

## *Junior High Athletics*

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Since the February 27th Board of Education meeting many questions have been asked regarding the elimination of Junior High Athletics and Activities. In particular, two topics of conversation seem to occur more than others. First, is the communication of the potential cuts and lack of community input that took place and second, the potential of self-funding sports. The intent of this communication is to address both of these topics.

**Communication** – Two public Board of Education meetings were held to discuss the potential of significant cuts immediately following the submission of a petition signed by over 10 percent of the registered voters in Meridian CUSD that halted the sale of Working Cash. At those meetings, the potential for cuts were discussed and the potential of eliminating Junior High sports was directly named. Additionally, the PowerPoint presentations that drove those meetings and also explicitly mentioned Junior High sports as a potential reduction were posted on the District website and discussed on the District’s social media site. It should be noted that at both of those meetings, no public comment occurred. The decision to eliminate opportunities for students was not entered in to lightly, in fact, it was painstaking. The position of the Administration and the Board of Education was to not select particular sports for reduction as there is no possible way to be fair or equitable in such a circumstance.

**Self-funding Sports** – The role of administration and the Board of Education is to provide the best possible experience for all students within our District. While the intent of parents willing to self-fund the sports their child participates in is to be commended, it is not a concept that is sustainable, addresses the real issues at hand, or considers the needs of all Meridian CUSD students. The Administration and Board of Education have been charged with making very difficult decisions that are geared toward Meridian CUSD being able to sustain in the future. By allowing certain athletics or activities that have financial backing of parents to operate as a function of the District when others cannot, is not something the District is willing to entertain.

The decision to eliminate Junior High Athletics is one that takes away opportunities from students. This is simply not a position that Administration, nor the Board of Education, would ever want to take. The financial condition of the District, however, dictated that drastic action be taken. As much as not having Junior High athletics and activities hurts, so too do increased class sizes in elementary schools, fewer offerings at the high school, less support in terms of aides, longer bus rides for students, and a significantly reduced amount of Custodial staff. While the District appreciates the offers of parent-funded sports, what we need now is a sustained solution to our still existent revenue shortfall issue – and that will not occur as a result of certain parents or community members attempting to self-fund individual projects or activities that they happen to be personally passionate about.