

ATHLETICS

The Gorham School Committee recognizes the value of athletics as an integral part of the educational program. As such, the athletic program reflects and advances District Core Documents, specifically, but not exclusively, the ideals and the goals as articulated in the Commitment to Learning, the Code of Conduct, and the District's Wellness Policy.

The Committee believes that participation in sports provides a significant learning experience and opportunity for personal growth. As an important component of the District's comprehensive educational program, the athletic program is an extension of teaching and learning, and is aligned with the Guiding Principles of Maine's System of Learning Results. In competition and practice, student athletes learn skills, strategies, relationships, leadership, self-discipline and responsibility. They also learn the importance of setting goals for themselves and the team, and planning how to achieve those goals.

The Committee also believes that participation in sports is attendant to physical, mental and emotional health and fitness. Sports provide the incentive for developing and maintaining healthy bodies and active minds. Sports promote habits of exercise and good nutrition that can last a lifetime. Participation in sports contributes to the development of moral character; it builds self-confidence; and it advances a sense of personal responsibility for making healthy lifestyle choices. Being part of a team also creates a feeling of belonging and the importance of contributing to the common good, and offers a supportive network that contributes to emotional well-being.

Based on these beliefs, it is the Committee's intent that the District offers students the opportunity to experience developmentally sound athletic programs.

At the high school level, interscholastic athletic programs will be designed to serve the needs of students who have shown that they are developmentally and emotionally ready for focused competitive experiences. At this level, the purpose of athletic programs is to promote healthy competition, sportsmanship, cooperation, integrity and citizenship. Sub-varsity programs may be available to students who wish to learn and compete in a new sport. The Committee also supports intramural sports as a way to involve students who are not competing in interscholastic activities.

At the middle school level, Gorham's athletic programs will be designed to meet the developmental needs of students through appropriate intramural and interscholastic activities. At this level, athletic programs will emphasize exploration of various sports, the strengthening of fundamental skills, teamwork, sportsmanship, and health and safety. It is the Committee's intent that the programs promote opportunities for involvement of all team members in practices and play. The Committee supports intramural activities for students not participating in interscholastic activities or when financial, staffing or other concerns require the school to limit the number of students participating in interscholastic activities.

The Committee recognizes that the capacity for young people to flourish is significantly enhanced when they are engaged in activities with their peers; activities that are led by caring and competent adults that focus on developing self confidence and the importance of working together to achieve common goals. Reflecting that core belief, the Committee encourages District and School Administrators to establish protocols for student academic achievement that will advance their opportunity to participate in athletics and activities, while providing the support required to enable them to make significant and timely academic progress.

The Committee will be responsible for approving the school sponsorship of interscholastic athletic programs. The Superintendent/designee (e.g., Athletic Director) shall be responsible for making recommendations concerning the approval of new athletic programs or the modification or elimination of existing programs. The Committee may articulate, through policy, criteria to be considered in decision-making or may delegate the responsibility for developing such criteria to the Superintendent/designee.

Adopted: February 11, 2009