



ESCANABA AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement Regarding the Non-Renewal of Former Gymnastics Coach

At Escanaba Area Public Schools, we generally do not comment publicly about personnel matters. However, we believe in transparency and in keeping our community informed about matters impacting student programming. Given community concern expressed about the district's decision to not renew the contract of our former gymnastics coach and given the former coach's decision to discuss the matter publicly, the following are important factors our community should understand concerning the non-renewal decision.

As educators, the district has deep respect for everyone who dedicates their lives to serving children. However, all district employees (including coaches) commit to adhere to district policies, procedures, and expectations as a condition of continued employment. People may not always agree with these policies, but they exist for good reason. Publicly available records show that the district considered relieving the former coach of her coaching duties after the 23-24 school year because of concerns about the program co-mingling with other programs. Such co-mingling, in the Board's reasoning, negatively impacts the opportunities and well-being of Escanaba students. The district decided instead to give the former coach another opportunity to improve and gave her clear instruction that there was to be no co-mingling of programs at other districts to avoid, among other concerns, MHSAA guidelines limiting scrimmages. Despite this clear instruction, the district became aware of further incidents this most recent season.

Regrettably, other false information is circulating about this decision. For example, several people have inaccurately claimed that the District prevented the former coach from holding a gymnastics banquet with her athletes. To the contrary, the former coach informed the Athletic Director of her plans to hold a banquet on the day before her end of season review with him. This was only two business days before the proposed date of the banquet. Despite the late



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notice, the district was fully prepared to keep information regarding the coach's renewal status for next year confidential until after the banquet. Publicly available records show that the former coach immediately made her future status public and emailed the Athletic Director to cancel the banquet.

We understand that coaching decisions like these stir strong feelings. The district made the non-renewal decision because ultimately, we believe it was in the best interests of our students. Despite the concerns expressed, the district appreciates the former coach's many years of service, and we intend to move forward in ways that support our excellent athletic program.