

SPONSORSHIP AND EVALUATION OF ATHLETIC PROGRAMS

It is the Board's desire to offer students in RSU 29's public schools athletic programming that provides diverse, developmentally appropriate opportunities and encourages student participation. At the same time, the Board recognizes that resources may not be available to fund all of the sports in which students and the community have an interest. In order to provide students with meaningful athletic experiences while maintaining high quality, sustainable programs, the Board adopts this policy governing sponsorship and evaluation of the school unit's athletic programs.

Through sponsorship, the school unit assumes responsibility for, and control of, a particular athletic program. Sponsorship requires Board approval. The District assumes responsibility only for those athletic programs the Board has designated as school-sponsored.

I. INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC PROGRAMS

The Board will approve for sponsorship only those interscholastic programs that are consistent with its philosophy and policies and with regulations established by the appropriate governing bodies, including the Maine Principals' Association (which refers to its regulations as "policies"). Sponsorship does not mean that funding will be provided in whole or in part through the school unit's budget. Sponsorship is required even for activities that may be funded in full by booster organizations.

Sponsorship is required before any team may represent itself using the school name, to be eligible for league play and tournament participation, or to be eligible for school athletic awards.

In order to assess the sustainability of athletic activities, each ongoing activity will be evaluated as needed.

The Board establishes the following process for the approval and evaluation of athletic programs.

A. Criteria for Approval and Evaluation of Athletic Programs

The Superintendent and appropriate administrator(s) shall be responsible for developing a process for evaluating potential athletic programs and assessing the viability of existing programs.

The process shall take into consideration the following factors, which shall be applied consistently to all programs:

1. Student body interest;
2. Community interest;
3. Gender equity;
4. Impact on facilities;
5. Impact on existing programs;
6. Impact on administration and staff;
7. Expenses;
8. Availability of competition;
9. Potential to field competitive teams;
10. Alignment with Board philosophy and policies; and
11. Availability of funds, consideration of extraordinary costs (e.g., rental of facilities, transportation, specialized equipment), and other relevant data.

B. Approval of New Athletic Programs

Sponsorship of all new interscholastic athletic programs must be approved in advance. The Superintendent and appropriate administrator(s) shall be responsible for making and supporting recommendations to the Board at least six months or a reasonable amount of time prior to the proposed starting date. Recommendations are to be made based on data from the evaluation process.

The Board may impose conditions that must be met for the program to be approved.

Following initial approval, new programs will be placed on probationary status for a period of one to two years.

Prior to the end of the probationary period, the Superintendent and/or appropriate administrator(s) must submit a report to the Board including recommendations and support for continued Board approval. The Board may provide for continuing approval, deny approval, or extend the probationary status.

C. Evaluation of Existing or Ongoing School-Sponsored Athletic Programs

The purpose of evaluation is to ensure that all existing or previously approved programs continue to meet the standards and criteria established by the Board.

The Board may authorize a program to be reviewed out of sequence based upon the recommendation of the Superintendent and appropriate administrator(s)

The evaluation of existing or ongoing approved programs will be done using the same process used to assess proposed programs.

Based upon the data, the Superintendent and appropriate administrator(s) shall make a recommendation to the Board as to whether the program should continue or be deleted. The Board may vote to delete any program that it deems no longer sustainable or in keeping with Board philosophy, standards or criteria.

D. Delegation of Authority

The Superintendent and appropriate administrator(s) may appoint a program evaluation or review committee to perform evaluations of proposed and existing athletic programs. Any such committee must should have balanced representation that may include the Superintendent and/or Athletic Director, a high school administrator, a middle school administrator, teachers,

coaches, parents, students, and community. Any such committee will use the process for program evaluation.

The committee shall be advisory to the Board. While it may make recommendations to the Board, the Board retains full authority over RSU 29's athletic programs.

II. CLUB SPORTS

“Club sports” are those that are not part of the District’s regular interscholastic athletic program but have been approved by the Board through Board action, including approval of an affiliation agreement between the community supporters of the sport and the District.

Community supporters will assume the cost of coaches and officials, uniforms and equipment, transportation, supplies, and student accident insurance. Coaches will be hired and supervised by the District, and the cost of coaches will be billed to community supporters.

Although club sports exist through community support, the Board may contribute limited resources such as fields, facilities and locker rooms through the affiliation agreement.

A. Initial Approval

In order to apply for approval, supporters of a prospective club sport must submit a letter of application to the athletic director. The letter must set forth the purpose of the club sport and include the bylaws, names of officers, insurance and financial information, and commitment by club supporters to follow all District and league rules, policies and procedures. The athletic director will make a recommendation to the principal regarding affiliation and club status based upon the criteria listed in Section I. A. of this policy and consideration of capacity of the organizers/supporters to sustain the club. After reviewing the athletic director’s recommendation, the principal will forward his/her recommendation to the Superintendent.

The Superintendent will review the principal’s recommendation and make a recommendation to the Board, including provisions to be included in the

affiliation agreement. The affiliation agreement will at a minimum include the purpose of the club sport and the responsibilities of the supporting organization/supporters including those related to finances and insurance, and commitment by club supporters to follow all District and league rules, policies and procedures. The agreement will authorize the use of the District and school's name and logo.

The Board may grant approval of the club sport contingent upon completion and execution of the affiliation agreement. Supporters of club sports must also agree to adhere to the Board's policy JJIBC, Relations with Booster Groups, and all other Board policies.

The Board may limit the number of club sports within the District.

B. Continuation and Evaluation

Club sports will be evaluated as needed. The purpose of evaluation is to ensure that the club sport continues to meet the Board's criteria and the terms of the affiliation agreement.

Violations of the affiliation agreement will be documented by the athletic director and/or principal and reported to the Superintendent and the School

Committee. The Board may terminate the affiliation agreement and the club sport if violations cannot be appropriately resolved or if significant or repeated violations occur.

C. Coaches

Coaches for club sports will be hired by the District and will be subject to the same standards, evaluation processes and conduct expectations as other District coaches.

D. Change in Status from Club Sport to Interscholastic Sport

Parents, students, staff, or club sport supporters who wish to have the club sport added to the District's regular interscholastic sports program must submit their request for a change in status, in writing, to the athletic director, who will evaluate the request in light of the criteria for approval of evaluation of interscholastic athletic programs and the process for

approval of new athletic programs as provided for in section I of this policy. The athletic director will make a recommendation to the principal. After reviewing the athletic director's recommendation, the principal will forward his/her recommendation to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will review the principal's recommendation and make a recommendation to the Board. The Board may impose conditions that must be met for the club sport to be approved as an interscholastic sport.

III. PARTICIPATION IN INDIVIDUAL SPORTS – STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS OTHER THAN RSU 29 SCHOOLS

The Board recognizes that there may be instances in which students with ability or interest in an individual sport or activity governed by the Maine Principals Association (MPA) are unable to compete for their own school because the school does not field a team.

The Board will permit individual students, upon petition to the principal, to compete for the RSU 29 schools under the following conditions: 1) no coaching, practice facilities or financial support from RSU 29 is required; 2) the student or his/her family provides transportation to and from the competition; and 3) the family assumes liability for accident or injury. Individual participants are subject to policies of the RSU 29 Board and MPA regulations applicable to interscholastic athletes.

Cross Reference: GCFA - Hiring and Evaluation of Coaches
JJI - Philosophy of Athletics
JJIBB - Sportsmanship
KJA - Relations with Parent/Booster/Community Groups

Adopted: April 6, 2015