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Greetings to the BNL Athletics Community,

Corey and I wanted to take the time to update you all on a greater level about changes we are instituting for the upcoming academic year of 2023-2024. As of our last Wasaren League meeting, BNL Athletics have asked the league to have BNL Athletics take a 2 year “Step Out” period starting this upcoming academic year. Specifically, for our struggling programs **ONLY** (Boys and Girls Basketball and Boys Baseball). All other sports/levels will remain as full members for Wasaren League participation.

What is the “Step Out” rule/process

The “Step Out” rule allows a school in the Wasaren League to continue to be in the league but recognizes that certain sports may not have the numbers/skill set to compete with its other member schools. That school is still a part of the league, but will not be permitted to participate in post season tournaments or Wasaren League championships. Teams that opt to take the “Step Out” schools/teams are allowed to participate in Sectional/State playoffs. As an example, Saratoga Spa Catholic is completing their “Step Out” period for their Girl’s Varsity Soccer team. Their numbers and talent levels were dwindling and they took the initiative by hitting the reset button on that program to allow it to grow and foster into a competitive program for entry into full Wasaren League competition. We have asked the league to change the wording of the rule from “automatic re-entry into the Wasaren” to “reassess re-entry into the Wasaren”. We have an upcoming league meeting on June 6th in which we will get more guidance on the requested change to the wording. As of this letter, the league has accepted BNL’s proposal to “Step Out” in specific to Boys/Girls Basketball and Boys Baseball.

BNL Athletics Plan during the “Step Out” period

BNL Athletics plan during this period will be to craft an independent schedule with schools that are similar in school size and comparable athletic programs. The Wasaren League has sent schedules out for those sports we are taking the time out for this year. We are not compelled to use that schedule, we can schedule some Wasaren League teams (if comparable to us) but we want to take the time out to play other schools like BNL. The rationale for this is to hit the reset button for those sports. This will allow our students and the community to see we are building for the future without lopsided losses, which does not show the true context of incremental gains by our student athletes and athletic department. We have sought out similar schools

comparable to Berlin-New Lebanon such as Germantown, Doane Stuart, etc. Our hope is not to get better by engaging in games with less talented teams, but to get ourselves some positivity with others who have some of the same challenges as well.

Reassessment Period

During the reassessment period this time will allow us to “grow” our programs. Currently with the makeup of Wasaren sports formats, the postseason is determined by league record only, not a true tournament type of schedule similar to NCAA or other Sections in the NYSPHSAA. After the initial 2 year period, we will make a determination if BNL is making the strides necessary to re-enter the league in those sports on a full time basis, or will we ask for an additional 2 year period to keep building our BNL programs.