

The Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference



Athletic Program Evaluation

**Foran High School
Milford, Connecticut**

September 21-22, 2010

**Elaine B. Bessette, Chair
John Barile, Principal
Anthony Vitelli, Athletic Director**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference Mission Statement.....Page 3

Introduction.....Page 4

The Evaluation Process.....Page 4

Overview of FindingsPage 5

Standard I—Program Guiding Principles.....Page 9

Standard II—Program Curriculum.....Page 14

Standard III—Program Resources and Equity.....Page 19

Standard IV—Program Administration.....Page 24

Standard V—Program and Player Evaluation.....Page 31

Follow-Up Responsibilities.....Page 35

Visiting Team Members.....Page 36



THE CONNECTICUT INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

MISSION STATEMENT

The CIAC believes that interscholastic athletic programs and competition are an integral part of students' academic, social, emotional and physical development. The CIAC promotes the academic mission of schools and honorable competition. As such, the CIAC serves as the regulatory agency for high school interscholastic athletic programs and exists to assure quality experiences that reflect high ethical standards and expectations for fairness, equity and sportsmanship for all student-athletes and coaches. The CIAC provides leadership and support for member schools through the voluntary services of dedicated school administrators, athletic directors, coaches and consultants.

EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC PROGRAMS



INTRODUCTION

There is a greater need today than ever before in the history of interscholastic athletics to develop an educational framework which will promote the value and importance of high school athletic programs. The Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference Board of Control (CIAC) has expressed the need to identify educational expectations for school-based athletics and believes that it is incumbent upon CIAC and its member schools to be successful in advancing and accomplishing those expectations. The establishment of an assessment and technical assistance program that will enhance the quality of high school athletics through the teaching of character education, sportsmanship, ethical and socially responsible behaviors will enhance the value and importance of high school interscholastic athletics well above other athletic experiences now available to high school age athletes. In the final analysis, it is the responsibility of educational leaders to prove the educational worth of high school sports and to show that the lessons learned by young people participating in athletic activities will reinforce and supplement the goals of the classroom teachers and the school as a whole. The athletic program evaluation process is a program improvement model designed to assist athletic departments and school administrators in providing an exemplary interscholastic athletic program to all their students and linking the athletic program to the academic mission of the school.

THE EVALUATION PROCESS

Each CIAC member school is encouraged to conduct a periodic formal review of its athletic program to determine the program's success and areas in need of improvement. This review will be measured using a set of defined standards as well as specific indicators for each standard. Each school will measure its degree of compliance with the standards as well as areas identified for improvement efforts. Foran High School volunteered to participate in this process.

Foran High School began its program review by completing a self-study process in which the school and athletic department measured its progress in meeting each of the standards and indicators prepared for schools by the CIAC. Additionally, the athletic department conducted a survey of student-athletes, parents, and coaches to solicit feedback concerning the quality of the athletic program. The school's self-study and information derived from the review of survey data allowed the school and athletic program to determine strengths and areas in need of improvement. It is expected that the athletic department will develop improvement plans based on the findings of the self-study and the recommendations found in the evaluation report.

Following completion of the self-study a visiting team consisting of three school administrators and two athletic administrators conducted a two-day site visit to the school. The visiting team reviewed the self-study documents, the athletic department improvement plans, and met with all stakeholders in the program. The visiting team then determined the athletic department's success in meeting its mission and expectations and to what extent the standards of an exemplary high school athletic program are being achieved. The visiting team completed a comprehensive report delineating the strengths of the program and the areas in need of improvement. Appropriate commendations and recommendations are detailed in this report which will be provided to the school principal and athletic administration. After receipt and review of the report, Foran High School will embark upon a plan to address the recommendations found in the final report, and the school will report its progress to CIAC every two years.

The CIAC wishes to thank the principal and athletic director of Foran High School, the Superintendent of Schools and the Milford Board of Education for their willingness to undergo an athletic program evaluation using the standards of an exemplary interscholastic athletic program. The commitment of the school and district to conduct a meaningful evaluation of their program is a clear indication of their belief that athletics is an integral part of the educational program in Milford. The school is to be commended for its self-study. The open and straightforward self-assessment completed by the school/athletic department, along with recommendations in this report, will form the basis for continued improvement in the athletic program at Foran High School.

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

Five standards form the foundation of the CIAC Athletic Program Evaluation: *Guiding Principles, Curriculum, Resources and Equity, Administration, and Program and Player Evaluation*. The thirty-nine indicators embedded in these standards describe practices that are exemplars for schools to aspire to in their athletic programs. The overall findings from a comprehensive overview of the Foran High School/Milford school district athletic program provide evidence of its dedication to providing the best programs and services to Milford's student-athletes and the many fine traditions established and maintained in the athletic program. These findings also provide some insights and suggestions for the district in the spirit of support for its commitment to continuous growth and the on-going pursuit of excellence.

Because Milford Public Schools has two high schools with comprehensive athletic programs, the Foran athletic department has worked cooperatively with the Law athletic department to develop and adopt an athletic mission statement for the department. The Milford Public Schools Mission Statement emphasizes that their mission statement must illustrate their expectations for the final outcome or goal of the school, i.e., that students who graduate from the two high schools will demonstrate mastery of reading, writing, and numeracy, comprehend and organize, and analyze information in order to independently solve problems and articulate solutions, and demonstrate

the attributes of good citizenship and community/school engagement. The athletic “Philosophy” that serves as the department’s mission states that the school district believes that interscholastic athletics are an integral part of the educational process. Furthermore, athletics make a significant contribution to personal growth of all participants. The mission also emphasizes good sportsmanship, and good mental health and rejects the notion of winning at all costs. In the student-athlete handbook the mission statement is followed by program objectives. These objectives explain that the athletic program provides opportunities for student-athletes to: work with others, compete, develop sportsmanship, accept the outcome of contests, develop desirable personal health habits and to enjoy athletics. Students-athletes were not familiar with the school’s athletic mission statement and were uncertain how to locate a copy. However, they believed that their coaches emphasized the core values reflected in the mission through team meetings and reminders of their expectations at practices and games. The mission is published in the student-athlete’s handbook, which is posted on the school’s web site, but it is not disseminated in hard copy format to those involved in the program. There is a section of the handbook that student-athletes and their parents are required to sign in order to participate. Most parents and athletes admit that they locate the required form on-line, but only skim through the rest of the document, especially student-athletes who are upper classmen who have been involved in team sports for more than two years. In the student-athlete handbook both the Southern Connecticut Conference Code of Conduct and the responsibilities of the student-athlete are outlined. The three responsibilities include: responsibility to yourself, responsibilities to your school, and responsibilities to others. The SCC code of behavior also lists conduct toward officials, taunting or vulgarity, respect for officials, coaches and fans, and obedience of school regulations. Future changes to the mission and expectations should be developed as a part of an annual review using student, parent, and coaches’ surveys or focus groups to keep the mission relevant and every effort should be made to familiarize all stakeholders with the department’s mission.

The Foran athletic department provides a wide range of programs for students as well as many well- designed and maintained facilities that bring pride to the school and the community. The program is well administered thanks to the efforts of the athletic director, the coaches, and the custodial and maintenance staff who take pride in the program and ensure that every aspect of the management of the program effectively meets the needs of student-athletes. FHS provides students with a safe and positive program that provides skill development, training, guidance, support, and recognition to all participants. Other students support the student-athletes and attend team competitions, especially those held at the Foran facilities. However, some students and parents expressed their concerns that the costs of attendance may cause some students to restrict their attendance. There is respect for student-athletes. Students who were interviewed emphasized that athletes are not given favorable treatment and that all students interacted as friends without making distinctions or developing cliques. Proper behavior of all constituents is emphasized before competitions and expectations are published in handbooks and announced before competitions.

Although the athletic program is designed to support student-athletes and coaches are clear in their expectations of student-athletes, Foran High School has not developed a comprehensive curriculum that outlines the skills and knowledge expected in each sport, nor has Foran developed teaching modules that would fit the “teachable moments” related to sportsmanship, healthy lifestyles, and leadership. Some coaches have developed materials that they use for coaching and developing skills that easily could be developed into a sports curriculum, especially if the department created a template that each varsity coach could employ in the development of a guide.

FHS coaches, especially those who are also teachers at the school, monitor the academic and behavioral records of their student-athletes. There is time in the after-school schedule between school dismissal and the beginning of practices for students to meet with teachers to receive additional help or make up missed work. Foran High has a 2.0 grade point requirement that student-athletes must meet and maintain to participate on a team. Coaches, teachers, and counselors are diligent about monitoring the academic performance of student-athletes. Teachers and coaches cooperate when it is necessary for student to remain after dismissal for additional help or make-up of work, however, the tutorial assistance cited in the student-athlete handbook is not available to those falling below the 2.0 average.

The athletic director is not a full-time 12 month administrator, but a teacher responsible for teaching two classes each day. He oversees a large program and facilities without a faculty manager or secretarial assistance. He is a highly-capable and approachable member of the faculty who received praise from everyone interviewed. He puts in many hours to ensure that every student-athlete is provided with the best program possible. He is also highly visible at games and practices and responsive to questions and requests. He is supported by a coaching staff that is dedicated to the program and proud of the work they contribute to make the program successful. The City of Milford should be proud of the programs, facilities, employees, and student-athletes that make Foran High School’s athletic program successful.

The Foran High School athletic program is supported by the City budget which is developed by the Milford Board of Education. The athletic program depends significantly on gate receipts to pay for operational costs of the program and is often in a precarious position when attendance at events falls below previous years for a number of reasons. Teams are also supported significantly by the booster club that provide for items that are not covered by the budget. Individual teams also conduct fund-raising activities to provide for additional items such as special apparel. The booster club is a non-profit organization that supports all Foran teams. Booster club guidelines help to ensure that all student-athletes receive support and acknowledgment.

Foran High School’s athletic department has well-developed policies that govern most aspects of the program, and clarify the expectations for students, coaches and parents. The athletic director

and principal evaluate the performance of the coaches involved in the FHS program. The Foran athletic director provide coaches with free professional development programs within the district that assist them in maintaining their coaching certifications. All Foran coaches are required to conduct pre-season evaluations of their athletes and provide suggestions for improvement during practices throughout the season. Coaches later conduct individual end-of- season evaluations of players that provide suggestions for improvement during off season time—a commendable practice. These end- of- the-season evaluations are collected and reviewed by the athletic director. Most of the student-athletes interviewed indicated that they value these player evaluations.

One of the challenges acknowledged by coaches and parents alike is the need for sound communication and an understanding of policies, procedures, roles and expectations. Better communication and better support for the program would be generated by the development of an athletic advisory council with members who represent students, coaches, parents, teachers, administrators, the board of education, and the community. The group would be responsible for representing their constituents and for communicating with that constituency on a regular basis. The advisory group would also assist with the review of this report and suggestions concerning implementation of the recommendations. Final decisions concerning the many aspects of the program, however, would remain the responsibility of the school administrators.

Most of the constituents agree that it is difficult for Foran High School to support all teams sufficiently and to ensure equity in funding because of the shortage of funds. Results from the athletic surveys revealed that student-athletes perceive that other teams enjoy a higher level of funding or better access to facilities, and most believe that the teams they compete against are better equipped with supplies, uniforms and facilities.

Foran High School has a fine athletic program that is well-supported by parents, athletic personnel, student-athletes, and the community. Student-athletes enjoy training and competing against other schools under the guidance of their coaches, and they are proud to represent Foran High School. The students interviewed by the visiting committee were friendly and articulate. The meetings with coaches, parents, administrators, teachers, and athletes revealed the pride and commitment of the school community to the athletic program. The recommendations included in this report are suggestions for improving a program that has benefited from strong leadership and the dedication of all involved.



STANDARD I **PROGRAM GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The athletic program has developed a mission statement that clearly defines what the school/program is seeking to achieve and delineates the expectations of the program for student athletes, coaches, school administration, parents, and the community. The expectations of the athletic program are the fundamental goals by which the school assesses the effectiveness of the athletic program and services provided.

1. The athletic program mission statement and expectations shall be developed by all stakeholders in the program including, but not limited to, coaches, student-athletes, parents, board of education, community members, teachers, and school administrators. The mission is to be clearly linked to the academic mission of the school and district.
2. The mission shall reflect the core values, beliefs, and goals of the athletic program.
3. The athletic program shall define expectations as they relate to the athletic program for coaches, student-athletes, school administrators, parents, board of education, and the community.
4. The mission and expectations of the athletic program shall be the basis upon which all decisions are made relative to program.
5. The athletic mission and expectations shall be reviewed, revised/reaffirmed bi-annually to assure they reflect the needs of the student athlete, the school and the community.
6. The athletic mission and expectations shall be published and distributed throughout the school community in a manner that ensures that all stakeholders are aware of athletic department's goals.

PROGRAM GUIDING PRINCIPLES

CONCLUSIONS

The original mission statement for the Milford athletic program that serves as the guiding philosophy for both Foran High School and Jonathan Law High School, was developed by the athletic directors in 1987. In 2004 the athletic directors reviewed and revised the athletic mission under the direction of the superintendent of schools. At that time the athletic directors sought input from various members of the school community. However, the schools did not form a committee with representative parents, student-athletes, coaches, and others interested in the program, and there was no process to gain input from a broad sampling of constituents. The results of recent surveys administered at the beginning of the self-study process reveal that these constituents endorse the mission and the values that informed its creation and revision. During interviews with groups of parents, student-athletes, coaches, and teachers, most representatives revealed that they were not familiar with the athletic mission statement, but were able to name several of the values and beliefs that inform the mission. Foran High School athletes will benefit from a mission that is developed by the many stakeholders involved in athletics.

During the revision process in 2004, the athletic directors examined mission statements and goals from other schools that they believed matched the profile and characteristics of the two Milford high schools. The guiding principles for Foran and Law High Schools also reflect the two schools' mission statements as well as the district mission statement. The two athletic directors worked cooperatively in an effort to ensure that the process used to identify the core values and beliefs of the athletic program reflected the beliefs of the community. When the mission and guiding principles are reviewed in the near future, Foran High School should take steps to ensure that a review committee includes representatives from each constituency so that many opinions and beliefs inform the mission and core values that will guide future decisions about the athletic program.

The school's athletic mission statement is well aligned with that of the district and Foran High School. The District Mission Statement places emphasis on academic skills, good citizenship, and community engagement, and the Athletic Mission states that academic requirements come first and that student-athletes should behave in a courteous and respectful manner. The athletic mission also acknowledges that students who participate in the program will acquire knowledge and skills that will have a significant influence on their development. The Foran High School Mission Statement, which was revised during the NEASC accreditation process, also emphasizes the goal of creating responsible and productive citizens who are well-educated.

The district has established academic standards for student-athletes that exceed those of the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC). Foran High School's student-athletes are required to achieve and maintain a 2.0 grade point average. The athletic director and assistant principals monitor student performance and coaches are able to determine the academic performance of their students through a data management program that tracks student grades. Coaches emphasize that academics come first and they support teacher requirements that students stay after school for conferences with teachers or to make up work. However, the tutoring services cited in the *Student-Athlete Handbook* are not available to players who fall

below the requirement. The department also supports the academic progress of students by posting a student-athlete honor roll.

The Foran High School self-study reports that the expectations for student-athletes were developed by a board of education committee and are published in the Student-Athlete Handbook which is included as a section in the Student Handbook. The key components of the expectations are delineated as three major concepts: Responsibility to Yourself, Responsibilities to Your School, and Responsibilities to Others. The Student-Athlete Handbook also publishes the Southern Connecticut Conference (SCC) Code of Behavior. Parent responsibilities emphasize the commitment to the program and a listing of policies and procedures that parents are expected follow. The Athletic Program Objectives include: to work with others, to compete, to develop sportsmanship, to accept the outcomes of every contest, and to enjoy athletics. The *Coaches Handbook* provides coaching staff with expectations that pertain to their responsibilities as well as the policies regarding student-athlete requirements.

When asked about the benefits to student-athletes derived from sports participation, student-athletes, parents, coaches, teachers, and administrators cited many of the values referenced in the mission and objectives of the athletic program. It is evident that the athletic mission, while somewhat general in its wording, reflects the values of the school community. The list of program objectives helps to specify and expand on the concepts referenced in the mission.

The athletic program defines expectations for student-athletes and parents in the *Student-Athlete Handbook*, and through pre-season meetings with parents. The handbook is posted on the district website and parents are required to sign a form that indicates that they have read the handbook and understand the department's expectations, policies, and procedures. Coaches explain expectations to their players through team meetings, and members of the school community are reminded of expectations for spectators through announcements made at the beginning of competitions, and by posting the SCC Code of Behavior at athletic venues. In outlining the expectations for athletes and parents, the department also commits staff and the district to providing adequate equipment, well-trained coaches, and equal levels of competition with skilled officials: "When your son/daughter joins one of the interscholastic athletic programs, he/she commits our staff to certain responsibilities and obligations: to provide appropriate equipment and facilities, to provide trained coaches,(and) to provide equal levels of competition with skilled officials."

The Athletic Mission and objectives influence decisions about the program in a number of ways. The athletic program hires and evaluates coaches based on their ability to model appropriate behavior and commitment to the mission, and the department outlines policies and procedures that govern student behavior in the handbook and discusses them with athletes before, during, and after the sports season. Behaviors contrary to the core values of the program, such as hazing, taunting, involvement with controlled substances, and poor academic performance are the subject of policies outlined for students and their parents. However, the compact mentioned earlier that states that when a student-athlete commits to the program s/he commits the school's staff to certain obligations regarding equipment, facilities, coaches, and officials, is not well-served by the district's dependence on gate receipts and fund-raising by both booster organizations and teams in order to provide for the needs of student-athletes.

Currently, Foran High School has not created a process or a schedule for the regular review of the Athletic Mission and Objectives. The handbook is reviewed annually, but the review of the mission by a committee of representatives has not been established or discussed. The lack of a formal review process also contributes to the lack of familiarity with the mission. It is unclear how the program can be judged or how positive change can be accomplished when so few constituents are familiar with the philosophy and guiding principles of the program. The mission is not widely- disseminated or discussed with parents, students, or coaches; nor is it available in the *Student-Athlete Handbook* posted on the district's website. Most students agree that their coaches discuss expectations with them, but do not take time to discuss the salient ideas of the mission and objectives of the program. When asked where they might find the mission of the athletic program, many student-athletes stated that it was posted on the CIAC website, and only a few parents indicated that they had read any portion of the handbook other than the page they are required to sign for student participation. At the pre-season meetings and awards ceremony no time was dedicated to discussion of how well the department succeeded in meeting its mission and goals. Perhaps the term "department philosophy" rather than "mission and core values" has influenced the view of many that the statement is not the guiding force of the program. Whatever the reasons, the challenge remains to create, disseminate, explain, review, and judge the efficacy of the athletic program through the lens of the athletic mission statement.

COMMENDATIONS

1. The alignment of the athletic mission statement with the district's and school's mission statements
2. The athletic department's emphasis on academic achievement as the first priority for student- athletes
3. The academic eligibility requirement that challenges all students to achieve academically
4. The support that coaches give to the academic requirements by monitoring student grades and cooperating with teachers who request that students remain after school
5. The posting of the student-athlete honor roll
6. The emphasis on expected student-athlete, spectator, and coach behavior through announcement and posting of SCC rules

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop and implement a review process and a regular review cycle for the athletic mission statement that involves representatives of each constituency
2. Increase efforts to ensure that all constituents are familiar with the athletic mission through discussions at preseason, coaches, and parent meetings, prominent placement at athletic venues, and inclusion on department bulletin boards and stationery
3. Ensure that all decisions made regarding the athletic program are influenced by the key concepts in the mission statement
4. Provide the tutoring services cited in the handbook for student-athletes who are in danger of losing eligibility because of their academic performance

5. Provide adequate resources to the athletic program and eliminate the department's dependence on gate receipts and fund-raising to maintain the program
6. Ensure that the mission of the athletic department informs all decisions made about improvements or modifications in the future
7. Adopt the title "Mission Statement" or "guiding Principles" to replace the term "Athletic Philosophy" in order to emphasize its importance in decision-making and program improvement



STANDARD II

PROGRAM CURRICULUM

The athletic program has developed and implemented programs, activities and curricula that enable the school to achieve its athletic mission and expectations. Embedded in this standard, in addition to sport specific skill development and the promotion of academic achievement, are the teaching and endorsement of sportsmanship, character development, ethics, values, living a healthy and drug free lifestyle and appropriate behavior for all student-athletes, coaches, parents, and spectators.

1. Curricula shall be developed and instituted that advance sport specific training, conditioning, and skill development in all sports.
2. Curriculum units/modules shall be developed and taught to all student-athletes and coaches in a formal setting on the following topics: Sportsmanship, appropriate behavior, ethics, values, character development, leadership, and development of healthy lifestyles.
3. Specific programs and activities shall be developed and implemented by each school and athletic department to address the proper behavior of all student-athletes, coaches, parents and spectators at athletic contests.
4. The athletic program shall support and monitor the academic achievement of each student-athlete throughout the high school years.
5. The athletic department promotes a program that is safe, positive, respectful, and supportive and fosters the benefits of multi-sports athletics and the disadvantages of sports specialization.
6. The athletic department provides leadership training to all captains and team leaders.

CURRICULUM

CONCLUSIONS

Foran High School provides an athletic program that is designed to meet the needs of its student-athletes. While Foran High School does not have written curriculum documents that articulate sport-specific skill development and conditioning programs, their student handbook contains a *Student-Athlete Handbook* section (pp. 76-96) which includes a code of behavior, the philosophy of the athletic department, a code of conduct, and regulations-- both CIAC and local. This document was updated three years ago. In addition, coaches are provided with an athletic *Coaches Handbook* which contains the athletic department philosophy, objectives, department policies, copies of forms to be used, and much useful information.

Several individual coaches provide handouts to team members that include goals, team rules, and conditioning information, but there is no program-wide written curriculum. As a result, coaches who are new to the athletic program do not receive information regarding the best practices related to their sport for skill development and sport-specific conditioning. Head coaches work closely with sub-varsity coaches to ensure continuity within their sport. Because there are no sport programs at the middle school level in Milford, their influence and instruction does not extend beyond the high school level. There is at present no connection between the high school coaching staff and local youth league programs through clinics. The athletic program would be greatly enhanced by having each coach develop a written, sport-specific curriculum which includes sport-specific training, skill development, conditioning relevant to the sport, and the development of sportsmanship, character, leadership and a healthy life style. The athletic director would then compile these documents and add the appropriate written overall program-wide information on sportsmanship, leadership, and philosophy.

A well-equipped weight room is available and is always supervised. A number of sports take advantage of this facility. An athletic trainer is on site for 30 hours per week and attends all home contests. In addition, she provides a workshop on concussion awareness for the coaches. The trainer is not involved in developing or overseeing conditioning programs. Because sport-specific manuals do not exist, there is no certainty that the individual needs of student athletes are being met through their workouts. An athletic safety and procedure directive guide, developed by the athletic training provider and the athletic director has recently been made available. This excellent document details all emergency plans and includes criteria for evacuation from every venue used by a Foran High School team. It provides emergency action plans, equipment (i.e. AED), first aid, phone numbers, and much more.

Each season a "Meet the Coaches Night" is held at Foran High School. At these meetings the athletic director explains the expectations and policies of the athletic department to parents. Academic eligibility, sportsmanship, and behavioral expectations are all reviewed and clarified. A DVD from the Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors (CAAD) entitled "Parenting your Student Athlete" is also shown to all in attendance. Coaches also outline their expectations and their sport-specific policies at these meetings. These meetings are not mandatory, and attendance fluctuates from season to season and team to team. However, before their son or daughter may participate in athletics at Foran High School, a parent must sign forms provided in

the *Student-Athlete Handbook* that indicate that they understand the policies and requirements. This document is available on-line.

Foran High School has not yet developed written teaching guides containing modules or units on sportsmanship or character issues. Many sportsmanship issues are addressed in the handbook and at the meetings mentioned previously. Parents and athletes agree that coaches, under the direction of the athletic director, stress proper sportsmanship and conduct and have no tolerance for any form of hazing. The Southern Connecticut Conference (of which Foran High School is a member) provides a Code of Behavior which is detailed in the Foran *Student-Athlete Handbook*, displayed on the wall of the gymnasium, and read to spectators and athletes before all home contests on the public address system. Students are aware of expectations and their accountability for negative behavior. Coaches are held to a high standard as well, and most athletes and parents agree that they practice what they preach. Some teams have athletes sign sportsmanship directives given to them by their coaches.

Team captains are either selected by their coaches, a team vote, or a combination of the two. The process varies from team to team. Some individual coaches use their captains more than others and provide varying degrees of leadership opportunities. At present there is no standard program-wide description of the duties and responsibilities of captains and there is no written guideline for coaches regarding the resources and leadership that effective captains provide. Every season the Southern Connecticut Conference provides a workshop for team captains that Foran captains attend. Individual captains agree that they found this day to be particularly beneficial. However, upon returning to their teams, they receive no further scheduled meetings or follow-up.

The academic achievement of student-athletes at Foran High School is monitored at several levels. The athletic director and coaches emphasize the importance of good grades. The provisions of the “C Rule” requirement for athletic participation are well explained in the *Student-Athlete Handbook*, by the athletic director, and the coaches. The athletic director provides all non-faculty coaches with the progress reports of their athletes. Coaches monitor their athletes’ grades closely, are very aware of their academic progress and discuss any problems with the athletes to head off an eligibility problem. Coaches allow their athletes to seek extra academic help after school that might result in being late for practice as long as they bring a note from the teacher. Although the *Student-Athlete Handbook* mentions the availability of a tutor during the school day, such service is not currently available at Foran High School. Teachers report a good working relationship with coaches and particularly with the athletic director, whom they feel goes to great lengths to keep coaches informed and to head off eligibility issues. Presently, the athletic department has no formal practice whereby all coaches monitor and support their student-athletes consistently. Such a guide would be a useful addition to the coaches’ handbook.

Most parents feel that coaches are helpful and involved in aiding athletes in their quest to play a sport at the college level. However, both athletes and parents do not feel that there is a coordinated effort by the guidance department and athletic department to ensure that procedures for meeting NCAA requirements are explained early in the students’ high school career. In particular, although information concerning the NCAA Eligibility Center is available in the

Student-Athlete Handbook, many of the students and parents are unaware of the details and requirements of the Eligibility Center. Those who are familiar with the NCAA requirements have not been made fully aware of them until grades 11 or 12.

The athletic director requires that each coach submit individual records and achievements for each team in each season. Outstanding achievements are posted on the bulletin board outside the athletic director's office. Each team is required to plan a post-season gathering at which awards are distributed. The booster club sponsors a senior athletes awards night each spring. Each team presents trophies for specific achievements and letter jackets are awarded in both October and April to student-athletes who have accumulated the requisite number of varsity letter points.

The Foran High school athletic department promotes a program that is safe, positive, respectful, and supportive, and it fosters the benefits of multi-sports athletics and the disadvantages of sports specialization. Student-athletes and their parents agree that Foran High School coaches do not encourage sports specialization and they encourage multi-sport participation. Students and coaches state that coaches do not schedule pre-season conditioning workouts that would interfere with in-season sports. All constituencies (coaches, athletes, administrators, faculty, and parents) commend the athletic director for his dedication, work ethic, competence, and integrity. His energy and attention to detail are applauded and cited as a strength of the athletic department.

COMMENDATIONS

1. The communication and direction provided to coaches by the athletic director regarding what is to be taught and emphasized in the areas of academic monitoring, sportsmanship, character building, and other elements of the athletic program
2. The well-organized and thorough emergency action plan provided for coaches and the standing orders for the sports medicine and athletic training provider
3. The efforts of the athletic director and coaches to encourage students to be multi-sport athletes and to discourage sport specialization
4. The athletic department's strong emphasis on sportsmanship which is supported by the entire athletic community
5. The vigilance of the coaches, teachers, and athletic director to monitor student-athletes' academic performance
6. The booster club's support and sponsorship of the senior awards night for athletes

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop and complete a written athletic curriculum that includes sport-specific skill development and conditioning as well as units or modules on sportsmanship, character development, leadership, and healthy life style

2. Establish a Captain's Council to enable the athletic director to enhance the leadership skills of team captains, and to help the athletic director gain more valuable insights into the program
3. Use the athletic trainer as a resource to better educate coaches and athletes on sport and gender- specific conditioning, strength maintenance, and healthy life style
4. Design and implement a formal process that ensures that all coaches consistently monitor the academic progress of their athletes and publish it in the *Coaches Handbook*
5. Provide early and comprehensive information about the NCAA Eligibility Center and eligibility rules (as early as grade 9) to ensure that parents and athletes are prepared and aware of the requirements for continuing play at the college level



STANDARD III **PROGRAM RESOURCES AND EQUITY**

The athletic program is provided sufficient support and resources by its governing body and the community to assure the achievement of the athletic mission and expectations. Equitable resources, facilities, and opportunities are afforded to all student-athletes and sports programs including intramural programs for students not involved in interscholastic sports. The athletic program is in compliance with all state and federal mandates.

1. The athletic program shall be provided sufficient funding to assure the program provides and maintains quality athletic opportunities, personnel, services, facilities, equipment, transportation, uniforms, teaching materials and supplies to support each sport offering.
2. All athletic equipment including uniforms shall be adequate, properly maintained, refurbished or replaced on a prescribed schedule for all teams.
3. The athletic program shall allocate resources, programs and services for all sports equitably.
4. The athletic program shall be in compliance with all state and federal mandates including coaching certification and Title IX.
5. The athletic program provides athletic opportunities to all interested students including special needs students.
6. The athletic program provides equal opportunities for male and female athletes.
7. Athletic programs and activities exist for those students not involved in competitive interscholastic athletics.
8. Funding parity shall exist among all sports programs and support from sources such as booster clubs is considered when allocations are determined.
9. All athletic facilities are properly maintained to ensure the safety of student-athletes and the school shall have a long-range facilities plan to upgrade, improve and to add to existing facilities as necessary.

RESOURCES AND EQUITY

CONCLUSIONS

Foran High School offers a comprehensive athletic program that includes a wide range of sports offered during each of the three seasons. The program affords students the opportunity to become involved in a total of twenty varsity level sports, eleven for the males and nine for the females. The entire athletic program (freshman, junior varsity, and varsity) consists of thirty-three teams. Data for the 2008-2009 school year indicate that the student-athlete population participating at the varsity, junior varsity and freshman levels totals 456 participants. This number represents 53% of the male population (241 student-athletes) and 47% of the female population (215 student-athletes). Of the student-athletes involved in the athletic program, approximately 52% plays a second sport with 11% of the students participating in a third sport. The Athletic Director has the sole responsibility for the operation of the department and for the supervision of forty coaches and a number of volunteers, in addition to teaching two classes per day. He does not receive any secretarial support or assistance from other staff members. His responsibilities are extensive and are an enormous task for any individual.

Revenues used to support the athletic program come from several sources. For the 2010-2011 school year, the board of education has allocated funds totaling \$73,600. It is expected that these funds need to cover all of the department's expenses (excluding the operation costs of the entire program) which include uniforms, supplies, equipment, re-conditioning, and awards for all thirty-three teams and the purchase of any large equipment items (new or replacement equipment). There is also a separate line item for transportation, athletic trainer and coaching salaries. Gate receipts serve as a second source of revenue and must cover all of the operational costs which include; officials, timers, scores, ticket personnel, police, entry fees and other expenses. Admission is charged at many of the events and approximately \$40,000 to \$50,000 is generated through gate receipts, however; the amount generated varies from year to year depending upon the success of the teams as well as spectator turnout. It is extremely risky to rely on gate receipts to cover operational costs as there is no consistent guarantee that these funds will be collected on an annual basis. As a result, the funding could run out prior to the end of the school year thereby jeopardizing the program, especially in the spring season, as has previously occurred. The third revenue source comes from the efforts of the booster club. This group is highly active and has contributed approximately \$30,000 to the department on an annual basis. These funds have been used to purchase necessary equipment and other needs that the board of education budget has failed to provide. Without the efforts of the booster club and the funds generated through gate receipts, the athletic department could not function. Again, it is important to emphasize that dependence on these two sources of revenue is not a common practice. The recent loss of revenue gained through income from soda machine sales has been a tremendous loss to the department as well. In spite of the limited funding, the athletic director has been able to meet most of the budget requests of the coaches through his ability to successfully manage district allocations and gate receipts. The athletic trainer is funded by the board of education and is a valuable asset to the program.

Budget preparation is a unique process as it appears that the stakeholders have very little input, understanding, or influence on the outcome. The athletic director seeks budget requests from the coaching staff and includes them in his proposal. The athletic director determines which items are crucial for the safety of athletes, which teams are due for uniform replacement according to the established cycle, and the costs of continuing needs for the entire program. However, it does not appear that his recommendations are considered in the development of the athletic budget. There is not a clear explanation from administrators or board of education members interviewed regarding the steps involved in the budget-building process and how funds are allocated. An annual audit is conducted that indicates

what is spent per athlete by sport. This serves as a helpful resource in developing the budget from year to year. It would be beneficial to inform all of the stakeholders exactly how the process evolves and should be shared at a board of education meeting so that there are no misunderstandings in how funds are allocated and the needs of the department. While the district administrative practices allow for various directors to present their budgets to the board of education, few take advantage of the opportunity and the athletic director does not enjoy the option. Instead, he is presented with an allocation for the program.

Foran High School has not conducted a recent compliance review. It would be beneficial to complete a gender self-audit in an effort to avoid any additional equity issues similar to the dugout inequity. A self-audit would also ensure that the program is meeting the needs of both the male and female student-athletes. The program does offer a good balance of opportunities for males and females. The cooperative ice hockey program is the only sport that requires a participation fee; however, it does not appear that the funding for this program is distributed equally among the three participating schools. In addition, the insurance and liability appears to rest with the Milford Board of Education. This arrangement needs to be reviewed by all parties involved in the program. There is some miscommunication regarding the cheerleading program. The school district views the program as a club activity yet the coaching stipend is in line with other varsity sports and awards are consistent with those programs as well. The club members and advisor are under the impression that they are a varsity sport and not a club, yet they receive no funding from the athletic department. Communication regarding the status of this program needs to be clarified. The athletic director and coaches work cooperatively to develop plans for the use of outdoor and indoor facilities. Overall, there is evidence that scheduling of all venues is conducted without bias for any particular sports. The athletic director has a rotation plan in place for the purchase of new uniforms. This is an equitable process as is the distribution of funds among the teams. All parties interviewed agreed that budget resources were equitably distributed with the exception of ice hockey and cheerleading. The athletic director is responsible for the reconditioning of uniforms and equipment and gathers input from the coaches on their reconditioning needs. The booster club has also distributed funds fairly by providing \$25.00 designated to each student-athlete for the purchase of approved items such as optional gear. The club has also provided additional equipment to the program (weight room equipment, golf cart, scoreboards, etc.) The booster club works hard to provide for student-athletes regardless of team and the efforts of its members are greatly appreciated by the department. The school and the booster club would benefit from adding a representative from the school system as a member of the club and ensuring that a financial report is submitted to the school administration on a yearly basis. In addition to the booster club, many teams are involved in fund-raising activities. The specific guidelines in place for all fund-raising activities are very helpful in maintaining the types of fund-raising and keeping them to a minimum. Students and parents interviewed expressed a great deal of interest in the addition of lacrosse and indoor track programs. At the present time, there are no guidelines established for steps to add programs. It is essential that these guidelines be developed as soon as possible.

The indoor facilities include the main gymnasium which was upgraded two years ago with renovations to the floor and bleachers. This facility appears to be well-maintained and in good condition. Two scoreboards were added to the gym replacing existing boards. There are two storage areas that are used to house large equipment located near the gymnasium. The weight room is of sufficient size and is well equipped with cardio and strength training equipment. Equipment maintenance is conducted monthly and is the responsibility of the physical education department. A small auxiliary space is used as the wrestling practice facility and houses a batting cage used by the baseball and softball teams on a rotating basis. A small equipment room is also located off this facility. The indoor pool is a good facility with two diving boards and adequate seating. The pool is used by Foran, Law, and Laurelton Hall swimming programs after school hours. Better use of this facility could be arranged as it does sit idle for a great deal of time. Rental fees could also be charged that would help to generate additional funds for the athletic department. There are two locker rooms for the male and female swimming programs that are of adequate size but are in need of renovation. Lockers need to be replaced in the entire facility and the over-all lack of

cleanliness needs to be addressed. Although the replacement of ceilings tiles in all of the locker rooms is a tremendous improvement to the facility, the male and female locker rooms and team rooms are in poor condition. The rest of the locker room area now needs to be addressed so that it will become a more safe and useful facility. A training room, used during the winter season, is equally accessible to the male and female athletes; however, it is also used as a custodial area which is not an ideal situation. During the tour of the indoor facilities we were made aware of a good number of storage areas, one of which could house the custodial supplies thereby creating a true training room. At the time of the visit the indoor facilities did not have an area to display awards received by the various teams because the trophy case provided was being repaired. The outdoor facility consists of a turf field surrounded by a six-lane track, both of which are in good condition. The baseball and softball facilities each have the same amenities with the exception of dugouts at the softball field; in addition, the newly-purchased scoreboard for the softball field has yet to be installed. The four tennis courts need to be repaired on an annual basis because they are in a very wet area and continue to crack. When the traffic flow is redesigned as part of the current renovations, it would be an ideal opportunity to also re-locate the tennis courts. In addition, the present tennis court area could be converted to a practice field which is desperately needed. There is an additional practice field owned by the city that is used for the sub-varsity soccer programs and for the track and field throwing events. During the interview process coaches and athletes felt that this area needs to be maintained on a more regular basis. The availability of this practice is was also limited. It is important to note that the other outdoor fields are well-maintained by two staff members who do an outstanding job and are easily accessible. Some maintenance concerns were addressed regarding the need to repair the sound system and the stadium flagpole. Overall, the male and female locker rooms and team rooms are in poor condition. The stadium field includes lights, bleachers, press box, football locker room, concession stand, and training area. There are no improvement plans to address future maintenance of the turf field or other facilities.

At the end of each season teams attend recognition events or banquets that are planned by the coach/parents and supported through fund-raising efforts. There is a wide variance among these award programs from a simple pizza party to an elaborate banquet. The school itself does not schedule a general end-of-season ceremony that would bring teams together to recognize all sports and celebrate the accomplishments of the department as a whole. In fact, several programs do not hold any type of celebration for the athletes; coaches simply distribute certificates/awards when it is most convenient. The department needs to set minimum standards for the distribution of awards to be followed by all teams. In addition to the certificates, athletes also receive letters and pins depending upon their accomplishments. Students may also earn a letter jacket that is purchased through funds from the board of education, parents and booster club. The senior athletes are recognized for their accomplishments at an end of year banquet that is funded by the booster club. Special awards are distributed by each team as well as plaques to all of the seniors. This program is well-attended and is a very special evening for the seniors. The athletic director does an excellent job organizing this function.

Currently there are no opportunities for students who are not members of an athletic team to participate in intramural sports. The problems with facilities, scheduling events, and budget constraints have resulted in the absence of any intramural activities. Interviews with students revealed an interest in a badminton program. Students also stated that some programs have been tried, but they only lasted a short period of time as students lost interest. The weight room/fitness area is supervised and available to the students four days of the week. It does not appear, however, that non-athletes have taken advantage of this facility.

While students with disabilities are welcome to try out for interscholastic teams, there is no program currently in place that encourages them to become involved in team sports such as unified sports. Several students serve as managers for various teams and there is talk that a unified basketball program may be

instituted this year. This new activity should be pursued so that there are competitive opportunities for the special needs students as well.

COMMENDATIONS

1. The efforts of the athletic director in providing a quality program in spite of the limited funding from the board of education
2. The outstanding financial support and efforts from the booster club that is given to each of the athletic teams
3. The efforts of the athletic director to provide equity for all teams when allocating funds, programs and facilities
4. The guidelines that have been developed for the booster club and fund- raising initiatives
5. The athletic director, administration, and coaching staff for providing a quality and successful program despite stringent budget constraints
6. The efforts of the athletic director to provide a program that meets the needs of all athletes without clerical support

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Milford Board of Education provide sufficient resources on a consistent basis for the operation of the athletic program rather than relying on gate receipts and booster club revenue
2. Clearly communicate to all parties the differences between a club activity, such as cheerleading, and teams under the jurisdiction of the athletic director
3. Ensure that the district's capital improvement plan addresses needed improvements in the school's facilities, such as maintenance of the turf field, repair of the sound system at the football field, repair of the swim touch pads/scoreboard and repairs/renovations to the locker rooms
4. Institute a Title IX review process and develop a plan for addressing the current inequity regarding the dugouts
5. Develop guidelines that outline the process for adding an additional sport
6. Review the current procedures for the operation of the ice hockey cooperative program to ensure that all participants are equally sharing in the costs and liability of the program
7. Implement a plan to upgrade the outdoor facilities by re-locating the tennis courts and creating an additional rectangular practice field
8. Conduct an interest survey as a program review and to determine the need for additional programs such as lacrosse, field hockey and indoor track
9. Measure the needs and interests of Foran High School students for intramural type sport programs and use that information for future planning
10. Evaluate the need for sport programs for special needs students and plan accordingly
11. Provide revenue to the Foran athletic program through rental fees for facilities such as the pool



STANDARD IV **PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

The athletic program has the administrative structure, policies, procedures, and personnel in place to allow for the attainment of the athletic mission and expectations. The program encourages the active involvement of coaches, student-athletes, parents, booster clubs, and the community in decision-making to promote an atmosphere of participation and ownership. The accomplishments of the program, the student-athletes and the coaches are regularly acknowledged and celebrated. The program has a clearly defined formative and summative personnel evaluation plan in place which is designed to enhance the professional growth of all coaches. The athletic program promotes and supports all CIAC regulations and by-laws including those of the national Federation of State High Schools and is in compliance with all state and federal statutes.

1. The school/district shall provide appropriate personnel with adequate time and resources to assure the effective administration of the athletic program.
2. The athletic program has clearly defined policies and procedures in place for the effective administration of the program.
3. The athletic program has a student-athlete/parent handbook and contract that clearly defines all expectations for student-athletes including, but not limited to, policies on sportsmanship, hazing, taunting, substance use and abuse, and is provided to all student-athletes and their parents.
4. The athletic department provides to all coaches, including volunteer coaches, a handbook which outlines all expectations and procedures including CIAC rules and regulations and the responsibility of the coach to promote and model good sportsmanship.
5. The athletic program shall have written guidelines for all booster clubs explaining their role in the program.
6. The athletic program shall have written guidelines and procedures for all athletic events including emergency evacuation measures in line with the CIAC Manual for Tournament Operations and Guidelines for Crowd Control and Security.
7. The athletic program shall have programs in place to educate players, coaches, students, parents and spectators on sportsmanship and proper behavior at all sporting events.
8. The athletic program shall have a formal evaluation plan for all coaches including assistant and volunteer coaches that promote the professional growth and competence of all coaches.

9. The school/athletic department shall provide staff development programs for coaches designed to enhance and improve their professional growth and competence.
10. The athletic department provides an induction program for new coaches as well as coaches who are not employed as faculty or staff in the district.
11. The athletic department allows for the meaningful input from student-athletes, parents, booster clubs, and the community into decisions impacting the athletic program.
12. The athletic program complies with all CIAC and National Federation of State High School rules, regulations and by-laws and all state and federal statutes.
13. The athletic program regularly acknowledges, celebrates, and displays the accomplishments of the student-athlete, teams and coaches.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

CONCLUSIONS

The Foran High School athletics department is supervised by a part-time athletic director who also teaches two classes at the school. A certified athletic trainer provides daily service to the athletic program for a contracted 30 hours per week. At the present time, the trainer provides services to student-athletes, but does not provide professional development services to the coaching staff. Secretarial help is not available within the athletic department except through the services of a secretary from the administrative office at the school who is authorized to provide up to two hours of assistance per day on an as-needed basis. Therefore, the athletic director not only provides leadership and organization to the work of the department, but also completes the bulk of the administrative responsibilities that come with this position, including tasks such as submitting schedules to the CIAC, arranging for transportation for teams, booking officials for games, dealing with postponements, engaging site workers for games, preparing purchase orders and payment of bills, tracking athletic awards, fielding questions through phone calls and emails, tallying gate receipts, and many other requirements--a very challenging and daunting responsibility. Adding to these challenging responsibilities is the highly questionable practice of using the gate receipts to cover the operating costs of the athletic program. In light of these conditions, a climate of cooperation exists among coaches and administrators to assist the athletic director given the large number of responsibilities that constitute his area of responsibility.

The athletic department has clearly defined policies and procedures in place for the effective administration of the program, and the policies and procedures are aligned with both the school and district mission statements. Handbooks for students and for coaches are well-written documents that provide information as well as policies and procedures for all participants. The student handbook is thorough and clearly describes the expectations for the student athlete. In addition, the Foran High School athletic folder, available for all participants in the athletics program, clearly spells out the department's philosophy, its goals and objectives, and its code of ethics for all concerned with Foran athletics. Information is also included for students and coaches about the nature and purpose of varsity, junior varsity, and freshman athletics. The handbook for coaches outlines the duties and responsibilities of personnel in the athletic department. The athletic director reviews the handbook for coaches at a meeting held in August. Changes are made yearly and seasonally, as appropriate, with approval of the Milford Schools Board of Education and the superintendent. There is a sign-off procedure for coaches following these sessions. Coaches then review these rules and procedures with their respective teams. Coaches reported great satisfaction with the athletic director's efforts at making them aware on a yearly basis of changes to school and CIAC policies and procedures. All coaches have handbooks which contain the rules and procedures for the functioning of the department.

Parents are kept abreast of the rules and procedures of the athletic department through several avenues. A general meeting for all parents of students involved in athletics at Foran is held each season for this purpose. In addition, parents attend meetings with coaches preceding each athletics season. Newsletters, e-mail, a bulletin board adjacent to the AD's office, an athletic department website, and information supplied by the Foran High Booster Club keep parents

generally well- informed. Parents who seek more first-hand information reported that “the athletic director is very approachable, as are the coaches.” A sign-off sheet included in the handbook is used by the department to ascertain that parents and athletes have indeed read the rules and procedures for participation. Parents further stated to the CIAC visiting committee that they understand well the policies and procedures and that “it’s your own fault if you don’t understand them.”

The Foran athletic department has policies in place concerning sportsmanship, hazing/initiation, taunting, and substance abuse and use. These policies are clearly stated in both the high school’s student handbook as well as in the athletic department handbook for student participants. A sign-off procedure for students and parents is required for both of these documents. These issues are also addressed in meetings by the AD and by coaches for parents and student- athletes.

All athletic teams are supported by a central booster club, the Foran High School Sports Association. The athletic director attends meetings of the booster club as a representative of the school but is not an official member of this group. Individual team booster clubs are not permitted. Written guidelines exist to direct the work of the Foran High School Sports Association, including the extent of fund-raising and the permitted use of such funds. The Association allots \$25.00 per student athlete per year to support teams in the program and may provide further support as deemed warranted. These guidelines, among others, were created through combined efforts of the Foran High School administrators, the athletic director, and booster club representatives. These guidelines have been in place for more than twenty years. Teams are permitted to raise funds on their own, but they must first receive prior approval. Funds cannot be used to procure equipment, supplies, and services normally acquired under board of education budgetary requirements and procedures. Booster club fund raising efforts, described by club members interviewed by the CIAC visiting committee, typically amount to between \$20, 000 and \$30,000 per year. These funds are kept in an account outside of the control of the school, a procedure not considered advisable.

Support for athletics is wide-based at Foran High School. Athletics is viewed as a positive learning experience by students, coaches, teachers and parents. A participation rate of 50% characterizes the Foran athletics program. All groups interviewed feel that a proper balance exists between athletics and academics. “Academics come first” was a refrain stated many times by those interviewed. Evidence to support this statement can be found in the school’s “2.0 rule” required for athletic participation, a rule more stringent than the eligibility requirements of the CIAC. Broad consensus exists that the rule is appropriate for this particular school population and that it is being equitably enforced. A one-time appeal process is available to each athlete as part of this regulation. All groups interviewed were able to articulate the values that Foran High School seeks to instill in its student athletes—respect, teamwork, discipline, responsibility, fair play, time management, and many other worthy values were advanced. Winning is important, but not at the expense of these values, the visiting committee heard time and again. Some parents and students expressed confusion, however, as to the proper procedure for adding a sport to the athletics program, such as with lacrosse, a growing program within the city of Milford.

The athletic department emphasizes good sportsmanship and proper behavior at all sporting events in a variety of ways. The procedures for management of all home contests comply with

the CIAC Manual for Tournament Operations and Guidelines for Crowd Control and Security. The athletic handbook describes appropriate conduct for all participants. In addition, rules for spectators are announced prior to athletic contests. Rules for good sportsmanship are also posted in the gym. The athletic director and appropriate security and contest management staff address fan behavior at athletic contests on a routine basis. Adequate staffing is provided for all home contests. The athletic director is present at virtually all home contests and at some away contests as well. Site workers assist in providing a safe and orderly environment for athletic contests. Police officers are present, as appropriate, along with designated school personnel.

Written job descriptions are provided for athletic personnel in the athletic department through the Milford Human Resources Department. These descriptions are limited in number as compared to positions common in many Connecticut high schools of comparable size to Foran. Positions such as faculty manager, facility manager, or event manager are neither established nor funded positions in the school.

A formal evaluation plan exists for assessing the performance of all coaches, including assistant and volunteer coaches, a process used to promote the growth and competency of all coaches. Coaches interviewed felt that the evaluation process was fair and helpful. The athletic director cannot evaluate a certified teacher in the district who coaches a sport. Consequently, the evaluation of teacher-coaches is assigned to a school or district administrator. Evaluations are completed in a two-step manner. Head coaches complete a self-evaluation which is then reviewed with an evaluator who makes comments and suggestions for improvement. Assistant coaches are evaluated by the head coach who then submits the completed evaluation document to the athletic director for review. The athletic director offers staff development and coaching certification programs, including CIAC required coaching modules, during the year to enhance the skills and abilities of the coaching staff. Several of these modules are provided yearly at no cost to the coaches. Exit interviews are conducted by coaches with individual athletes at the end of each season to delineate the athlete's strengths and weaknesses. Student-athletes indicated through surveys and interviews that they appreciate and benefit from these interviews. However, no formal plan is developed for athletes to pursue further skill and physical conditioning improvements.

The athletic department acknowledges the accomplishments of student-athletes in a variety of ways. Public address announcements, bulletin boards, banquets, and individual sport activities showcase achievements. Banners in the gym and trophies in display cases proudly announce athletic accomplishments. A pre-season pep rally is held each season to engender enthusiasm for the upcoming year. Funds are being raised to build and install new trophy cases. A senior awards banquet is held yearly, and athletes can earn points over their years of participation to qualify to receive a jacket. The overall sentiment among parents, coaches, and students, both athletes and non-athletes, is that Foran High School appropriately recognizes the achievements of its athletic program. Accomplishments are neither over-valued nor under-valued. An appropriate emphasis exists. However, a few athletes did state that their athletic achievements had been overlooked or under- appreciated in the recent past.

The athletic director has an "open door policy" for players, coaches, parents and the community to allow for meaningful input. A more formalized process for seeking input and improving

communication among all constituents of the athletic program would improve this approach. However, athletes, coaches, and parents were unanimous in their praise for the efforts the athletic director makes to lead the department. Great respect for the job being done by the athletic director for his helpfulness, work ethic, communication efforts, among many other positive comments characterized many of the interviews. “I don’t know how he does it all,” is a common feeling expressed by many parents, coaches, and students.

COMMENDATIONS

1. The leadership, competency, commitment, and integrity demonstrated by the athletic director in providing direction to the sports program
2. The well-written documents which describe department policies and operations, including the *Student-Athletes Handbook*, the *Coaches Handbook*, emergency procedures, coaching evaluation forms, end-of-season checklists, athletic folders, and other important information, and the efforts made to communicate this information to the community
3. The acknowledgement by all constituent groups that the sports program at Foran High School is a positive experience for all concerned, and that practices and contests are conducted in a well-organized and safe manner
4. The athletic director for his high levels of visibility and accessibility to all constituents
5. The cooperation and teamwork demonstrated in many interactions between school administrators and the athletic director to support the functioning of the athletic department, most notably in the application of the “2.0 rule” and the coaches’ evaluation process
6. The efforts by the school and the athletic department to recognize student-athletes and their achievements through various channels, such as public address announcements, banners, school newspaper articles, website information, trophy displays and banquets, among other efforts
7. The athletic department’s efforts to promote high levels of player sportsmanship and proper spectator behavior
8. The support provided to the athletic program by the Foran High School Sports Association booster club

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Create a full-time director of athletics position to better serve the needs of the Foran High School athletic program
2. Increase the level of clerical assistance given to the athletic director through secretarial support dedicated to the operations of the athletic office
3. Supplement the level of financial support to the athletic program so that gate receipts are no longer relied upon as the chief source of revenue for operating expenses
4. Develop a written procedure for adding varsity level sports to the offerings of the athletics department
5. Provide trophy cases for the display of the achievements of the student-athletes
6. Review the department's recognition programs and procedures to ensure that the achievements of all teams and individual participants are equitably celebrated
7. Utilize the expertise of the athletic trainer as a professional developer to enhance the knowledge and skills of the coaching staff
8. Improve the frequency and quality of dialogue among stakeholders in the athletic program concerning topics such as policy and program changes, department needs, improvements plans, financial status, budgeting, athletic achievements, and other vital issues



STANDARD V
PROGRAM AND PLAYER EVALUATION

The athletic program has an ongoing program evaluation procedure in place designed to measure the department’s success in achieving its mission and expectations and the developmental skill growth of each student-athlete. The skill growth of athletes is formally assessed at the end of each season and improvement plans are co-developed by the coach and athlete. The athletic department reports its progress in meeting its mission and expectations to the school administration and develops action plans for improvement.

1. The athletic program shall have a formalized process in place to assess the achievement of its mission and expectations. Data collection and review procedures shall be in place to support the department’s findings.
2. The athletic department shall periodically employ surveys and focus groups to garner information from parents, students, and coaches regarding the success of the athletic department in meeting its mission.
3. The athletic department shall report the results of its efforts to meet the mission and expectations annually.
4. The athletic department shall develop action plans for improvement or enhancement of the program on an annual basis.
5. The athletic department shall develop and implement a player assessment program that is designed to set and evaluate individual performance goals for each student-athlete on a seasonal basis.

PROGRAM AND PLAYER EVALUATION

CONCLUSIONS

According to the self-study report, the Foran High School athletic department reviews the mission statement on a yearly basis when the student-athlete handbook is updated. The process, as outlined in the report, involves school personnel (central office administrators, board of education members, and athletic directors from both schools) with no input from any other athletic constituents such as coaches, parents, student athletes or community members. The report states “A greater spotlight is placed on the mission and expectations for the athletic program every ten years as it is studied and reviewed in (sic) the New England Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges. During this intensive investigation all aspects of the athletic department are scrutinized and evaluated by members of the faculty, students, parents and administrators and members of the Milford Board of Education.” While this may be true, athletics is not one of the standards required by the NEASC self-study process. If the athletic department does a thorough review of the mission statement as a parallel activity during preparation for the NEASC visit, they are to be commended; however, ten years is too great a time span to seek participation of the athletic department stakeholders in reviewing the mission statement. The entire athletic community, parents, student athletes, coaches, board of education members and those in the community who are interested in athletics, such as the youth groups, should review the department’s mission and provide input to the athletic department annually.

The athletic department collects data on student participation and academic success. The department’s goal is a laudatory one: “.....to increase student participation across all sports and to increase the academic success of all participants.” Although an end of year report is submitted each year to the central office administrators, the data that is collected is not shared formally with the board of education or the public. According to the assistant superintendent and board of education members who were interviewed, other than budgetary reports, there are no formal reports, oral or written, that are submitted to central office, or to the general public. One board member stated that some of the opinions she has formed of the athletic department are a result of what she hears from constituents and not from information she receives as a board member. It is essential that an annual report to the community that explains how the department is progressing in meeting its missions and goals become a regular procedure for the Foran athletic department.

Establishing a systematic approach for sharing information with all of the athletic department’s constituents would help to spread information about the many positive activities that occur within the athletic program and would help the department to realize the above-mentioned goals. It is critical that all of the athletic department’s constituent groups have an opportunity for on-going dialogue with the school’s administrators and athletic director about what the data indicate in relation to the department’s success in meeting its established goals. Based upon survey results and comments from student athletes and parents who were interviewed during the site visit, the program’s constituents do not feel that their input is valued. One way to ensure that all of the department’s constituent groups have input into the athletic department’s goal-setting procedure, and to send a message that their opinions are important, is to form an athletic advisory committee composed of representatives from the booster club, the board of education, student-

athletes, school administrators, and relevant community groups. The department could also use this group as a means of sharing the successes of the department as well as to quell any rumors that may circulate throughout the community regarding high school athletics.

Responses to the questions in the parent survey regarding communications from the athletic department scored consistently amongst the lowest of the responses that were tallied. The two questions that parents scored as the least satisfactory ask them to respond to the following: “Parents’ input regarding the athletic program is valued,” and “Parental input regarding coaches is fairly considered by the administration.” An athletic advisory committee and a public meeting to share information with the community would help to alleviate this area of concern. However, further efforts need to become part of department procedure. Developing an action plan that includes all of the relevant data would allow the athletic director and school administrators to focus on the strategies needed to maintain and improve the services provided by the department to its constituents. Surveys periodically administered to the various constituent groups, questionnaires given to student athletes, exit interviews given to students who choose not to continue participation in athletics, the number of students who participate in athletics each year, and the number of awards given to student athletes, are just some examples of the types of data that can be collected, presented to the athletic advisory committee for feedback, then used to develop an action plan that can be shared with the community in a public meeting, preferably one held by the board of education.

The lack of clerical and program support given to the athletic director needs to be addressed. The parents, teachers, student athletes and coaches interviewed felt very strongly that the athletic director does an excellent job with very few resources. The need for a full- time athletic director, or a part- time one with the help of a faculty manager was mentioned frequently, but the lack of a secretary seems to be the biggest area of concern. Given the myriad of duties an athletic director must perform, including budget preparation, inclement weather game cancellations, scheduling concerns, facility as well as game management, student athletes ‘academic eligibility monitoring, evaluation of coaches, and preparation of professional development sessions for coaches, and a host of other responsibilities, it is almost impossible to imagine maintaining the status quo, much less implementing new initiatives, without additional support provided to the athletic director.

The athletic department does an excellent job of setting pre-season goals and providing the student- athletes with an end- of -season sport- specific plan, individualized for each student athlete, which addresses the strengths of the athletes as well as areas in need of improvement. The coaches meet with each athlete individually to discuss their end- of -year evaluation plan. The student athletes who were interviewed during the visit discussed the various plans individual coaches use and were unanimous in their appreciation of the feedback they receive at the end of the season. They said that it was very helpful to get advice from their coaches about what they should concentrate on to improve their skills and become better- prepared for future athletic endeavors. The athletic director shared samples of the evaluation tools used by the coaches. They provide the student- athletes with important, relevant information and guidelines on how to improve their individual athletic skills.

COMMENDATIONS

1. The athletic department's post season player evaluation forms that are detailed and sport- specific, allowing coaches to share with the student athlete information about conditioning drills and how to improve their sport specific skills during the off season
2. The strong interdepartmental communication between the athletic director and coaches
3. The dedication and commitment of the athletic director to the Foran high School athletic program

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Establish a standing athletic advisory committee chaired by the athletic director that includes representatives of all the athletic constituent groups to solicit their input, share with them the successes of the athletic program, and to review the mission statement bi- annually
- 2 Collect data and publish an annual report to the board of education that addresses how the athletic department is progressing in meeting the needs of the student athletes as determined by the department's goals and mission statement
- 3 Provide dedicated secretarial support to the athletic director by either shifting assignments of current personnel, or by funding a full or part- time position
- 4 Provide program support to the athletic director by either making the position a full time one, or providing him with the services of a faculty manager
- 5 Survey student-athletes, parents, coaches and faculty members periodically to determine program success, uncover concerns and needs, and provide topics for discussion during the mission review

FOLLOW-UP PROCESS

The Foran High School follow-up program evaluation report reflects the findings of the athletic department's self-study and those of the visiting committee. The recommendations in the report and those in the self-study will serve to guide the school's athletic department in the improvement of programs and services provided the student-athletes, coaches, parents, and spectators. The athletic department is charged with the responsibility of implementing the recommendations found in the final report in a timely manner. The school will be asked to report its progress in meeting the recommendations to the CIAC after a two-year period. The CIAC is committed to assisting the school/athletic department in addressing the recommendations and to providing technical assistance as necessary.

The visiting committee would like to thank everyone at Foran High School for their hospitality and the time they contributed to the self-study process and the interviews conducted during the CIAC evaluation team visit.

VISITING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr. Elaine Bessette

Chair

Mr. John Shulie

Ms Barbara Startup

Mr. Sal Randazzo

Mr. Vin Iezzi