

January 31, 2019

Good Morning,

I apologize for the awkwardness of not being present with you all today to speak for myself. One of the parts of my job I enjoy the most is getting to connect and network with my fellow ADs. A medical emergency has prevented me from being with you during this incredibly important process.

During this releaguing cycle, Damien, in conjunction with St Lucy’s, will be asking for your consideration of relief from our current league configuration. The landscape of Damien High School is undergoing a change. In the span of one calendar year our enrollment has dropped significantly. At this time last year, we enrolled over 900 students. As of today we sit at approximately 830. We have dropped rapidly and unexpectedly.

Additionally, we are seeing the trend of losing more students to transfers than we are bring in. The concept that Damien is taking in transfer students from its surrounding schools is simply untrue. In the last 18 months we have enrolled 36 transfers that have participated in athletics and had 43 transfer out that have sought eligibility at a new school. Competing in a league where it’s member schools regularly have 3500 students to our 1300 (when combining Damien and St Lucy’s) just doesn’t make sense.

Geographically, being placed in our current Baseline league, our student-athletes have suffered. Damien has seven academic classes during the school day. We have no athletic release period. When our student-athletes need to leave to travel to the other side of the inland empire and leave at 1:00 they are missing significant amounts of class time, not simply their athletic release period. Our release times are routinely 1:00 or 1:15, where they could be later by as much as 30/45 minutes if placed in a more reasonable geographic location.

Secondly, our community is suffering. The reality is we are seeing a significant decline in fan support at away contests and visitors when we host. It’s challenging to get to some of our league schools on a Friday night, especially for our student body and the reality is they just aren’t coming and, as mentioned, visitors simply aren’t showing up to events hosted at Damien. This is a problem. Our student athletes deserve to play in front of their parents, deserve to play in front of their friends, and our student body should be able to easily support their friends. This is just really challenging in the current configuration. With consideration of relief, I believe these issues could be resolved.

Lastly, is the issue of competitive equity. While there is no denying Damien has enjoyed some success in some sports, when looking at the program as a whole we have many sports that are suffering greatly having to compete against schools with a thousand more boys. Our track and field program has one league victory in the last two seasons. Our wrestling program has only three league victories in the last four seasons. Our cross country team has finished fourth and fifth respectively in the last two seasons. In the sport of football, we are 6-14 in the last four seasons, with no finish higher than fourth place. Most would consider basketball to be one of our most successful programs, and we won league in our first year in the Baseline league and not since.

During this most difficult process, coupled with the clear evidence St. Lucy’s has demonstrated of their recent struggles and our continued desire to be a league partner with them, we respectfully request your consideration for relief during this releaguing cycle.



Jeff Grant, Athletic Director

