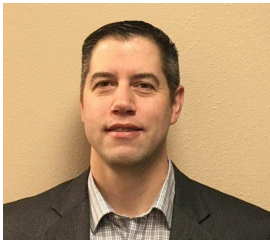


Major changes ahead for GMCS athletics

Written by By Jonathan Gregg Sun Correspondent
Friday, 09 February 2018 08:46



Most district schools dropping a class, except in football

At the end of last year, the New Mexico Athletics Association voted to make major changes to the way schools are classified statewide. The NMAA voted to collapse the existing six class structure down to five for all sports except football.

Asked during Monday's schoolboard meeting how this would impact Gallup McKinley County Schools, district Athletic Director Ben Chavez said, "this will directly impact every school in McKinley County."

In addition to concerns on the impact of the new classification system, Board Member Priscilla Manuelito asked question on behalf of some curious parents.

"One of the concerns I heard going to the games was 'Why was a 3A school playing a 5A school?'"

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Chavez explained how scheduling is more art than science, and many factors are considered, including the strength of a schedule.

However, he reiterated, scheduling control ultimately rests with the local athletic directors.

NEW ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS STATEWIDE

The NMAA also decided, via a vote by athletic directors and coaches, to modify the eligibility standards for the 2018-19 school year. Per a handout provided by the NMAA, there are four key provisions of these new standards.

Use of semester grades only

Eligibility will be determined by a student's semester grades. Importantly, "Fall 2018 eligibility will be based on second semester grades from the 2017-2018 school year," the handout states.

Additionally, if a student is ineligible at the semester, they will undergo checks at designated marking periods, and if they are passing they will again become eligible.

However, Chavez emphasized that the reverse is not the case.

"Students that are passing at the end of the semester will not have to undergo additional checks until after the end of the semester," he said.

Students are no longer allowed an F

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Students must maintain a 2.0 GPA in addition to no F's. This is a change from the past where a student was allowed one F.

Summer course policy change

Beginning the summer of 2018 students may take make up multiple courses to attempt to gain eligibility. But, the caveat is that it must be the same class as the one failed.

"If you failed Algebra I, you would have to take Algebra I again, you couldn't just take any math class," Chavez said.

This rule applies next year, but will use this year's grades.

Cumulative provision

This provision may only be used at the beginning of the semester and needs to include all semester grades starting with the ninth-grade year. This provision may be used if the student has no more than one "F" grade at the semester.

"My concern is how are we getting this out there," Manuelito said. "This is information we need to get out there."

Gallup McKinley School Superintendent Mike Hyatt agreed with Manuelito on the importance of getting the word out.

"We will also be putting this out on social media and (this) is something I think would be appropriate to put in newspapers," he said.

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MCKINLEY ACADEMY

During the board meeting, Hyatt also provided an update on the planning and process of McKinley Academy, which allows for go-getter students to get a jump start on college.

“We have had four community meetings totaling 700 people that have attended those community meetings thus far, and we have three more scheduled in the next week,” Hyatt said.

“I have met with the governor, several legislators,” adding that he also met with several other state and local officials to discuss the vision for career pathing for students.

According to a press release, McKinley Academy is an early college program and “students in an early college program will earn a high school diploma along with the opportunity to earn an Associate’s Degree from local college institutions.”

There’s an existing high school to college program at UNM-G, the Gallup Middle College. It’s unclear at this juncture how the McKinley Academy will parallel their curriculum.

By Jonathan Gregg
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