

# 2017

## WCSD Athletic Committee Recommendations Update October, 2017



**GLOBAL Thinking**  
Limitless Choices

**Waterloo** SCHOOLS

*A full copy of the report is available in  
the Superintendent's office.*

To: Athletic Committee

From: Willie Barney

Date: October, 2017

I wanted to provide you with an update on how things are progressing. Although we still have plenty of room to improve, we are making progress in many areas. In addition to monthly meetings, I maintain regular contact with the ADs to problem solve and address items in a proactive manner in order to assist us in moving our programming forward.

Below you will find some of our work to address the recommendations outlined by the committee.

Please see my comments **in red**.

## Recommendations and Updates

### A. Youth Sports

1. Foster relationship-building between the varsity coaches and those who are coaching/volunteering in the youth programs in their area.
  - As we hire new head coaches, we have included representatives from our feeder programs in the hiring process as well as included questions meant to probe the coach's willingness to work with the youth programs. Currently we have HS coaches supporting youth Basketball, Wrestling, Swimming, and Football.
  - Introduced a school supported Jr. Wahawk/Jr. Trojan basketball program. This is a parent led program that receives support from the district and varsity head coaches via facilities, organization, communication, coaching tips and practice leadership but is coached by parents and other community volunteers. They practice twice a week and play low level tournaments. The season runs approximately, October through January/February. The Jr. Wahawk program fully took off on the boys and girls side last year, but additional efforts will be needed to get things up and running with the Jr. Trojan program.
  - We have encouraged the other sports programs to establish additional developmental Jr. programs as well. However, it is difficult to compete with the AAU framework of selective groups and high costs. Lots of groups carrying a Jr. program name but are not serving in the spirit of a Jr. program. To be characterized as a Jr. program, it must be developmental (all kids play equally-fair amounts), low cost and no one being paid from the kids fees (fees for kids needs only), open to all Waterloo students (not select kids), and be held in a short season (not year round).

- Not recommended by the committee but explored in 2015-2016 school year through a pilot at Irving - 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Extramural programs to assist students in gaining earlier structured exposure and skill development in sports offered at the MS and HS level to be implemented during the. The cost was written into our at-risk grant for 2016-2017.
  - 5<sup>th</sup> grade piloted in 2015-2016 (1 school), implemented in 2016-2017 in all elementary buildings, continued in 2017-2018. Sports focused on will be Flag Football, Wrestling, Basketball, Volleyball, Swimming, Soccer, and Track & Field. They go on Tuesdays/Thursdays for 1 hr after school. The high school coaches put together a list of skills that they want the extramural coaches to focus on. The high school and area club coaches lead the wrestling and swimming programs at Central, East, and West. In 2017-2018 we started the 6<sup>th</sup> grade program at the MS to assist with the transition from elementary to MS.

Cost approx \$3,000 per school per year.

2. Create a “gateway” website that would provide links/information on all of the youth sports programs in the area.
  - The district webpage has helpful resources for coaches, parents and athletes. We compiled and added info regarding practices and camps being offered by our high school coaches. We have a link where community youth programs can post contact info. This provides parents with a centralized point to identify potential programs for their child. The district does not specifically recommend any of the programs listed and encourage parents to take due diligence in making sure the organizations listed are appropriate and safe for their child.
  - <http://www.waterlooschools.org/athletics/>
  - <http://www.waterlooschools.org/athletics/athletic-opportunities/>

COST: 100-150 hours of technology staff time.

3. Ensure that youth sports have increased priority access to school facilities, at a cost only rate—immediately following district athletics practices and events.
  - Starting the summer of 2016, my office took over the scheduling of all facilities. We have established a new scheduling document, fee schedule, and a scheduling process to assist us in standardizing facility usage. We intentionally set aside gym time at the beginning of the year to allow school programs (athletics, activities, extramurals) and community programs (Jr., City, clubs) serving our kids priority to gym space. Our initial assessments indicate that during an average week, we have approximately 62 different groups of kids utilizing our athletic facilities for approximately 200 hours. This use is outside of our normally scheduled school practices. These groups are using the facilities for basketball, wrestling, swimming, volleyball, baseball, and scouts/brownies. These counts do not represent the indoor hitting

facility usage at this time as the usage has been more fluid. We will be identifying a strategy to increase documentation of use.

- External Practice fields-Our fields get a lot of usage and that usage affects the playability and safety of the fields. Over the last couple years, we have been very intentional about increased maintenance of fields, making adjustments due to weather, and encouraging use of additional green spaces to ensure our students have the best fields available throughout the year.

## **B. High School Sports and Policies**

1. Fund a year-round, qualified, strength and conditioning coach at each high school.
  - We hired two full-time strength/conditioning coaches to serve the two comprehensive high schools. We adjusted the funding process to appropriately fund the strength coach position year round. Previously, the position received a staffing allotment for the year that is more suitable for the semester and should be renewable for 1<sup>st</sup> semester, 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, and a summer allotment. By increasing the funds available, we sought to attract individuals who are nationally certified.
  - During the summer of 2017, the middle schools began establishing connections with the strength coaches to arrange opportunities for their students. East had several middle schoolers who joined the East High Strength training program.

COST: \$25,000 to \$50,000

2. Ability to hire coaches in our buildings.
  - As a result of the 2013-2014 negotiations with the WEA, the district now has discretion in the filling of all coaching vacancies.

COST: No cost, would require collective bargaining changes.

3. Lower the ratio of coaches to students/athletes.
  - (Previously 1:24) During the 2014-2015 seasons we will be investigating which sports that ratio is appropriate and which sports need to see an adjustment. Adjustments were made for the 2015-2016 seasons to ensure there was basic support provided and then added as numbers increased (football at least 3, track HS 3, basketball, etc).

COST: \$10,000 to \$50,000

4. Add a third gym to high schools and a second gym at middle schools.
  - No update at this time. This will be tied to any changes made as a result of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century HS reforms.

COST: \$10,000,000 to \$15,000,000.

**Other Notable Facility Items-**

- New video scoreboard installed at Memorial; the track will be resurfaced; an updated track timing system was installed; we are exploring synthetic turf options; many of the fields are being resurfaced to flatten and thicken them up in addition to moving events around to assist in the longevity of use; updates to the Central Pool structure and area; and Central tennis courts are being reviewed for upgrades.
5. The district and city should collaborate with junior (club) sports programs.
    - There have been a number of collaborative efforts. Different programs have rented the sportsplex facilities. The city uses our facilities. HS school basketball league was held at the sportsplex with districts from all over the Cedar Valley participating. Various sports and school programs hold events or practices at the Sportsplex. There are arrangements to support our golf, tennis, and swim programs. As noted previously, lots of area youth clubs use our facilities at reduced rates. This last summer, district personnel supported the start of the Loo League (youth basketball) through facility access, promotion, coaching, setting up the registration process, etc.
  6. Explore the issue of moving to one high school system, with one high school sports program. Begin with selected sports.
    - The board should note that this recommendation dovetails with one or more of the options discussed by the 21<sup>st</sup> Century High School Task Force. As the district determines the appropriate delivery model of HS education, athletic options will be explored. In the short term, we have reviewed a number of sports to determine best approaches to maintaining.
      - Athletic Collaborative Recommendations-Currently sharing boys swimming, girls swimming, and boys tennis, girls cross country .
      - Through student surveys we identified a common color scheme (Old Rose and Orange) and mascot theme (Trojan/Wahawk combination).
      - There have been requests to explore boys cross country (during the 2017-2018 season, they trained and traveled together), golf, girls soccer (parent meeting end of October, 2017), and both boys and girls track. Numbers will be reviewed; meetings with coaches and/or parents may be scheduled.

**C. Middle School Sports and Policies**

1. High schools need to be more involved at the middle school level.
  - Determination has been made that coaches 7-12 will be considered a part of the Varsity programs. The Varsity programs will work to include the feeder programs in on coaching meetings game discussions, skill development ideas, they were encouraged to attend the varsity camps during the 2017 summer season, etc. to assist the MS coach in developing a program that is operating with the Varsity programs ideals in mind while supporting the growth of the MS program and coach. When a building (Central) can't be identified as feeder program for a specific Varsity program, the feeder program will be connected to both Varsity programs. Additionally, MS Athletic Directors will include the Varsity Coach or representative in the hiring of head coaches and the middle school level.

- Towards the end of the year, we had all high school coaches go down to the middle schools to meet with current 8<sup>th</sup> graders to recruit them for 9<sup>th</sup> grade athletics and to communicate summer opportunities. We encouraged the coaches to determine summer programs prior to this meeting so that kids left aware of the opportunities for them to get summer work in.
  - In April, 2017 eighty gender balanced student-athletes in grades 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> from all four middle schools participated in an Educational Talent Search trip to UNI campus for an athletic career day. This was an opportunity for students who are already interested in athletics to gain a better understanding of the careers available to them in all areas of athletics. There were a total of eight athletic career presenters along with UNI coaches, the UNI President, and UNI mascots.
2. Reduce the coach to athlete ratio.
- Skill development of MS athletes is crucial. In 2014-15, to support the increased emphasis on fundamental skill development, we investigated which sports needed their coach ratios adjusted. During the 2015-16 seasons, we began moving to a 1:10 coach/athlete ratio during winter sports.
- Cost: \$25,000 TO \$50,000
3. Coaches present in the buildings.
- Administrative teams seek to identify opportunities to get coaches on staff in their buildings. Adjustments to the negotiated agreements were made to allow buildings to hire the most qualified candidates despite seniority.
  - It has become clear that we have elementary staff that could assist with our coaching needs. We have identified areas to be flexible to assist us in hiring elementary staff as coaches. We will continue to expand those opportunities.
4. Right coaches, right places.
- Varsity coaches are encouraged to review their programs to identify potential candidates to support and coach the MS programs. We have placed some former varsity program coaches at the MS.
5. Revise elementary and middle school physical education program.
- In 2014-The district adopted the SPARK PE program. SPARK emphasizes physical activity, nutrition plans, and the development of athletic skills and social skills while challenging students to cooperate with one another, and to encourage problem solving and communication. Life fitness focus.

6. Rethink middle school season length

- During the 2014-2015 school year, the building ADs discussed the philosophy behind the current structure of allowing kids to participate in both wrestling and basketball during the winter months versus asking them to choose one or the other. At this time we plan to maintain opportunities experience the various sports without the selective process emerging until HS. Introduced swimming as a sport this year that ran between wrestling and track. We included 6<sup>th</sup> graders. Participation numbers were in the mid-teens. Programming will also run this summer. Cross country continued this year.

**D. Coaching Recommendations**

1. Develop a comprehensive recruitment program. (Look in to offering training/licensure at the District level).
  - Dr. Smith began the process of working with Hawkeye to offer our own courses at a much lower cost in a more time efficient manner. Unfortunately we were not able to reach an arrangement with Hawkeye that would reduce the cost. We are now exploring other avenues to offer our own certification program. The state is reviewing its licensure process. We are still planning to finalize something through the (AEA) to be able provide our own program. We are considering offering a Waterloo Coaches' U for all new coaches to the district.

COST: \$5,000 to \$10,000

2. Develop a comprehensive support system for coaches.
  - During the winter and spring of the 2014-2015 school year we began exploring the development of a monthly training process around items related to coaching (nutrition, communicating with parents, goal setting for athletes, educational monitoring, practice planning, etc.). Currently we provide electronic updates, but this is still a work in process. We have "reinstated" the Annual Coaches' Classic. This event Kicks off the year for our coaches. Outside speakers and our AD's provide training, review current issues, and discuss program structure and support for coaches. Over the years our speakers have included Lisa Brinkmeyer from IGHSAU; Jed Smith, Strength and Conditioning Coach from UNI; Dr. Pappas, West High AD; Dr. Heisterkamp, UNI gender/athletics; Jim Miller, Accomplished Alum; **UNI's Athletic Director, David Harris; UNI Head Football Coach, Mark Farley;** representatives from the IHSAA discussing legal and safety issues; a sports psychologist to discuss motivation and athlete stress; **medical personnel from CVMS to discuss athletic injury and prevention;** we have worked with our coaches on their perspective of the obstacles to success for athletics in Waterloo; **we provided time for coaches (regardless of level) to connect (led by varsity coaches); and every year we provide a review of the coaches handbook.**
  - We would like to establish a mentoring program similar to what teachers receive. Funding may need to be identified to pay Mentor coaches.

- The evaluation process is also under review to assist us in making sure the standards of program leadership are being met by current and future coaches to assist us in making the appropriate changes. A new evaluation process was implemented during the 2015-2016 year. Evaluations are to be reviewed at the district level to provide feedback to building ADs regarding “next steps”.
- We established metrics to assist the admin team in identifying if athletic programming is moving in the right direction. These metrics include growth indicators like participation numbers, season and grade to grade retainment, data supporting individual athlete growth, wins/losses, point gaps, student/coach perception data, numbers of athletes participating in strength/conditioning programming, sportsmanship rankings from the conference, conference rankings/tournament play, team/individual awards, off-season opportunities and participation numbers.

COST: \$5,000 to \$10,000

3. Review structural administrative issues regarding athletic directors and administrative supervision.
  - Explore restructuring of the existing governance model, including our practice of utilizing part time Athletic Directors at both the district office level and building level.
  - New assignment of district administrator to oversee athletics-Done.