

Sportsmanship shall be maintained at all levels. Coaches are expected to have their athletes play by the rules of the sport and respect themselves and those against whom they compete. Displays of anger or other indications of poor sportsmanship shall not be tolerated. Coaches shall have the right to remove a player from the game and to take further action deemed necessary as determined by the severity of the unsportsmanlike-like display.

Role of coaches

Coaches, by virtue of their training, experience and position, are vital to the development and maintenance of athletic excellence. Because of their closeness to athletic situations, they are in an excellent position to help make decisions that affect athletes. Coaches shall be hired for their coaching skills and abilities to work with students. They shall be considered to have full authority as long as they function within the guidelines of this policy. Head coaches shall be expected to provide leadership for the freshman, junior varsity and varsity programs.

High school head coaches shall communicate with middle school coaches in order to ensure that everyone works toward common goals. The head coach, to the extent that time permits, also shall work directly with the younger athletes. Even though a

coach may be considered a freshman or junior varsity coach, he or she shall be encouraged to lend support and assistance at all levels.

Program conflicts

When conflicts exist between programs, it shall be the responsibility of the student and parent to make a decision with regard to participation. Program directors and athletic coaches shall give assistance and full cooperation to help the student and parent make the best possible decision for the student. A student who misses athletic practices may receive less participation time for the week practices are missed. Further, the skills of the student who misses practices may regress in relation to the skills of other student athletes who have not missed practices, resulting in less playing time for that student. A student who misses all or portions of athletic practices because of program conflicts shall not otherwise be penalized as a participant in athletic programs.

When schedules are being prepared, every possible effort shall be made to avoid program conflicts.

Role of the Board and administration

The most important role of the Board is to provide support for the achievement of excellent interscholastic sports' programs. Administrators shall assist by becoming thoroughly knowledgeable about both the Board philosophy and expectations with regard to the athletic program and shall interpret these to all who wish to know about them. Before district representatives to athletic organizations vote on a change of by-laws or regulations that will in any way affect the schools or athletic teams of this district, they shall inform the Board of the proposed change and seek and follow the Board's directions for voting.

The Board and the administration shall support coaches who are implementing district philosophy. The building administrator(s) and/or designee are expected to field complaints should problems arise. Although the district may not be able to prohibit contacts between coaches and parents or other community members regarding complaints, administrators shall develop procedures for addressing and attempting to resolve complaints at the level closest to the perceived problem in the least hostile environment. If the athletic director, administrator and the coach decide that a meeting with a parent, a group of parents, or community members would be beneficial, a meeting shall be scheduled.

Students, coaches and parents shall be treated with dignity. People affected by Board and/or administrative decisions are encouraged to be involved in the decision making process. Final authority shall rest with the Board.

File: JJIB

Adopted: December 10, 1985
Revised: October 10, 1989
Revised: January 24, 1995
Revised: November 26, 1996

Garfield School District No. Re-2, Rifle, Colorado