



Dear Director of Athletics Association of New Jersey (DAANJ) Awards Committee:

The North Hunterdon High School Athletic Department is extremely proud to be awarded the Director of Athletics Association of New Jersey (DAANJ) "Athletic Program of Excellence" Award for 2015-2016.

The United States is the only country which allows athletic programs to be part of the school system. Throughout the rest of the world, young people attend school for the academics and participate in sports through clubs, travel teams, camps and clinics, and with private coaches. Athletics is a very integral part of a student's education at North Hunterdon High School and in the United States. Athletics is an extension of the school day where the learning process still continues. Our main focus is not wins or losses, but developing the student-athlete for an ever-changing world. By participating in athletics, young people have the opportunity to learn, grow and develop just as they do in the classroom and this principle is essential to North Hunterdon's approach to developing the whole child.

It is important to understand that the "Best Practices" data proves that student-athletes generally have better attendance, fewer discipline issues, team skills, commitment, sportsmanship, time management skills, and perform better in the classroom during their high school career. Many successful businesses, corporations and government leaders credit their athletic participation for helping develop their leadership skills.

We are very proud of our excellent staff of coaches who take an interest not only in the student-athlete's performance on the field, but their academic and social performance as well. The majority of our coaches are teachers in our building and our Administration promotes hiring overall educators who have co-curricular backgrounds. We have found that great teachers make great coaches and vice versa.

While our coaches still prepare their teams to excel and strive to perform well on the playing fields, there has to be more involvement when coaching students in our educationally based athletic program. Beyond learning sport-specific skills and strategies, young people should be learning positive qualities, philosophies and principles that will help and carry them throughout the rest of their lives.

Some of the safety and social skills student-athletes learn at North Hunterdon include Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), Automated External Defibrillator (AED), Character Education Program, Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Awareness (HIB) and many others. Students also attend semi-annual class meetings, school-wide assemblies, Friends of Rachel and Green Dot Club programs that focus on improving school climate and reducing bullying in the schools.

We are the first high school in the country to have it's student-athletes and coaches experience the "Mind of the Athlete" psychology program curriculum by Jarrod Spencer, Psy.D. We have run this program three times a year for five and a half years now and it is still going strong. Some of the topics include: Proper Sleep Management, Performance Anxiety, Leadership, Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Awareness, Emotional Management, Positive Thinking, Healthier Relationships, Better choices, Team Work, and Confidence Skills.



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Additionally, North Hunterdon High School is the first school to have all students experience the North360 online educational program. The curriculum is designed to provide high school students with a range of resources to help navigate today's digital and mobile world. The program is composed of a series of online modules that will further educate students on important topics such as harassment, intimidation and bullying, dangers of drinking, online safety, dealing with stress, and college admissions. Students can access these modules on their school issued Chromebook or any student device with internet access. In the near future, we plan to launch modules that parents can take, which will have topics related to raising a teenager in today's digital world.

North Hunterdon High School serves as a community center due to the sheer number of our sending districts and the far-flung nature of the geography of this region. Participation in sports and other activities is an important element in helping our students get to know each other and in teaching them the value of being part of the larger community. Students learn the power of sharing their unique talents and the intensity of working together for a common goal. We encourage our students to become involved in as many programs as possible, to do their absolute best, and to support their coaches' and their teams' efforts to excel.

Importantly, our parents play a major role in the development of our educationally-based athletic program. One way our parents support their child is by joining the NHHS Booster Club. The purpose of the Booster Club is to encourage and support the North Hunterdon High School Interscholastic Athletic program and all athletic activities through fund raising and volunteer efforts. There are many wonderful programs the NHHS Booster Club sponsors such as the College Workshop Preparation programs, SAT/PSAT/ACT workshops, Flu-Clinics for the community, Special Interest group fundraising efforts such as, but not limited to, American Cancer Society, Green Brook Family Medicine, Clinton Sunrise Rotary to name a few. When families participate in our Booster Club, they also obtain commercial liability insurance for team events, support for senior athlete gifts, the awarding of senior scholarships, help in purchasing team equipment, "the gifts of Spirit Kits" for each family, and participation in the Senior Athletic Awards Night. All of these activities through parent, coach and student-athlete efforts not only aid North Hunterdon, but the community as a whole.

In conclusion, "It takes a village to raise a child" from the African proverb. We believe our vision for the children focuses on the positive impact the North Hunterdon staff, coaches, parents, students and community groups have, on a students' well-being, and advocates a society which meets all of a child's needs.

Thank you for selecting the North Hunterdon Athletic Department as the "Athletic Program of Excellence" for 2015-2016. We are proud of our community which focuses on the positive development of our students.

Respectfully,

John Deutsch
Athletic Administrator



Richard Bergacs, Ed.D.
Principal

