

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF GILMANTON

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Kory Rud, Superintendent - Jill Alexander, Principal
Jay Hebert, Dean of Students - Sarah McCutcheon, School Counselor

April 1, 2022

Dear Students and Families:

Our district has had ongoing cooperative sports discussions about expanding the co-op with the Independence School District which began in October and has now come to an end with the basketball co-op deadline of April 1st. The Gilmanton School Board has worked hard to be transparent, listening to community ideas, objectives, and concerns. This has been an extremely stressful time for many, as we work to balance local and historical concerns with the aspirations of the student athletes. We have listened to community input and, with any tough decision, the outcome is not usually to everyone's satisfaction. In just March alone, four school board meetings were held, three of which were special meetings. Of the special meetings, one was a joint school board meeting with Independence to try to hear all concerns and guide the District in moving forward. Below are just a few of the factors which pulled our hearts in many directions:

- Our community's desire to continue to have our facilities used
- Hosting at least one of the basketball programs to keep leadership and significance in our District
- Consideration of the advantages of a co-op, potentially increasing the number of players to have varsity and JV games while having athletes play at the appropriate level and also considering the potential loss of student participation if volleyball and basketball were a co-op sport

Below is a brief description of our process so our community has accurate information about the co-op discussion process.

- October 12th- initial request by Independence to consider expanding our co-op
- October 28th- First meeting with the athletic director from each school and Mr. Rud
- November 16th- Gilmanton shared a parent, student, and coach survey
- December- both schools shared survey results with each school board
- January 25th- our board did not proceed with the volleyball coop
- Continued co-op discussions at School Board meetings February 9, 28, and March 9, 22, 28, and 30th

- Each district presented a proposal and unfortunately a mutual agreement could not be reached

Though some will be happy/content that all basketball will remain in Gilmanton, we did hear from many that wanted the co-op so their children were playing at an appropriate level (c-team, JV, or varsity) and to improve our team competitiveness within the conference. Though our district is smaller, many communities are struggling with less participation in high school sports than has historically occurred. As I mentioned earlier, I am sharing this information to continue the transparency regarding the process of expanding our co-op and opportunities for student athletes.

Discussion can always renew with Independence, or other options can be considered also. Our goal is to do what our community feels is in the best interest of our students and athletes. We encourage the community to continue to communicate with our school board members and administration to participate in our future planning.

Sincerely,

Kory Rud

Kory Rud
Superintendent