

# JJI Philosophy of Athletics

The Board of Directors recognizes the value of athletics as an integral part of the educational program.

The Board believes that participation in sports provides a significant learning experience and opportunity for personal growth. Learning in sports is closely related to learning in the classroom, supporting 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 Board also believes that participation in sports is related to physical 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 builds self-confidence and a sense of personal responsibility for making healthy lifestyle choices. Being part of a team also creates a feeling of belonging and offers a supportive network that contributes to emotional well-being.

Based on these beliefs, it is the Board's intent that the school unit offer 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 ready for intense competitive experiences. At this level, the purpose of athletic programs is to promote healthy competition, sportsmanship, cooperation, integrity and citizenship. It is important to note that at the high school level, especially for the varsity teams, playing time will be dictated by the coach. Whenever feasible, junior varsity programs will be available to students who wish to learn a new sport. The 9<sup>th</sup> grade/JV programs are designed to prepare students for consideration at varsity level. These programs emphasize skill development and focus on competitive element of sport. The Board also supports intramural sports as a way to involve students who are not competing in interscholastic activities.

At the middle school level, the school unit'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 Board's intent that the programs promote opportunities for involvement of all team members in practices and play. The Board 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 Board 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 Board may articulate, through policy, criteria to be considered in decision-making or may delegate the responsibility for developing such criteria to the Superintendent/designee.

Cross Reference: JJIB -- Sponsorship and Evaluation of Athletic Programs

JJIBA -- Hiring and Evaluation of Coaches

JJIBB -- Sportsmanship

KJA -- Relations with Booster Organizations

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