

MSAD #15
Co-Curricular Study Committee Final Report
November 18, 2009

Background

In March 2007, Athletic Director Geoff Robbins, in collaboration with Tina Martell, hosted a community forum to gather ideas for evaluating and improving the District's athletic programs. In his invitation, Mr. Robbins stated, "Programs are not built at only one level, but through the work of those from the lowest levels to the highest levels. With this philosophy in mind, we feel strongly that only through collaboration can we be successful in building the top-notch programs our athletes deserve." From this first forum sprung an entity called Project Teamwork. Its goal was to achieve a harmonious and collaborative relationship between our two towns, their recreation departments, MSAD #15, private athletic clubs, booster organizations and the Gray-New Gloucester Business Association in order to create organized and healthy local sports programs. Over the next two years, several meetings were held specific to spring, fall, and winter sports. Participants consistently raised concerns with a common theme: the need for stronger leadership, higher-quality coaches, better communications, and adequate funding. It became evident to Superintendent Vicky Burns that the District's athletic/co-curricular structure lacked clarity in roles and responsibilities regarding booster clubs, fundraising, evaluation of programs, and budgeting. Project Teamwork itself lacked authority to make decisions that impact the District, so the Superintendent recommended that a review of the athletic and co-curricular program be placed on the District Improvement Team agenda for the 08-09 school year.

Appointment

The Co-Curricular Study Committee (the Committee) was appointed by the District Improvement Committee in September 2008. Sheryl Robinson, Board Member, was appointed Co-Chair and Regular Committee members were Anne Rowe, Board member; Tina Martell, Project Teamwork representative and later Board member; Victoria Burns, Superintendent; Melanie Craig, Athletic/Co-Curricular Director; Jeff Ryan, Gray-New Gloucester Athletic Boosters representative; and Kelley Bowen, Patriot Grandstand Club representative. Additional guests who attended one or more meetings were Gary Harriman, Board member; Tonya Fons, teacher; and Matt Laney, teacher.

The District Improvement Committee recommended the formation of the Co-Curricular Study Committee and placed this item on the School Board agenda October 1, 2008. The School Board authorized the formation of the Athletic/Co-Curricular Study Committee. The charge to the Committee was to create an athletic/co-curricular structure that adheres to Board policy and provides an excellent program for students in MSAD #15. The Committee was to create job descriptions and pay recommendations for Schedule B Stipends as agreed during the 2009 Teacher Association negotiations.

The Co-Curricular Study Committee made its first report to the School Board on June 3, 2009 with the complete recommendations for Schedule B and a request to continue its work into the next school year in order to address remaining questions regarding the structure and related policies of

athletics/co-curricular.

Committee Tasks

The Committee the prioritized the following tasks:

1. Create job descriptions and pay recommendations for Schedule B stipends that will be presented to the School Board and the Teachers' Association for final approval.
2. Recommend a policy for reviewing current programs and evaluating new programs.
3. Recommend a structure for summer programs for athletics.
4. Define the role of booster clubs in the District.
5. Recommend a fundraising policy for the District.
6. Define a structure for co-curricular/athletic program improvement.
7. Define a process to determine a collaborative approach for athletic/co-curricular funding.
8. Define school-sponsored activities.

Meeting Dates

The Committee held seventeen regular meetings, as follows:

October 22, 2008	February 23, 2009	July 23, 2009
November 3, 2008	March 10, 2009	August 25, 2009
December 8, 2008	April 7, 2009	October 1, 2009
December 23, 2008	April 28, 2009	October 13, 2009
January 26, 2009	May 12, 2009	November 2, 2009
February 9, 2009	June 2, 2009	

Public Forums

The Committee held two public forums, as follows:

August 11, 2009
October 20, 2009

Findings and Recommendations

Task #1 – Schedule B Stipends

The Committee was tasked with creating job descriptions and pay recommendations for Schedule B stipends. We began our work by reviewing the existing list of stipends on Schedule B and determining which ones should be brought forward to the new contract and what, if any, new stipends should be added.

The Committee's next task was to create a formula for determining the value of each stipend. For athletic coaches, our goal was to have a majority of stipends fall in the sixtieth percentile of the

Western Maine Athletic Conference. For co-curricular advisors, our goal was to have our stipends average between \$16 and \$18 per hour.

The Committee surveyed other schools in our area and gathered data on how their stipends are calculated. We then constructed our own formula using the most pertinent pieces from several of these schools. For athletic coaches, we identified six criteria to be used for calculating their base stipend – length of season, number of participants, number of countable contests, holiday/vacation/week-end activities, coaching level, and number of adults supervised. For co-curricular advisors, we identified four criteria – hours worked, number of participants, budget/equipment/travel/management responsibility, and outreach. Each factor was given a weight equal to a specific percentage of the District’s base teacher salary. We also proposed an add-on to each stipend for years of experience.

The Committee then proceeded to gather data by coaching/advisor position for the criteria identified above. This data was compiled into a spreadsheet which totals the factors and computes each stipend. A second spreadsheet calculates the experience add-on for the actual coach or advisor hired into each position.

Job descriptions, stipend criteria and stipend calculations were presented to the Personnel Committee on May 13, 2009 and were approved by the Teachers’ Association on August 25, 2009.

Task #2 – Reviewing Existing Programs and Evaluating New Programs

The Committee was tasked with designing a process for reviewing current programs and evaluating new programs. We began our work by reviewing the Maine School Management Association (MSMA) sample policy JJIB, Sponsorship and Evaluation of Athletic Programs. We also gathered and reviewed similar policies from other schools in our region. The Committee determined that the MSMA sample policy could be easily modified for our use, and we are submitting it for the Board’s consideration with this report.

In order to offer high-quality, sustainable programs, Policy JJIB requires a rigorous evaluation of new programs and continual assessment of existing programs. All new programs must be sponsored by a building principal and presented to the Superintendent (or a designated advisory group) at least six months prior to the proposed starting date. If given initial approval by the Board, new programs will remain on probationary status for at least two but no more than four years. All existing programs will be assessed for sustainability by the Superintendent (or a designated advisory group) on at least a five-year cycle. Policy JJIB requires the Superintendent to develop a rubric to be used for these purposes based on the following criteria:

- Alignment with Board philosophy
- Gender equity
- Student body interest
- Community interest
- Impact on facilities
- Impact on existing programs
- Impact on administration and staff

- Expenses
- Availability of competition
- Potential to field competitive teams

The Committee prepared a rubric to be used for this purpose, and we are submitting it for the Board's consideration with this report.

Policy JJIB also grants the Superintendent the authority to appoint a program evaluation committee to perform evaluations of proposed and existing athletic and co-curricular programs. We recommend that the Superintendent give this responsibility to the Council for Continuous Improvement in Athletics/Co-Curricular Activities (the Council), which is discussed in further detail under Task 6 below.

Task #3 – Summer Programming for Athletics

The Committee was tasked with establishing a comprehensive program of summer athletics that would provide an equitable benefit to all athletes at a reasonable cost and compensate coaches for their efforts. We began our work by reviewing existing summer programs offered by the District's coaches. We found significant discrepancies in both the level of programming offered and the amount charged to the athletes to participate. Although the District did not pay for summer programs, in many other ways these programs met the criteria of being school-sponsored. They were run by the District's varsity coaches, in many cases on a volunteer basis, and they utilized District facilities. Students were charged either no fee or a nominal fee to participate, and monies collected and expended were funneled through school activity accounts. Coaches were also allowed to pay part of their expenses with proceeds from student fundraising. Having summer programming classified as "school-sponsored" raised a distinct problem for the District because it was not providing bus transportation to away contests. Instead, parents, coaches, and the athletes themselves were driving to out-of-town game locations. The Committee was aware we would need to address this issue in our recommendations.

The Committee gathered data from all coaches as to the types of programming they wished to provide over the summer and the associated costs. The guidelines we established are as follows:

- Programs must be open to all students.
- Programs must be self-sustaining.
- Hours must be between 28 and 50.
- All head coaches must be paid a stipend based on \$17 per hour.
- All assistant coaches must be paid a stipend based on \$14 per hour.
- The charge per participant cannot exceed \$50.

Coaches and athletes were polled about the possibility of using District transportation to away contests. We found that many varsity players drive to contests directly from a summer job, so requiring them to come to the High School to board a bus would not be feasible. The Committee suggested that parents sign a liability waiver for transportation, as is common in other schools in the area. The Superintendent and the Director of Finance and Operations, however, decided that the District could not continue to sponsor summer programming unless students were transported by

bus. Therefore, the Committee approached the Town of Gray to operate summer programming collaboratively through its recreation department.

Gray Rec offered seven varsity summer programs, as follows:

Boys Soccer	32 Participants
Girls Soccer	38 Participants
Boys Basketball	18 Participants
Girls Basketball	14 Participants
Football	30 Participants
Field Hockey	18 Participants
Cross Country	<u>3</u> Participants
Total	153

The Town agreed to operate these programs based on the guidelines previously established by the Committee and outlined above. However, the \$50 maximum charge per participant did not allow all programs to cover their operating costs. The District therefore allowed the girls and boys basketball programs to use \$300 and \$350, respectively, from their activity accounts to make up the difference. The Patriot Grandstand Club also contributed \$150 towards football coaching stipends.

The Committee found that roles and responsibilities between the District and the Town were not adequately flushed out before the summer sessions began. Better planning will be required if we continue to offer summer programs through Gray Rec in the future. The Committee recommends that summer programming be an early agenda item of our successor organization.

Task #4 – Relationship with Booster Groups

The Committee was tasked with reviewing the current structure of booster organizations and defining their role within the District. We began our work by reviewing MSMA sample policy JJIBC, Relations with Booster Groups, and compiling a list of groups which fundraise and otherwise support athletics and enrichment activities at our schools. We found several prevalent structures under which parents and/or students organize themselves for these purposes. The structure relevant to policy JJIBC is the tax-exempt/non-profit corporation which is operated independently from the District. This type of organization is comprised of adults and is responsible for its own finances. The Committee classified these organizations as “school-affiliated”. In MSAD #15 we identified four school-affiliated booster groups:

- the Gray-New Gloucester Athletic Boosters, which supports all middle school and high school athletics
- the Patriot Grandstand Club, which supports middle school and high school football
- the GNG Poland Patriotic Knights Hockey Club, which supports middle school and high school ice hockey
- the Patriot Parents, which supports cultural enrichment in the District’s schools

Policy JJIBC requires that booster groups maintain bank, financial and tax exempt/non-profit status separate from the school. They must provide the District with annual financial reports and proof of

liability insurance. Booster groups must make gifts to the school rather than directly paying coaches or officials or purchasing equipment.

The Committee reviewed MSMA sample policy JJIBC, made revisions specific to our circumstances, and presented it at two public forums for community feedback. We incorporated this feedback into our final draft and are submitting it for the Board's consideration with this report.

Task #5 – Fundraising Policy

The Committee was tasked with formulating a fundraising policy for the District. We began our work by identifying the various groups that raise money for athletics or enrichment activities. We first identified and defined the District's relationship with school-affiliated booster groups as discussed in the previous section. The Committee then analyzed the other structures under which parents and/or students organize themselves for fundraising purposes. The first, used primarily in athletics, is the loose association of parents who come together under a coach's guidance to support a specific athletic program. These groups raise money "in season" with some participation by athletes. All fundraising proceeds are deposited into school activity accounts and are disbursed at the request of the coach with approval by the Co-Curricular/Athletic Director. The Committee labeled such fundraising as "school-sponsored". The other common structure we observed is student-driven fundraising, which is directed by a co-curricular advisor or building principal. The groups in this category are the freshman, sophomore, junior and senior classes; the student council; and the co-curricular clubs. This type of fundraising is also considered school-sponsored, and all proceeds and expenditures run through school activity accounts.

In order to construct a comprehensive fundraising policy, the Committee reviewed both our own current policy JJE and policies from several other area schools, and gathered feedback from the community at a public forum on August 11, 2009. We then proceeded to construct a policy which divides the guidelines into three sections:

- Guidelines for All Fundraising Groups,
- Guidelines for School-Sponsored Fundraising
- Guidelines for Booster Fundraising.

There was consensus from Committee members and those who attended the community forums that our policy must include the following principles:

- The School Board should provide the basic uniform and equipment needs for co-curricular/athletic activities through the budget process.
- Booster and school-sponsored fundraising should be limited to providing enrichment opportunities, such as specialized advisors, summer programming, and team-building activities.
- Fundraising should not be burdensome to the Gray and New Gloucester communities.
- All fundraising activities should be coordinated through and pre-approved by a board advisory council.

The Committee incorporated the above principles into our first draft of a revised policy JJE, Fundraising, and presented it to the community at a second public forum on October 20, 2009. We used additional feedback from this forum in our final draft, which we are submitting to the Board for consideration with this report.

Task #6 – Structure for Co-Curricular/Athletic Improvement

The Committee was tasked with recommending a structure for improving the District's co-curricular and athletic programs. Committee members recognize that quality programs come from strong leadership and collaboration among a wide variety of associated individuals and organizations. In the course of our work over the past year, we found that important stakeholders – coaches, parents, students, community leaders - perceive that they have historically been excluded from the District's co-curricular decision-making process. In order to address this concern, we feel that the District should appoint a Council for Continuous Improvement in Athletics/Co-Curricular Activities which would act in an advisory capacity to the Board. This Council would be responsible for overseeing the District's athletic and co-curricular programs and recommending ideas for improvement. We believe that the core membership should include the following:

- one or more School Board members
- the Superintendent
- the Athletic/Co-Curricular Director
- a Middle School Administrator
- a High School Administrator
- a Representative from each Booster Group
- a Student-Athlete
- a Co-Curricular Participant

The Council should invite other appropriate stakeholders, including coaches, parents, students, and community members, to meetings based on agenda topics. The Council's responsibilities regarding the District's athletic/co-curricular activities would include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Developing a philosophy based on the District's vision;
- Reviewing, updating, and developing policies and procedures;
- Recommending program needs through the District's budget process;
- Determining the levels of funding that differentiate between necessities and enrichment;
- Recommending facilities needs as part of the Board's five and ten year maintenance and capital maintenance plans;
- Approving fundraising;
- Using data for program improvement;
- Recommending funding for stipends and new programs;
- Insures appropriate summer programming for athletics;
- Recommending the suspension of funding for existing programs;

- Monitoring and recommending activity fees and fees for specific activities;
- Planning District celebrations.

The Council would meet no less than monthly. Individuals or groups who would like items to be placed on the agenda or discussed by the Committee would present such items to the Athletic/Co-Curricular Director prior to the next scheduled meeting.

The Council would report its activities to the Board at appropriate intervals. While the Council would make recommendations to the Board, the Board would retain full authority over MSAD #15's athletic and co-curricular programs.

Recommendations

The Committee recognizes that athletics and co-curricular activities are an important extension of a good educational program, as follows:

- Students who participate in athletics and co-curricular activities have higher grade-point averages, better attendance records, lower dropout rates, and fewer discipline problems.
- Through co-curricular activities students learn self-discipline, teamwork, and good sportsmanship while also building self-confidence.
- Participation in high school activities is often a predictor of a student's later success in college, in the workplace, and in society.

In order to help MSAD #15 build and maintain top-notch co-curricular programs, the Committee recommends that the Board appoint a Council for Continuous Improvement in Athletics/Co-Curricular Activities, which will oversee this important aspect of our educational system.

The Committee also recommends that the Board consider adoption of the following policies:

- JJIB – Sponsorship and Evaluation of Athletic/Co-Curricular Programs with the accompanying procedure.
- JJIBC – Relationship with Booster Groups
- JJE – Fundraising.