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Philosophy Statement
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My philosophy as a prospective administrator for an athletic/PE program is partly grounded in my philosophy of the benefits of sport. I believe sports and physical education are activities that potentially provide three things: enjoyment, opportunity to teach life's lessons and build character, and an avenue to better health. As an educator, naturally I am most taken by the second benefit, the opportunity to teach life's lessons and build character. The athletic fields are a classroom without walls. The difference is that the act of competing physically brings all the human emotions closer to the surface. Plato wrote, "You can learn more about a man in an hour of play than in a lifetime of conversation." Whereas this is hyperbolic in nature, it contains, in my experience, a striking element of truth. While a great proportion of my time in the classroom has been spent teaching an academic discipline, I have found a much greater proportion of my time on the playing fields has been spent talking about the struggles and triumphs of life. As I find myself saying so often to my lacrosse players, "It is in the crucible of adversity where we define ourselves." In other words, it is easy to be dignified, to be a good individual and team player, and to uphold a high standard of sportsmanship when all is going your way, but it is an entirely different story when facing stiff challenges, and best efforts are not being met with success. It is here where the essence of character is forged, and it is here where the essence of character is revealed. And to achieve a level of dignity in competition, so much depends on how we define success and meaning in the undertaking, and how we teach and set goals in pursuit of success.

The foundation of any athletic program must be set in the mold of true competition, that which consists of striving for excellence. How are we going to achieve excellence in skills, in content/knowledge, and in habits of mind and behavior? Winning is a by-product of the pursuit and achievement of excellence, but not the sole purpose for participating in the event. It can be a healthy goal, but it is but one standard among many upon which we measure ourselves. The bigger question is how we are going to achieve the maximum growth as human beings involved in the undertaking of sport. How are we going to learn about sacrifice, hard work, how to manage physical and emotional discomfort and perhaps pain, how to gain respect for oneself, for teammates, for opponents and for the game, and to live for something bigger than ourselves? It is when we do these things and recognize that honor comes through the pursuit of excellence that the magic moments of life, or what I like to call life's grace, are revealed. It is our competitors who bring out the best in us and we the best in them. We do not strive or compete *against* them; we strive and compete *with* them, to push one another to greater heights of achievement. It is in this framework that I believe a team is ideally coached, and by extension an athletic program ideally built.

So much of motivating those around us depends on them buying into the vision with a shared sense of mission. In a strong athletic program, this vision can be articulated at all levels, it is known, it is embraced, and it is part of the fabric of the athletics "curriculum." It is here that an athletic program so closely complements the academic curriculum, and fulfills its role in the mission of the school. And let us not forget, the busses must run on time!