

WASHOUGAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 112-06
Board of Directors Linkage Meeting

Washougal School District Athletic/Sports Program
November 16, 2010
6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

1. WELCOME BY BOARD PRESIDENT, BLAINE PETERSON

Welcome and introductions: Blaine thanked participants for being here and expressed appreciation for their time. He indicated that we would like to finish by 8:00 p.m. to honor everyone's time.

2. CONVERSATION STARTERS

A. What is working well with the middle school athletic program?

- Numbers: Our football and wrestling have grown in the last couple of years. This is due in part because we have combined JMS and CCMS for football and wrestling. Other sport numbers have also grown. There are limitations in our league as to how many teams you can have so that you can find opponents.
- Blaine indicated that coaches at Middle School football stressed that the schools were joining to become “panthers” rather than two separate teams.
- Teresa said that a parent, Greg Payne, appreciated the focus by Scott Dizmang on scholarship and athletics. This is a link to a concept being presented at the high school.
- If students are on a combined 7th and 8th grade team and 7th graders don't get to play much, they don't come back. If you have one combined team they can run the high school offense. There is a huge 7th grade class now and we could think about going back and splitting them back up again but from a scheduling perspective that is a nightmare.
- The condition of the field at JMS is atrocious. Parents were willing to mow the grass a couple of times. They mowed the lines. There are a lot of parent volunteers that are willing to help but he isn't sure if we would allow that due to liability. Parents would be willing to mow, paint lines, chalk, etc. if we would allow it. Field at Canyon Creek seems to be in better shape than the one at JMS but it doesn't have goal posts. Blaine indicated that we were trying to save that field and let it mature before we used it. Doug Bright asked for clarification on the mowing. It was indicated that it was more than one time that the field had not been mowed. There have also been concerns about the distance of the portable restroom from the field and that once the portable restroom was locked.
- Coach Dizmang needs some help. It is tough for him to run the program with such big numbers.
- It would be good to do something at half-time with the middle school kids at a high school game. You have the cheerleader night and you get more people in the stadium and they buy more concessions. It would be good to have more middle school students come to high school games. It would be a way to get some of the parents who are going to be coming in to the high school to the high school. At some schools, middle school students wear their jerseys to the high school games.
- It has been tried to schedule games at the high school but it has been tough due to scheduling and the use of our facilities.

- Kathy Douglas indicated that during the week there are not out of district entities scheduled Monday through Friday. She said that on weekends we sometimes have other schools schedule but not during the week. There have been three uses this year during a Monday through Friday by groups other than our school. Saturdays are sometimes used by other groups.
- We are lacking fundraising opportunities for middle school sports. As parents and community members we spend all of our time fundraising for the high school programs.
- Tried to do a track camp in July but there wasn't enough interest.

B. What is working well with the high school athletic program?

- Fundraising and the efforts with CCYF have been a boon to us and our athletic program. A lot of equipment has been purchased through these funds (wrestling mat, track equipment etc). CCYF pays the minimal fee because this functions as a fundraiser. It has been immensely important especially for our non-revenue sports. Doug Cox expects them to do fundraising for at least half of their equipment expenses such as uniforms. All head coaches are notified of this opportunity and almost everyone has had a chance to run at least one Saturday.
- Booster group offers concessions and other groups (choir, band, drama, interact, etc) participate in that as a fundraiser. They make it fun for the students and the students enjoy it. More groups now want to get in there and raise money for their groups.
- Some sports also make money through community education camps. The more you have the coaches and high school staff involved, the more you bring the kids in. This also generates interest in the programs.

C. What suggestions do you have for improving the program or the athletic policy?

D. What is the community's current perception about the athletic/sports program?

- This year, high school sports have really taken off. The community is coming in more. We are getting there. It is nice to see more people coming and seeing the kids.
- At the middle school level, we have a very athletic group right now at 7th and 8th grade (both boys and girls) and a lot of supportive parents. Having the two middle school teams together has made the students more connected and they moved to the orange and black uniforms this year. In wrestling it is the same thing. We can take advantage of the fact that right now we have a strong support system coming through. If we can get the ball rolling at this level, the outlook of what Washougal sports are: 1. People are sick of what it used to be and 2. We are headed in the right direction. We have a good opportunity.
- Communication is one of the number one things. That has been lacking over the last few years. It is getting much better at the high school level. At the middle school level there isn't really the email chain and getting the parents involved. You have to communicate with the parents. There are a ton of them that are willing to help but they need someone to step up and say hey.
- Blaine indicated that there is usually a tech-savvy parent who is willing to set up email communication and communicate and that usually works really well. From his point of view as a parent, that usually works well.
- From a middle school perspective, there numbers were so big, and this is a positive, they need to tap into the communication piece.
- High school website needs to be cleaned up. He sees the expectations placed on our students in our classrooms and we don't model that on our

website. There is information on it that is two years old. It would be better not to have a site than to have one that is so outdated. It was suggested that we make this a senior project or a webpage design class element.

- The coach has to be willing to communicate. Tons of calls and emails had to happen in football to get information from the coach. Parents get tired and frustrated with asking questions. Examples: Miracle League, fundraisers (what can the money be used for and what can it not be used for), game times, practice times changing etc. You have to be able to get some of that information.
- Pete Forgey is the best person for communication. He updates parents very regularly. At the middle school level, the website is kept up to date pretty well.
- Some other districts have booster groups for all sports. We have individual booster groups here but not a general or middle school booster group. They work on communication and fundraising. A question was asked about who is the champion of that group. Winning breeds support. We may not have a champion in athletics the way we have Gordon Washburn in performing arts. There are lots of coaches doing lots of good things but they don't all share the same philosophy and that creates a fracture group and their parents fracture off with them.
- It is hard to find parents who want to put that energy in. It is possible to spend 14 hours setting up concessions before a big game. To do boosters, that is a parent thing.
- From the athletic side at the high school, it is missing the champion. It is missing that person who says we can all agree or we can all agree to disagree and ask if it is good for the kids we should put everything else aside. He doesn't feel that. From a senior parent's perspective, all the football changes were not a positive experience. There doesn't seem to be a mentoring program when a new coach comes into the program to explain policies, expectations around fundraising, practice length etc. They did a fundraiser for football (the cards) and there was massive chaos on the last day. There was no mentoring about how to run that. Mentoring is lacking.
- There were three groups doing the same fundraiser at the same time. This should be coordinated so that they aren't doubling up. An athletic booster club could coordinate this. This takes a center force to get it going. Perhaps there is someone in middle school who could start this and get it moving through. It was indicated that it shouldn't be a booster group's job to train a new coach.
- It is difficult because it sometimes feels like some things are ingrained in the way we've done it in the past and new people come into the community and they want to know the "why" of things. They don't want the standard answer and if it doesn't make sense they might challenge it. This can create tension. If something doesn't make sense, that is the communication breakdown. Things are changing in the community and in technology and that can create breakdowns.
- Doug Cox indicated that the training at any level is only as good as how well the person who received the training is willing to implement. The department does do mentoring and training. Our district finance person has led a training on ASB processes and procedures for coaches. That happens every season. As far as communication goes, we are working on all of those things. When he came on, he was the fifth AD in six years. The coaches were not being given consistent information consistently. They now have a coach's handbook that coaches are given and they have trainings they go through on a regular basis. We have process and procedures and they use that term. Those have to be followed. The

football coach may not have had the fundraising training but he was informed on how to process an ASB fundraising activity.

E. How do people in the community hear about team or individual sports performances?

- School staff did get an email about the upcoming women's soccer game.
- Website
- Newspaper is a good avenue (both the Post Record and the Columbian) and as a coaching group we need to make sure we forward information such as scores and schedules on to the paper.
- In the Saturday paper, a couple of times this season in the Columbian for football and soccer, there were "no stats reported" listed in the paper. A parent texted the updates to the Greater St. Helen's League website.
- We need to encourage middle school students to attend the high school games. You need one year of winning and it sparks the interest to play.
- About six years ago, they went away from having pep assemblies. The kids get involved when you have a pep assembly.
- The Columbian has a bias with 2A scores. Sometimes 1A are in the paper and we're not.
- Seeing the scores in the paper gets the middle school kids inspired about the high school.
- Boosters could call the Columbian to complain if there isn't equal coverage.
- We could talk with elementary students and trying to get elementary students to come with their parents.
- Could have some of the high school varsity players visit the elementary and middle schools to invite them to come down and invite those students to come to games.
- Malcolm Estes has his students attend a middle school game.
- Could we use the reader board down by the boat landing? Maybe we could have a static reader board at one of the intersections on Evergreen.
- Getting the community involved (businesses wearing our colors on home game nights), you can just come to the town and know there is a game. Columbian Credit Union did a tailgate party to support the athletics.
- The athletic schedules are posted up around town.
- Try to get other sporting teams to go out and watch other teams. Many of the coaches are instituting that policy.

F. Other items of interest to you?

- Doesn't like the sports fees the way there are now. \$100 a sport for high school kids is too much for some families to afford. Not everyone knows that something is available to help families whose students are on free and reduced lunch. This is another piece of communication.
- A booster club could also help you communicate this information.
- When we were talking about fees, it was indicated that there would be no freshman athletics if there weren't higher fees. He thought the fees were only going to be that high for freshman. Seems like it is just take, take, take.
- Businesses can adopt an athlete to be able to play a sport.
- As far as the field, we could have coaches call their former athletes and ask them to donate.
- Don't play schools that are four or five hours away. It is important not to be traveling three hours on the bus.
- We should consider playing smaller schools from the more local districts like Camas and Evergreen.
- The gym floor is about 100,000 and the stadium rug is 400,000.

- The stadium also needs some work. The field turf and the stadium both need work and both were on the 2008 bond which did not pass.
- Someone asked how much grass is to plant. Grass is more expensive to maintain. Everything should be on the table and considered and then we need to communicate the answers to the community.
- Is there an opportunity to share the field with Camas and take the pressure off here? Their field is very booked.
- We would consider leasing a field if there were no other options.
- Why weren't things put in place to put money in place to save for the replacement for the field when we knew that it would have a life span?
 - i. Teresa indicated that districts typically ran bonds every 8-10 years and typically didn't plan out of general funds for these large expenditures. The thinking was that there would be another bond to pay for it. Because of the economy, we now have started saving for this.
- Have we talked to Roosevelt High School in Portland about how they raised the money for their new field? We can investigate that and find out.
- We are exploring that some of the companies allow financing options to pay for fields. We are exploring those options. We are looking at creative ways to fund the turf. Doug shared about people buying sections of turf to put it in their yards for putting greens.
- The whole stadium (restrooms, concessions, stands etc.) needs to be taken into consideration.
- Matching funds come from bonds. There is a robust matching fund option and then you can apply for the matching funds.
- We need to really open up all avenues. We need to think widely to decide what we can do. The officials have said they don't want to have students playing on it. We have had a G-max test and we tried to add rubber to areas that failed that and those are the black areas on the field because the rubber is not going down. We are looking at reconditioning it and we are talking to some experts and it is looking like that field is not a playable option for next year.
- We could fundraise some of the money, use the new school's fund, and we may have people willing to donate money if they know they might be more usable.
- We could consider tying in the gym floor and then you would be getting the whole community involved. We need to get the word out and get the community involved. You get all the different factions involved.
- Safeway is good about asking for donations for charities and maybe they would do the same thing for athletics.
- We should have big signs everywhere to say this is our goal and this is how much we have raised.
- We need to do a good job of educating people as to what the problem is before we can ask for money. If we tell them that there won't be any home games next year then there would be more urgency.
- The fields are warranted for 8 years and it has been 8 years. It has an 8 to 10 year life. We have done very good maintenance on this. Once the board is done collecting information before they declare what the next step needs to be.
- You have to educate people before you can ask them for money.
- In football games, there were times when pieces of the turf were up.
- When we put the rubber down, people talked about that because they asked about what all the black stuff on the field was.
- Even in bad times, at the Panther Foundation auctions, a lot of money has been made. The foundation is trying to pay for things that the district

won't pay for: travel, camps, coaches, training and he is very confident that we could raise more than 100,000 dollars for this.

- If would be great to have a community fundraiser but it is difficult when no one else wants to step up and help with these things. It can be done but you need more people than just a handful to help with these things.
- There are 265 students in grades 1-6 playing basketball under the Panther Youth Foundation. There is a lot of community support if you want to tap into it.

G. Questions/Answer time.

3. Board's Closing Comments/Thank you!

Blaine closed at 8:00 and thanked everyone for their participation.

Dated this 14th day of December 2010

President

Secretary to the Board