

HIGH SCHOOL TRANSITION PLAN FOR ACTIVITIES, ATHLETICS, AND PROGRAMS

Approved by the RRPS Board of Education on 2/25/08

As we prepare for the 2009 opening of Cleveland High School (CHS), it is essential that we establish a clear transition plan that takes a firm and comprehensive position on a number of topics. The objective is to establish strong and equitable academic, athletic, co-curricular, and extracurricular programs at both Cleveland HS and Rio Rancho HS.

BOUNDARY AND TRANSFER ISSUES

Out-of-boundary transfer requests for students residing in Rio Rancho:

The Board of Education established boundaries for RRHS and CHS at the last board meeting of December 2007. The boundary line is Northern Blvd. This decision was made after a comprehensive review was conducted by a committee representing a number of community stakeholders. A concentrated effort was made to strike a long-term balance in enrollment numbers between the two schools.

In support of this effort, transfers between schools will not be allowed. Comparable academic, extra, and co-curricular programs will be offered ensuring equitable opportunity for all students. The RRHS JROTC program will be housed at the new Career Technical Center at the current Mid-High and will be open to students from both high schools.

Transfer requests for students residing outside of Rio Rancho:

Under the state Open Enrollment Act, Rio Rancho Public Schools permits students from outside of Rio Rancho to apply for admission to Rio Rancho schools on a space-available basis. Transfer students must re-apply on a year-to-year basis. RRPS reserves the right to designate which high school current and future out-of-district high school level students must attend. During the 2009 – 10 school year, when all seniors are still at RRHS, Rio Rancho HS will not accept any new out-of-district transfer requests because enrollment will be very high.

NMAA (Associated) Issues:

The New Mexico Activities Association (NMAA) governs student participation in a variety of extracurricular and co-curricular activities. These include student government, band, choir, mock trial, chess, speech and debate, drama, spirit and cheer, PBA, DECA, FFCLA, JROTC, and many others as well as student athletics. The following recommendations apply to students participating in NMAA-sanctioned activities and athletic programs:

1. Students of Full-Time RRPS Employees (living in or out of district)

For purposes of eligibility a RRPS employee will be defined as a full time employee as interpreted by the Human Resources Department. RRPS believes in the NMAA concept of Pursuing Victory with Honor and will pay particular attention to the concept of “gamesmanship.” The intentional hiring of a parent / person with the intent to allow student(s) to gain eligibility at either RRHS or CHS is an example. Students whose parent / guardian fall into this possible situation will not be granted automatic eligibility. Each case

will be reviewed by a committee to be composed of each HS site athletic coordinator, each principal, the district athletic director, and superintendent of schools (or designee).

It is the intent of RRPS to uphold all policies and procedures set forth by the NMAA. We discourage these types of situations and in most cases the student will be subject to the 90 / 180 day period of ineligibility.

- A. If enrolled currently at RRHS the full-time employee's son or daughter will be given the option of selecting the high school they wish to attend effective August 2009. This is the NMAA one free choice rule. After making a choice, students that request a transfer will be held to all NMAA transfer policies and procedures.
- B. If enrolled currently at any RRPS middle (and MH grade 8) / elementary school, the full time employee's son or daughter will be given the option of selecting the high school they wish to attend effective their 9th grade year. This is the NMAA one free choice rule. After making a choice, students will be held to all NMAA transfer policies and procedures.

2. All other students:

- a. It is suggested that the board of education enact a policy indicating that RRPS will not follow NMAA By – Law 6.5.4 Eligibility Retention. (See NMAA policy manual). This waiver to NMAA policy should be in effect for the 2009-2010 and 2010-11 school years. Then all enrollment / transfer requests would be handled as per #b and #c below.
- b. New out-of-boundary and out-of-district students (beginning in the 2011-12 school year): Students accepted via open enrollment would stand subject to the NMAA Eligibility policies. Essentially the one free choice rule would apply.
- c. Out of district students and out of boundary students currently enrolled in a RRPS school (beginning in 2011-12):
 - i. Out of district students currently enrolled at RRHS must attend the RRPS high school to which they are assigned by the district. Rio Rancho Public Schools reserves the right to designate which high school current and future out-of-district students must attend.
 - ii. [At a future date, the school board will determine how out-of-district and out-of-boundary students currently attending Rio Rancho Mid-High, middle schools, and elementary schools will transition into the high schools. This could be done through assignment of students to a high school, or through requiring students to “feed” into the high school that serves the middle school/elementary school the student attends.]

Parents are strongly encouraged to carefully review the NMAA regulations and policies regarding establishing residency for purposes of athletic eligibility.

ATHLETIC PROGRAMS STRUCTURE DURING HIGH SCHOOL TRANSITION

The following plan reflects an extensive meeting involving Scott Affentranger, Jim Smelcer, Tom Horton, Toby Manzanares, and Gary Hveem, who reached agreement on all issues to follow. It has also been reviewed and agreed to by RRHS principal Richard VonAncken and Athletic Director Bruce Carver.

PHILOSOPHICAL POSITION

In order to ensure increased participation by student athletes, begin to build a sense of school spirit/cohesiveness, and effectively manage the existing two team framework (currently at grade 8 & 9), we recommend that we do the following beginning July 2008.

All Rio Rancho Mid-High (RRMH) students grade 8 & 9 will be designated by the high school they will feed into. Rather than continue to play one blue and one green team (two-team format) we would move to one RRHS and one CHS team at each grade. This structure begins to address the goals listed above and will provide an opportunity to start building a sense of identity for CHS students and teams. This will be done in (football, volleyball, basketball, softball, baseball, cheerleading, and possibly soccer). All other sports will continue to be unified until the opening of CHS in 2009.

Students in grades 10-12 will compete for RRHS at both the JV and V level in all sports. While we recognize that this creates some difficulty for sophomores, especially those who are scheduled to attend CHS in 2009, we feel this recommendation provides the least amount of constraints (such as facility overcrowding, scheduling difficulty, extensive travel, increased budgets, and the possible or perceived loss of CHS students being able to contend for a varsity position).

EXPECTATIONS (RECRUITING)

It is the expectation that all RRPS employees will support the opening of CHS and the boundary / transfer decision of the board. They will work collaboratively with CHS staff to ensure a smooth transition. It is also understood that they will comply with all by-laws set forth by the NMAA and will refrain from any conduct that might suggest or hint at recruiting. While the list of associated behaviors is quite extensive a simple rule would be to never initiate any conversation with a perspective student – athlete or their family about where they will be attending school and answer all inquires from student – athletes and their families regarding attendance options by pledging the full support of the boundary / transfer decision and all NMAA eligibility by laws.

HANDLING OF RECRUITING VIOLATIONS BY RRPS EMPLOYEES

It is our intent to remain in compliance with all polices and procedures that govern athletics in RRPS and the state of NM. All accusations / suggestions of recruiting violations will be investigated thoroughly. Violations will be dealt with in the following manner.

Violation #1

Staff member will receive a written reprimand to be placed in their personnel file.

Violation #2

Staff member will receive a second written reprimand which will be placed in their personnel file. Any staff member that is currently employed in an extra / co-curricular supervisory role will be suspended indefinitely from that position. A formal report to the New Mexico Activities Association will be initiated and the employee will be subject to any / all penalties imposed by the NMAA / PED

Violation #3

Staff member will be recommended for termination of employment. A second formal report to the New Mexico Activities Association will be initiated and the employee will again be subject to any / all penalties imposed by the NMAA / PED.

EXPECTATIONS (rules) FOR RECRUITING COACHES

It is agreed upon by the CHS leadership team and the RRHS leadership team that neither group will contact coaches to discuss their coaching plans for 2009-2010 while they are coaching “in season.”

HIRING OF CHS COACHES

It is our recommendation to start hiring head coaches this spring. We would begin with fall sports and move to winter and conclude with spring sports. Every attempt will be made to place these coaches into open teaching positions within the district with the understanding they will move to CHS in 2009. These coaches will be charged with coaching the CHS students at grade 9, working with the CHS principal, District AD, and CHS AC on the start up recommendations for the new program.

STAFFING PHILOSOPHY

The success of any program(s) resides in the quality of the individuals selected. CHS and RRHS will make every effort to hire the best “teacher and coach” possible for every position. We agree that it is best if the coach / sponsor is a district employee and employed at the school where they are coaching / supervising. With this philosophy in mind both the CHS and RRHS principals will instruct their leadership team(s) to look for / recommend for hire individuals who are excellent teachers and excellent coaches (sponsors of extra and co-curricular activities). Essentially this will become one of the highest priorities when hiring. (We understand that all state and local licensure requirements must be met).

DISTRICT SCHOLASTIC ELIGIBILITY RULE

The Rio Rancho Public Schools as a member of the NMAA will support all policies regarding athletic eligibility. A point of emphasis is that the 2.0 GPA rule will be adhered to. Individual programs may implement a more stringent GPA requirement (higher not lower) but cannot cut a student – athlete when they fail to meet the more stringent requirement. The student-athlete must remain part of the program and be allowed to practice.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

District AD
RRHS AC
CHS AC
MS AC (all middle schools)

Our Current Under Level Athletic Program (2007 / 2008) **Grades 7, 8, 9**

We are currently operating on a multiple team basis in grades 7, 8 and 9. The three middle schools, as well as the Mid-High, have two teams per gender in each sport. The sports included are: volleyball, football (Mid-High only), basketball (girls and boys), baseball and softball.

These are school board expectations and additional money has been added to the budget for each head coach to see that it happens.

The Under Level Athletic Program (2008 / 2009)

Grades 7, 8, 9, 10

We will continue to operate on the multiple team bases in these sports. However, now that the high school boundary line has been established the teams will be divided according to attendance zones. For example the two 8th grade football teams will no longer be the Rams (Blue and Green) but a Ram team and a Storm team.

Again, these are school board expectations and a budget will be put into place accordingly.

The Under Level Athletic Program (2009 / 2010)

Grades 7, 8, 9, 10, 11

The Mid-High will become a fourth middle school and the multiple team configurations will change a bit. Each middle school will have one 7th and one 8th grade team by gender creating four boys teams and four girl's teams in each sport.

Grades 9-12 will be housed at Rio Rancho High School and grades 9-11 at Cleveland High School in accordance to geographic boundary. Both locations operate C-Team, Junior Varsity and Varsity level programs at that point in time. Both high schools will open their doors grades 9-12 the following school year – 2010/2011

Student / Athletes meeting high academic expectations

As a result of adding the multiple sport teams concept grades 7, 8, and 9 has now in essence doubled the number of participants of any other school district our size. This is twice the number of students that are held to a higher standard of academic achievement and better behavior and attendance expectations. These students have also accepted the challenge of taking their educational opportunities to the next level by participating beyond the normal bell schedule. Scholastic eligibility reports at the end of each grading period indicate that these students as a group achieve at a very high performance levels academically.