

Below are some of the concerns that I received from a parent group that were addressed in the meeting held at WHS on June 3, 2014:

- 1). We understand that a head basketball coach was selected. Due to the nature of the complaints surrounding the basketball program, much like the concerns addressed about the football program, was there a hiring board established for the basketball coach? **No** If not, what hiring standard was used? **Realizing that teacher slots were going to be minimal, I accepted suggestions from parents re: Coach James "Bull" Martin. Coach Bull was interviewed at the school in February by me, Lance Carter, and Tonya Holmes (Asst. Principal). Once teacher contracts were due and I confirmed limited teaching slots were going to be available to hire coaches, and given that we are also in need of additional coaches for football (multiple), Wrestling (2), Basketball (2), Tennis (1 or 2), and Golf, I made the decision to pursue Coach Bull knowing that he was held in high regard by the many parents and students who had experiences with him in the past. Coach Bull's experiences playing college, international, and professional basketball, and his coaching record and history as a great role model guided me to this decision without hesitation.**
- 2). As expressed in earlier meetings, parents have been concerned with the mistreatment of our student-athletes, by many of the coaches at Woodland High School. It is vitally important that in addition to the number of qualified and caring teachers at Woodland High School, a paradigm is evoked to establish a teaching force within the halls of Woodland that empower, encourage, embrace and evoke excellence throughout the student body during the day and during practice. Having said that, what measures have you established to ensure the most qualified teaching candidates are in place to not only provide the right environment for academic success, but (for those teachers "assigned" to head the various athletic programs) athletic success as well? **While over the past 7 years there have been a few concerns brought to my attention about coaches' handling and interactions with players, those have been addressed as personnel matters and consequences given when necessary. I have always attempted to hire the best available teachers while attempting to find qualified coaches and will continue doing so.**
- 3). What is the status of an internal policy, procedure, protocol that addresses the dismissal of unethical and illicit behavior of coaches, parental grievances and required response time as well as plausible resolutions? **School System Policies address misconduct by employees...I follow those. Verbal reprimand, written reprimand, suspension, request for resignation, dismissal are a few possible consequences. Employees charged with a crime have the right to due process and are innocent until proven guilty. Even if found guilty of certain crimes, they may not lose job. The situation often depends on whether the issue occurred as part of a school event while representing the school and the issue's effect on the school and students moving forward.**
- 4). We understand that former Athletic Director Bice is still serving and being paid while there is a new Athletic Director in place. **Yes. This was a Human Resources decision to continue paying him. Though his responsibilities as A.D. ended, he was a consultant for the new A.D. during the transition period and continued to earn his pay as a game manager at multiple events.** What are the policies, protocols, procedures that dictate the stipends given to teachers who serve in the capacity of coaches and AD's? **BOE determines stipends.** If there is a "contract"? **No...There is an agreement to complete season, and the process for being paid if a coach does not, but no details on specific responsibilities. However, WHS is working on specific job responsibilities for its coaches that will take effect in the fall of 2014.** What are the terms of that contract(money/compensation and length of service)? **Stipends vary... coaches hold their positions unless they resigned or are replaced administratively.** Does the contract cover resignation, dismissals and/or terminations? **No. There is no contract at this time.** If the contract does address those areas, what does it state concerning continued payments or as a breach of the contract discontinuation of payment? **This is an HR decision** How do we go about reviewing the

contracts for head and lay coaches as well as Athletic Director? **We are developing a school coaches' expectations and responsibility agreement that details things. This is a personnel issue and will be handled accordingly.**

- 5). Is it true that all of the football coaches were relieved of their duties? **No....Schmitt resigned voluntarily. As is customary, the new coach would work with the administration to secure a new coaching staff. Therefore, the other coaches were left in limbo until new coach selects his staff. Only 2 of the former assistant coaches chose to request and interview with Coach Davenport. Only one coach was retained by the head coach.** Is it true that the former Athletic Director (Bice) was relieved of his duties? **No –he resigned voluntarily.** Have there been any complaints about these former coaches from parents relative to their teaching capabilities? **Not anything out of the ordinary for any teachers. Coaches are teachers first (more than 95% of their pay with one exception), and as such are held to the same standards in the classroom as other teachers.**
- 6). Having researched the “expertise and credentials” of the former football and basketball coaches, it is evident why there was so much turmoil. Of the coaches chosen to lead our student athletes the following was discovered:

Head Coach- Coaching experience (Geneva University)

Offensive Coordinator- No college football experience

Defensive Coordinator – Minimal college experience (Southern Mississippi)

Assistant Coach – No college football experience

Assistant Coach – No college football experience

Assistant Coach – No college football experience

Assistant Coach –Coaching experience (GA Southern University)

Basketball Head Coach- No college basketball experience

Assistant Coach – No college basketball experience

Assistant Coach – No college basketball experience

Track Head Coach- No track experience only football experience at the college level

Assistant Track Coach – No college track experience

Assistant Track Coach – No college track experience

This information is not completely accurate or fair to our former coaches. It leaves out the many coaching successes and accolades they have earned in their coaching careers, including some at WHS.

My plan is to focus on the present and future of WHS Athletics. Opening a new school, many teachers were displaced from UGHS including football coaches...WHS was required to take many teachers who were displaced from other schools that year. We conducted interviews for Head Coach, and Coach Schmitt was most impressive at the time. He and his assistant coaches had success at UGHS. There were no complaints when they were winning and making the playoffs. My focus was, and continues to be, on hiring good teachers first. It is not realistic to expect that a school with high academic standards is going to be able to hire highly qualified teachers

in all positions who played or coached college sports. There are many very successful coaches who never played or coached at the college level. Some never even played the sport they coached themselves. I will always attempt to hire coaches with greater experience, but it is very difficult to find highly qualified teachers who fit this expectation.

Going forward, what measures have you or are you establishing to ensure the best and most qualified candidates are in place as coaches? This has always been a consideration...We cannot overlook the success of the overall athletic program in virtually every sport except football and boys basketball, who have had success, though not consistently. What are your standards for acquiring qualified teachers/coaches? What measures are in place to also permit students or community volunteers who serve as medical/equipment/field managers are certified and trained appropriately? Athletic Trainers or EMTs are difficult to acquire....this is done through the school system A.D. They are limited in availability and what they are asked to do, though they are at most of games and competitions for most home boys and girls sports.

- 7). Are the coaches that were relieved from their duties or who chose to walk away and refused to interview with Davenport still teaching? Absolutely....6 of the 7 are still on staff and are good teachers. What (is) being done or (has) been done or can be done to assist in getting the adequate number of qualified coaches on staff for the football and basketball program? This will take time since there is little teacher turnover year to year and sometimes staffing is complicated by reductions in allocations, requirements to accept displaced teachers (3 this year from LHS), the timing of teachers leaving sometimes unexpectedly, and most importantly.....the subject area of vacancies, the impact of a particular position on our school's College and Career Performance Index from End-of-Course Tests, Highly Qualified status under No child Left Behind Federal Law, Gifted Certification, etc. and the likelihood of finding a qualified coach in that position who fits our multiple academic needs. What can parents do to assist you in securing whatever facilitates this action? Parent suggestions are always welcome...that's how we landed Coach Bull. However, personnel needs are complicated, and all final decisions rest with me and the BOE. Through your leadership and relationships built with the cluster of schools within the Woodland District, how many of them have you reached out to and inquired/negotiated for any available teaching slots? As a professional courtesy, Principals are in agreement that we do not do that except in the rare occasion where a coach is not needed at a school and can be shared. They have athletic programs and other extracurricular activities too that they are required to provide coaches and sponsors for and have a staff half the size of a high school to do it. Personally, I would not be pleased if another Principal recruited our teachers to coach at other schools rather than being committed to WHS.
- 8) If a coach was relieved of their duties in one sport how are they able to maintain a coaching position in another sport where there are equal concerns raised (i.e., Track)? This is not true...The track coach made a personal decision not to coach football and to focus instead on teaching special ed. and coaching track, which is a year-round job. Coach Stokes is one of the best coaches on the staff and has broad support among parents with few exceptions. Our Girls finished 6th in state, and several boys competed at the state meet. Since this school tends to show a no tolerance rule for students. This is not true. We use more discretion than most schools except regarding violence and drugs, which I have little tolerance for due to the dangers involved. Why isn't the same corrective or disciplinary measure placed on teachers who violate rules, regulations, laws and/or professional protocols? Teachers are addressed and reprimanded when necessary...Personnel matters are not public, so it may appear that nothing was done though I can assure you that all personnel matters are taken seriously, investigated, and addressed as necessary. Why are we retaining teachers, much less coaches who have been involved in illicit and illegal behavior? HR Policies are followed...the public does not always know the facts....the alleged situation may have nothing to do with the school....The situation's impact on school is taken into consideration. Personnel have the right to due process and are innocent until proven guilty...actions are taken as needed. Once a student athlete has been placed in ISS, is that student able to continue to compete in their

sport during the days they have been placed in ISS? Only in very rare circumstances....For example, a student might have ISS shifted so as not to conflict with a playoff game so as not to affect entire team who has worked hard to make it that far. However, this would only be considered if the student was in ISS for a minor violation and based on their overall discipline history. The student would still receive and serve the full consequence given.

- 9). How is it that Wrestling, Softball/Baseball, Golf , Soccer, Girls Varsity Basketball, Volleyball, Band and Choir are running what appears to successful programs? Positive parent support for the coaches and players – strong Booster Club / Strong feeder programs in middle schools and Recreation Dept. / Fees paid by all participants / Help with fundraisers, concessions, etc. / Volunteer time to work on fields, etc / Strong coaches who are organized, communicate well, enthusiastic, supportive of student-athletes. What is your span of control over these programs? I offer support as needed...attendance at Tryouts, Practices, Games, Senior Nights, Banquets, Playoffs out of town, Parent / Booster Club meetings (when invited). How do you manage them so effectively? Good working relationships / open door policy.
- 10). What teaching position or what class(es) does Davenport hold? Weight Training currently in the P.E. Department. What teaching position will the new basketball head coach (Bull) hold? None. He is a Community / Lay Coach. He will not officially hold the title of head coach per GHSA rules, but will be in charge of making most decisions involving the Boys' Basketball Program when appropriate for him to do so.
- 11). Understanding that this is a reconstruction effort, seizing every available opportunity is paramount. We have heard that Bice and Schmidt are leaving next year, is that true? Yes. Have you earmarked those positions for the football and basketball coaching needs? What other positions are or have been made available for any of the other coaches needed for football or basketball? Every attempt is made to hire qualified coaches if they fit our needs for certified, HiQ, perhaps AP certified or Gifted certified teachers....Academics take priority. I anticipate hiring a couple more football assistants in current openings.
- 12). Given the nature of the reason for all of these changes that included hints of financial impropriety especially after the ruling of the Henry Co. Board of Education(HCBOE) concerning booster clubs. False...it was reported about five years ago that the former A.D. was seen taking a money box home in his car following a game. I investigated this claim and he readily admitted that he had taken the box home. I advised him that this gave a negative perception of him and could bring about unfounded allegations and I told him not to do it again, and to my knowledge never did. Verification was made through our bookkeeper through our checks and balance procedures that all money collected was counted and the amount matched the tickets sold regarding these allegations. This was not a Booster Club issue. Athletic gates receipts are all deposited in the school Athletics Account. I am not aware of any allegations of improprieties with Booster Funds. Booster funds are in outside bank accounts controlled by parents, not coaches or school personnel. Parents are the check signers of all outside booster accounts. What measures are in place to ensure the financial integrity of all athletic sports programs at Woodland? These have always been in place, but will be reviewed this summer by me and the new A.D. to see if any modifications are warranted. Specifically, we are looking for what you and AD Carter have put in place to ensure proper accounting, proper inventory, proper listing of vendors used, tracking of contracts and services, financial disclosures and bank statements, etc. and tracking of sponsorships and advertising. Most of this is being done already. Coaches often choose the vendors they purchase from, as do the booster clubs. We will look at this over the summer. Serious consideration is being given to eliminating all outside booster bank accounts and bringing everything under our control through the use of the school accounts. In this way, monitoring, transparency, and reporting will be more efficient. Parents can still have booster clubs and raise money, but all money will be deposited in school-based sport accounts and the coach will determine how money is to be spent and the school system account procedures will be followed for approval of all checks written.

- 13). In reviewing the minutes from the HCBOE website, concerning the revised enforcement of policies surrounding the booster club, what requests has Woodland High School made to the board regarding requests and notifications for fundraisers from January 2013 to present? Fundraisers are the responsibility of coaches and booster clubs....All booster club request go through Ms. Holmes (Assistant Principal) and an administrator must approve and refer those to the BOE for consideration. The school is limited to 2 school-wide fundraisers per year, as are all athletic teams and clubs. Concessions are one exception. Be advised we did not see any listed on the website. This would appear to have an immediate impact on the various athletic teams' abilities to garner and solicit funds for operations. If there are none on the district e-Board website of minutes from BOE Meetings, then none were requested for that particular time period covered. What is your understanding of the impact of this? Fundraising is of the utmost importance. I strongly encourage parents, students, and booster clubs to raise money per the BOE fundraiser policies. What are you doing or going to do about it? Fundraising is a function of coaches, parents, and student-athletes individually, or through booster organizations. Are there any ramifications for not complying with this section of the Booster Club Policy? Yes. We are in compliance.
- 14). It is without question, across the nation, in addition to strong academics, at every level of sport (middle, high, and college), that a viable football and basketball program, and in many instances band/drama and arts program are the pillars to the economic development of the area and community surrounding that school. What percentage has the football and basketball programs garnered/accrued/added to the overall budget of the athletic program at Woodland for the past 4 years?

We will be disaggregating revenue and expenditure data this summer to determine how to make the athletic department more efficient. However, athletics is self-supporting except for facilities and supplements and gate revenue for all sports is used to support the entire athletic program since most sports are non-revenue producing.

Examples of revenue vs. expenses are as follows for this past year: FB \$27,000....BB \$16,000 (Other sports are non-revenue or minimal revenue that cannot cover their own sport cost for transportation and officials.)

Top two Expenses: Transportation \$20,000 Officials \$25,000 Yet to be determined: Security costs, Ticket workers, Large ticket items such as Wrestling or Cheerleading Mats, Soccer goals, scoreboard expenses, sports equipment, uniforms, reconditioning of helmets, new female sports being added with huge start-up costs and on-going expense: Gymnastics -Spring 2014, Lacrosse – Spring 2015 , Swimming – Winter 2015-16)

One primary problem we have already identified regarding revenue appears to be with the consistent collection of athletic participation fees and sport-specific player fees. We are currently working on having an athletic secretary to keep a database of all athletes to monitor payment of fees in order to continue participation.

Thanks for your continued support as we work together to build a stronger Athletic Department while maintaining a strong academic environment at Woodland High.

Bret Cook
Principal