



May 1, 2024

Panther Parents,

For many of you receiving this letter, it will be of no surprise to learn that the past few months have been particularly challenging as building administrators worked with district officials and coaches to investigate and address serious incidents that took place at last summer's football team camp at Eastern Washington University. That said, we understand there are varying levels of knowledge and understanding regarding what transpired and many questions about our response.

This communication is not intended to summarize the district's lengthy investigation into incidents at team camp. However, we do believe it's important to share that a significant number of student/athletes took part (both directly and indirectly) in inappropriate and offensive behavior that involved elements of hazing, including acts of intimidation and targeted harassment. Details about what happened at team camp came in bits and pieces over an inordinately long period of time, and ultimately, the severity of what took place last summer was fully realized at a time months removed from the actual incidents.

The fact that we're only now starting the process of moving forward – some nine months after the circumstances in question – is far from ideal. For many reasons, this has been a complex situation to navigate, and it's important we acknowledge the toll this has taken on students and families. Ultimately, the confidence and trust you place in us as we educate and care for your children are of utmost importance to us and cannot be in doubt. We are committed to moving forward with a steadfast dedication to the core values that drive our work as educators, as well as those specific to Panther Football.

Mead's football program seeks to mold and shape young men who understand that attending to excellence in the little things is a *big* thing, who buy into the team concept, and who treat others with dignity and respect. What took place at team camp violated those values and building administrators dealt with conduct violations in accordance with Mead's policies and procedures related to student misconduct.

As difficult as the recent months have been, this situation has provided ample opportunity for reflection and growth for everyone involved. District staff (administrators and coaches) have scrutinized processes and procedures and re-doubled efforts to ensure we're doing everything in our control to provide the best and safest environment possible for *all* of our students. Similarly, we must help young

people learn from these mistakes, reinforcing the importance of things like respectfulness, kindness, accountability, personal responsibility, as well as the courage it takes to be a leader.

We want to assure you that each of us – superintendent, building principal, and the coaching staff – is dedicated to rebuilding trust, reinforcing core values, and ensuring that Panther Football (and all of Mead’s athletics and activities programs) continues to focus on equipping young people to be quality humans and leaders in their community.

In a desire to connect and communicate, we are offering an in-person opportunity for parents of current and future members of the Panther Football program to hear from us directly. On Monday, May 13, at 6:30 PM, we will meet in Mead High School’s theater to briefly review the district’s investigation and put a few rumors to rest. Please understand that there may be specific elements of the investigation we will be unable to discuss; however, we will share everything we can, discussing lessons learned and revisiting expectations and commitments.

Questions you have leading up to this meeting can be submitted using the following link: [Parent Meeting Questions](#). Additionally, those in attendance will have the opportunity to submit questions on 3x5 cards during the meeting. This will not be a “Town Hall” style meeting; we will not be passing a microphone around the room for questions. We understand the importance of open dialogue and ongoing discussion, but this large-group meeting is not intended to be that opportunity. Please feel free to reach out directly with any specific questions or concerns – either before or after the meeting on May 13.

Moving forward, it is essential that we (administrators, coaches, and parents) come together and work side-by-side to ensure Mead football continues to offer an exceptional learning environment, characterized by far more than just an athletic experience. That said, this work extends beyond Mead football; no matter the school, classroom, activity, or sport, the mission of everything we do in the Mead School District will always be rooted in creating learning environments where every child feels connected, engaged, respected, valued, and challenged.

Again, should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out. Thank you for being a part of the future of Panther Football, partnering with us as we work to empower young people to reach their full potential, both on and off the field.

Travis Hanson
Superintendent

Kimberly Jensen
Principal

Keith Stamps
Head Coach