

Dear BOE,

This upcoming boy's basketball season, we are expecting 35+ 7th graders. This number came from an early sign-up sheet I put out in October. Having this many students interested in basketball is wonderful. However, from a coaching standpoint, I foresee some issues that could arise and would like to get ahead of this. If we have 35 students out for 7th grade basketball and placed 10 on Varsity, that would leave 25 on the JV team. We play 5 minute quarters in JV games and 6 minute quarters in Varsity. I feel like very little good can come from this situation. Coaches are put in a difficult position to manage playing time and try to be competitive. Players at all skill levels will be frustrated with limited court time. This will no doubt lead to parent complaints. To address this in the past, I understand we would split the 20 or so students on the JV team into two teams. Then we would have one team go to one game and the other go to the next. This cuts their amount of games in half. Putting in that much time and effort, I believe that this is not fair to those student-athletes.

My proposal is to have the coaches evaluate and place 8-10 athletes on Varsity and 8-10 on JV, totaling 16-20 players max per grade. The players that don't make the top 16-20 in their class will be placed on our Instructional Team. This will be an additional team, that could consist of both 7th and 8th-grade players. In our case this year we could have 10-15 players placed on the instructional team. Instructional Team practices will be separate, and they will focus primarily on the fundamentals and skills of the game. This approach gives players an opportunity to compete with other players at their level. Some girls and boys want to go out to see if they like basketball. Many inexperienced players would rather not participate at all than be in a practice with their peers that are more experienced or talented, because they don't want to be embarrassed. Instructional teams give players the chance to feel more comfortable learning the game. Here are some of my thoughts on the placement process: When placements become a necessity, the process will include of at least two practices before players are notified that they

will be on the instructional team. Players will have the opportunity to move up or down throughout the season depending on their performance. The player can also choose to be on the instructional team if they would prefer, and after the coaches have made their placements a short conference with the player and coach will be held to discuss their placement.

I propose that we provide them with their own coach, practice time and opportunities to play other teams. Due to the limited number of schools having instructional teams we will have to have some intrasquad scrimmages, but they will still be given the opportunity to play an actual game with officials and their parents/families watching. I've been in communication with AD's from other schools in the area who also have Instructional Teams, and they would be interested in setting up some games or even a possible tournament.

The only cons to adding this to our basketball program are going to be cost and gym use. Adding a 3rd team will require hiring an additional coach and providing transportation to their practices/games. We would need to utilize CAC (8th), OAC (7th), and SAC (Ins.) for practices. I realize this would affect Dr. Fernkopf's after-school program. On nights that the high school basketball teams are away, we could use the high school instead of OAC. The Jr. High season starts with practices on December 10th and will run through February 21st.

I believe that this would be what is best for our students and our staff. The need for this type of program would only be on a case by case and year by year basis depending on the number of participants. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. I would be more than willing to discuss this with you.

Sincerely,

TJ Meyer
CAC / SFTJH Assistant Principal/AD