

Dear Parents and Guardians of Incoming 7th and 8th-Grade Athletes,

The Peoria Unified School District recently solicited input from a variety of stakeholders regarding the upcoming elementary athletic seasons and potential changes that could alleviate our current challenges. The data confirms that a majority of our community, administrators, and coaches support the restructuring of our elementary athletic programming in the following ways:

1. Playing each sport on an opposite season of when the high schools play
2. Moving games to City of Peoria fields and/or other large venues
3. Beginning games later in the evening when there is more availability of bus drivers
4. Doubling-up on teams that play each evening to condense schedules for available officials
5. Aligning the seasons with other surrounding districts to provide cross-district competition

Changes to the upcoming 2022-23 school include:

- Fall season will consist of boys and girls Softball
 - Games will be played at Rio Vista, Pioneer, and Paloma Park at 5 p.m. and 6:15 p.m.
 - Schools will play back-to-back games, boys and girls playing on the same night
- Winter season will consist of Football, Cross Country, and girls Volleyball
- Spring Season will consist of boys and girls Basketball
- Track and Field championships will follow the spring season

There are several reasons why Peoria Unified is making these changes. The shortage of officials we experienced in recent seasons can be resolved by playing seasons opposite of the high schools and by having double headers on the same night. Playing games later in the evening will impact transportation and increase bus availability as well as playing during slightly cooler temperatures during the fall season. Another positive impact will be the opportunity for high school coaches to connect with feeder schools during their off-season and support the growth of our student athletes. An even more exciting change is the formation of the Northwest Valley Athletic Conference comprised of Peoria Unified, Dysart Unified, and Deer Valley Unified School District. These changes will allow our students to play in tournaments and in cross-district games outside of our regular Peoria Unified season. Culminating our season will be a 12-team championship tournament in which the top four teams in each district will vie for a Northwest Valley Championship.

We are very thankful for all the feedback from coaches, administrators, and parents as we worked to address some of the challenges we experienced in recent years. We look forward to the new and exciting adjustments in our upcoming athletic programming for the 2022-23 school year which creates positive change and new opportunities for our student athletes.

Sincerely,

Mark Ernster
Director of District Athletics