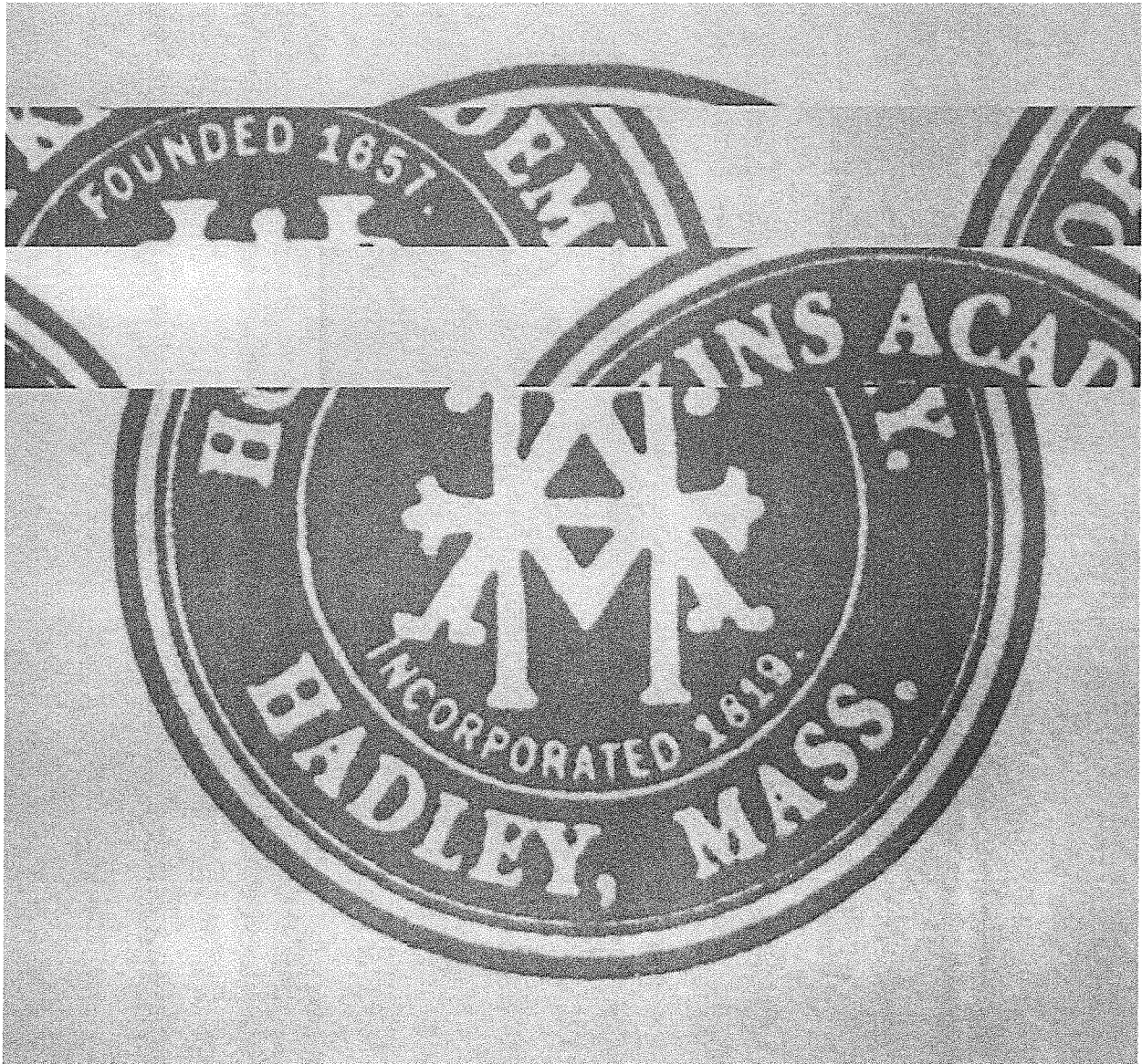


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Hadley Public Schools

Mission Statement

Hadley Public School District is guided by the mission to provide a safe and supportive environment that fosters cooperation, critical thinking, creativity, and integrity; and to educate students to contribute positively to a global society

Hopkins Academy

Mission Statement

Hopkins Academy, in partnership with the community, provides a safe and supportive environment. We offer educational opportunities for diverse learners to access, question, apply, integrate, evaluate and communicate essential knowledge. The school helps prepare students to act with integrity and to assume a contributory role as productive members of society.

Hopkins Athletics

Mission Statement

Athletics at Hopkins Academy play an integral part in the school program. Students have the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities that will enhance their educational experience. The sports program is committed to the physical, emotional, social, and mental development of all who participate. Participation in sports is a privilege; athletes are expected to exhibit the highest level of conduct on and off the field. They must show respect for everyone they come in contact with including but not limited to: teammates, game officials, opponents, and spectators.

Introduction

Like many middle and secondary schools in Massachusetts, the athletic program at Hopkins Academy (HA) is an integral component of the educational experience. Approximately half of the students participate in the athletic program at HA. This high degree of participation necessitates the school district ensure its athletic program adhere to high standards of quality. Many students and faculty at HA invest considerable time and energy in the athletics program and the district invests 2.1% of its total operating budget in the HA athletics program. Such an investment of time and resources obliges the district to evaluate its policies and practices against objective criteria and standards of program effectiveness.

In the spring of 2015, Superintendent Anne McKenzie, Athletic Director Erik Sudnick, and Principal Brian Beck, decided to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the HA athletic program. The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association did not have generally accepted standards of an exemplary interscholastic high school athletic program. Therefore, at the suggestion of a parent, experienced coach, athletic director and former school committee member, the district and school administration decided to use the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) Program Evaluation Model to evaluate the HA athletic program. The goals of the evaluation were: 1) to identify the extent to which the HA program adhered to Standards of an Exemplary Quality Interscholastic High School Athletic Program; 2) identify themes that indicate program strengths, promising practices and areas for improvement; and 3) recommend action steps.

The Evaluation Process

The evaluation process began with a self-study in which the school/athletic department measured its progress in meeting each of the standards and indicators delineated in the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference Standards. HA utilized self-study materials developed by CIAC. As part of the self-study, the HA athletic department surveyed student-athletes, parents, and coaches to solicit feedback on the quality of the athletic program. 68 parents responded to surveys; 18 student-athletes (~14%) responded to surveys; and 12 coaches responded to surveys. It is impossible to ascertain if the 68 parent respondents represent parents of 68 different athletes or if in some instances two parents from the same family responded to the survey; therefore the percentage of parent respondents as a total percentage of parents of student-athletes is not reported. Surveys were sent to current and former coaches. Of the 12 coaches who completed surveys 8 currently coach and 4 are no longer coach at HA. Responding to the self-study questions and the information elicited from surveys allowed the school/athletic program to determine its strengths and areas in need of improvement. The athletic department will develop improvement plans based on the findings of the self-study.

Following the completion of the self-study a visiting team consisting of two educational administrators conducted a one-day site visit to HA. The visiting team reviewed the self-study findings, survey data, various artifacts and evidence (e.g., budget documents, handbooks, evaluation instruments, etc.) and met with various stakeholders (parents, student athletes, administration, and coaches). At the conclusion of the site visit the visiting team completed its report identifying strengths and areas in need of improvement.

The visiting team wishes to thank the principal, athletic director, superintendent and school committee for being one of the few, if not the only, school district to undergo a thorough outside evaluation of its athletic program using the standards of an exemplary interscholastic athletic program. The willingness to be involved in this program evaluation demonstrates the commitment of the school department to provide a high quality program. The visiting team was impressed with the quality of work done by the self-study committee and the contributions of parents, students, and coaches who contributed during the evaluation process. It was apparent that all stakeholders have a deep desire to support the athletic program and make it successful at many levels.

All those who participated as members of the focus groups were forthcoming and seemed to be sharing their thoughts and beliefs without prejudice. This openness and transparency was greatly appreciated and contributed to the validity of the process.

STANDARD I: PROGRAM GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The athletic program has developed a mission statement that clearly defines what the school/program is seeking to achieve and delineates the expectations of the program for student-athletes, coaches, school administration, parents, and community. The expectations of the athletic program are the fundamental goals by which the school assesses the effectiveness of the athletic program and services provided.

KEY SURVEY DATA PERTAINING TO PROGRAM GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Survey respondents who agree or strongly agree with the statement *I am familiar with the mission and goals of the athletic program* - 86% of parent respondents; 44% of student-athlete respondents; and 73% of coach respondents
- Survey respondents who agree or strongly agree with the statement *The athletic mission reflects the values of the school and community* – 62% of parent respondents; 33% of student-athlete respondents; 63% of coach respondents

COMMENDATIONS

- The mission of the athletic program reflects the core values and beliefs of the program; that athletics should enhance the educational experience and help students to develop in all areas (mental, physical, social, and emotional). The mission of the program clearly delineates the philosophy of the program and the objectives of the athletic program.
- The athletic program handbooks define expectations of the athletic program for coaches, student-athletes, parents, and community. The handbooks include relevant policies and recommended practices of the MIAA and Hadley School Committee.
- The mission and expectations of the athletic program drive decision-making.
- The mission and expectations are published annually. The athletic director reviews and disseminates handbooks at the start of each season.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- The athletic program mission and expectations have not been reviewed by all stakeholders in the program (coaches, student-athletes, parents, school committee, community members, teachers, and administrators) since the appointment of the current athletic director (2012). The district should coordinate an advisory committee to review the mission and expectations and make recommendations for revisions.
- Develop a system of regular review of mission and expectations to assure they reflect the needs of the student-athletes, the school and the community.
- Align athletic program handbooks with the student handbook to ensure consistency of expectations in all school programs.
- The athletic program mission and expectations are familiar to the majority of parents and coaching staff but not to the majority of athletes. The athletic program should develop a process by which athletes internalize the important components of both the mission of the district and the expectations associated with their participation.

STANDARD II: PROGRAM CURRICULUM

The athletic program has developed and implemented programs, activities and curricula that enable the school to achieve its athletic mission and expectations. Embedded in this standard, in addition to sport specific skill development and the promotion of academic achievement, are the teaching and endorsement of sportsmanship, character development, ethics, values, living a healthy and drug free lifestyle and appropriate behavior for all student-athletes, coaches, parents, and spectators.

SUMMARY OF SURVEY DATA PERTAINING TO PROGRAM CURRICULUM

- Survey respondents who agree or strongly agree with the statement *The athletic program promotes and recognizes academic achievement* – 45% of parent respondents, 30% of student-athlete respondents, 63% of coach respondents
- Survey respondents who agree or strongly agree with the statement *Athletic achievements are given appropriate exposure within the school* – 56% of parent respondents, 63% of student-athlete respondents, 72% of coach respondents
- Survey respondents who agree or strongly agree with the statement *The athletic department articulates its expectations regarding sportsmanship and behavior* – 81% of parent respondents, 56% of student-athlete respondents, 90% of coach respondents

COMMENDATIONS

- Hopkins Academy has received the Sportsmanship Award for Division III Golf and the District F Conference Sportsmanship Award in 2014-2015.
- Coaches, faculty and administration consistently reinforce behavior and expectations for student-athletes.
- The majority of student-athletes are multi-sport athletes.
- There is a high level of communication and collaboration among coaches at all levels.
- There is a very high level of pride developed by all stakeholders regarding both sportsmanship and scholarship.
- The student-athletes respect and appreciate that academics and scholarship are made the top priority at Hopkins Academy.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Develop curricula/program guides/or documents for sport specific training, conditioning and skill development
- Develop process for monitoring and supporting student-athletes' academic achievement.
- Develop leadership opportunities for student ambassadors/captains.
- Create more opportunities to recognize academic excellence of student-athletes.

STANDARD III: PROGRAM RESOURCES AND EQUITY

The athletic program is provided sufficient support and resources by its governing body and the community to assure the achievement of the athletic mission and expectations. Equitable resources, facilities, and opportunities are afforded to all student-athletes and sports programs including intramural programs for students not involved in interscholastic sports. The athletic program is in compliance with all state and federal mandates.

SUMMARY OF SURVEY DATA PERTAINING TO PROGRAM RESOURCES AND EQUITY

- Survey respondents who agree or strongly agree with the statement *All students are given an equal opportunity to participate* – 45% of parent respondents, 33% of student-athlete respondents, 91% of coach respondents
- Survey respondents who agree or strongly agree with the statement *Practice and game facilities are equitable for boys and girls* – 48% of parent respondents, 67% of student-athlete respondents, 91% of coach respondents
- Survey respondents who agree or strongly agree with the statement *Provision of uniforms is equitable for boys and girls* – 40% of parent respondents, 44% of student-athlete respondents, 90% of coach respondents
- Survey respondents who agree or strongly agree with the statement *Athletic teams are financially as well supported as those of our opponents* – 46% of parent respondents, 44% of student-athlete respondents, 63% of coach respondents

COMMENDATIONS

- Gender equity audit tool indicates 0% variance in proportionality (number of interscholastic male and female athletic opportunities proportionate to the number of male and female students enrolled).
- 2.1% of school department operating budget supports athletics. There are no fees associated with participation in the athletic program.
- The athletic program receives generous support from Booster organizations.
- The athletic director has developed a system to document and monitor how financial resources are allocated including purchases from the operating budget and from private organizations. The system monitors spending by level and gender.
- Students with special needs (504 plans and IEPs) actively participate in the athletic program.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Athletic program would like to conduct a complete Title IX audit.
- Fields are in need of significant improvement and no funding has been identified.
- Girls' locker room has been on district capital plan for a number of years and there is no immediate funding plan to address needed improvements.
- Direct access and communication to coaches regarding students with special needs and those on 504 plans.
- Transparency regarding the use of funding generated through the Booster organizations and donations made outside of the Booster organizations.

STANDARD IV: PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The athletic program has the administrative structure, policies, procedures, and personnel in place to allow for the attainment of the athletic mission and expectations. The program encourages the active involvement of coaches, student-athletes, parents, booster clubs, and the community in decision making to promote an atmosphere of ownership and participation. The accomplishments of the program are regularly acknowledged and celebrated. The program has a clearly defined formative and summative evaluation plan in place which is designed to enhance the professional growth of all coaches. The athletic program is in compliance with all state and federal statutes.

KEY SURVEY DATA PERTAINING TO PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

- Survey respondents who agree or strongly agree with the statement *In general, athletic policies and procedures are clearly defined and effective* -49% of parent respondents, 44% of student-athlete respondents, 72% of coach respondents
- Survey respondents who agree or strongly agree with the statement *The athletic program is well administered* – 42% of parent respondents, 11% of student-athlete respondents, 72% of coach respondents
- Survey respondents who agree or strongly agree with the statement *Input regarding the athletic program is valued* – 32% of parent respondents, 13% of student-athlete respondents, 81% of coach respondents

COMMENDATIONS

- The athletic program has clearly defined policies and procedures.
- The athletic program has a student-athlete/parent handbook that clearly defines expectations and is updated regularly to align with MIAA regulations.
- The athletic program provides all coaches with a coaches' handbook.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Regular updating of all handbooks.
- Professional development for coaches regarding MIAA expectations and regulations.
- Develop written guidelines for Booster Clubs and other funding sources.
- Identify opportunities for increased input on athletic program from student-athletes and parents.
- Ongoing assessment and reinforcement of parent and athlete knowledge and practice of policies and procedures.
- Develop a formalized methodology for parent and athlete feedback regarding the management decision making of the athletic program.
- Establish a "State of the Program" report on an annual basis.
- Development of simple and straight forward protocols for participation of underclassmates, to include 7th and 8th graders at the varsity level.

STANDARD V: PROGRAM AND PLAYER EVALUATION

The athletic program has an ongoing program evaluation procedure in place designed to measure the department's success in achieving its mission and expectations and the developmental skill growth of each student-athlete. The skill growth of athletes is formally assessed at the end of each season and improvement plans are co-developed by the coach and athlete. The athletic department reports its progress in meeting its mission and expectations to the school administration and develops action plans for improvement.

KEY SURVEY DATA PERTAINING TO PROGRAM AND PLAYER EVALUATION

- Survey respondents who agree or strongly agree with the statement *Coaches demonstrate competence in teaching about sport* – 59% of parent respondents, 67% of student-athlete respondents
- Survey respondents who agree or strongly agree with the statement *Coaches are objective in their post evaluation of athletes* – 18% of parent respondents, 22% of student-athlete respondents
- Survey respondents who agree or strongly agree with the statement *Coaches develop skill goals for individual players and assess each student athlete in relation to these goals* – 24% of parent respondents, 40% of student-athlete respondents, 64% of coach respondents

COMMENDATIONS

- Coaches communicate frequently regarding a player's role on a team.
- Beginning in the 2015-2016 school year, the athletic department instituted a procedure in which all coaches check in with each athlete individually mid-season and at the end of the season regarding their skill levels and areas in need of improvement.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Regular review of the mission statement and expectations of athletes with athletes and parents.
- Regular report to school committee on program outcomes and adherence to mission.
- End of season review report developed by coaches and communicated to athletes and parents regarding strengths and areas for improvement.
- Development of individual improvement plans for athletes.
- Develop methods of communicating with parents and athletes regarding the evaluation of athletic skills and areas of development.

SUMMARY

The Hopkins Academy Athletic Program has worked very hard at establishing itself as a program that expects to meet all of the requirements, regulations and legislative responsibilities placed upon it by the State and Federal regulatory organizations. The Hopkins Academy Athletic program has also established itself as a program that is recognized as having developed outstanding individuals and teams as demonstrated by the numerous Sportsmanship Awards earned throughout the years. It is also clear that academics and scholarship are not only expected from their athletes but is an expectation of the athletes themselves and of their parents. The development of the “whole” student is clearly a goal and an expectation that is shared by all parties involved across the entire athletic program. Students, coaches, and administration describe a significant emphasis on scholarship and sportsmanship along with making individual sport programs successful and they deliver on that emphasis. Parents clearly recognize the value of having their sons and daughters participate in activities that focus on the growth of the entire student regardless of their individual abilities.

The athletic program has also been successful in developing very competitive teams and individuals across many sports. This success is a point of pride for, not only the school and district but is also very important for many factions of the community as well. Success on the athletic field is something that has brought this community together for a long time. For that reason, there is a very strong emotional tie to being successful in sports by present members of the school community, their families, and those who have been associated with these teams in the past. The School District clearly recognizes this and works to meet these expectations.

There have been many very positive components identified throughout this report but there are also a number of areas that have been identified needing some attention across all five of the evaluated standards. These issues are outlined above under “Areas for Improvement”. In addition to these areas we have identified some global concerns as well. We also attempt to give some recommendations as to how to begin to address these concerns so that the program can continue to improve and flourish.

Primarily, there seems to be a significant chasm between what the school athletic program administration believes is being communicated and implemented and what the athletes perceive is being done and/or communicated. In addition, this chasm also seems to be present between the administration and parents. This difference in perception is demonstrated by the responses made to the statement *“Input regarding the athletic program is valued”*. To this statement only 32% of parents agreed or strongly agreed and only 11% of students agreed or strongly agreed while 81% of coaches agreed or strongly agree. Another example can be taken from the statement *“Provision of uniforms is equitable for boys and girls”*. For this statement 40% of parents agreed or strongly agreed and 44% of students agreed or strongly agreed while 90% of coaches agreed or strongly agree. These are only a few of the many examples of a significant difference between the responses made from the groups surveyed. This discrepancy can be best described as being the results of ineffective lines of communication and /or a lack of transparency. Throughout our process there was no indication that any group or individual communicated anything to us that they did not believe was the absolute fact. Therefore the only thing we can determine is that there is a difference between what people know to be

fact and how those facts are being communicated to others. A better method of sharing information is needed so that all stakeholders are current on issues and are supplied with evidence to support the facts. When evidence is not supplied, there is a tendency for people to fabricate their “own” facts to support their beliefs and perceptions. This kind of interpretation is counterproductive for everyone.

The recommendation is to establish an Athletic Program Advisory Council to work with the Athletic Director and Principal. This council would help with the dissemination of policies, procedures, and general communication between all stakeholders. The council would play an advisory role only but could reflect the concerns and issues related to all involved. This council would be made-up of individuals not directly involved in the athletic program as either, coach, athlete, or parent but could be made up of individuals who have had those associations in the past, as well as individuals who are neutral to the everyday operation of the athletic program (community members, former students, former teachers, other town officials). This council could also advise the schools administration regarding new hires, establishment of new policies, and reflect on how to ensure that there is a consistency regarding what people know and what they understand.

Finally, there seems to be a significant effort to develop specific processes to address potential situations. It seems that this is done in an effort to bring clarity to the way the situation will be handled. At least in one situation this seems to have complicated the issue and made it difficult for many to understand it and to feel comfortable with the results. The example given revolves around the eligibility of 7th and 8th grades on varsity teams. It is understood that this was put in place to protect the younger students but it seems to be very convoluted and affected by too many factors. Similarly, the policy that seniors will not be cut from a varsity team seems to undermine many of the constructs associated with competition, reward for performance, and development of individual abilities. Simplification of these policies and opening membership to the best players based on performance could go a long way to eliminate much misperception and resentment.

These are only suggestions based on what was seen and heard from those involved in the review. The time spent on-site was limited and may not have produced a completely accurate picture of the program. However, we believe that this is a strong program that is working very hard to address all the needs of the student athletes they serve. The Hadley Public Schools and Hopkins Academy can be proud of what they have and know that continued improvement will come only with a cooperative effort made by all involved.

VISITING TEAM MEMBERS

Mr. Alvin Morton, J.D.

Mr. Morton serves as the Assistant Superintendent for Student Support Services for Chicopee Public Schools. Prior to serving in his current position, Mr. Morton was a Program Quality Assurance Specialist with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and a Student Services Administrator for the Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools. . Mr. Morton brings experience and knowledge as a lawyer, educator, coach, administrator and program evaluator. Mr. Morton has extensive coaching experience including CYO and high school basketball. He also has experience participating in athletic programs.

Dr. Patrice Dardenne

Dr. Dardenne is a retired superintendent and currently works full time at American International College. He sits on the MIAA state swimming advisory board and was a coach for ten years. His teams have won state and regional championships. Dr. Dardenne has been inducted into the State Swimming Hall of Fame as a coach. Dr. Dardenne also has experience building high quality athletic programs and continues to keep abreast of Massachusetts athletic policies and best practices.