

New Del Norte athletics director hired

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The Del Norte Unified School District hired Jay Reese on Sept. 23 as its director of athletics to oversee the district's sport programs.

School Superintendent Jeff Harris said the new position was created after extensive conversations with coaches, teachers, athletes and community members.

“Our community and students have a long, proud tradition of athletics. We’ve had a lot of phenomenal athletes go through our facilities. The coaching staff and community support has been unbelievable,” said Harris. “But we wanted to know how can it be better, expanded and improved?”

After holding meetings at all four middle schools and the high school, Harris said, it was apparent the district needed a more comprehensive athletics program for grades six through 12.

Wanted was consistent expectations for the scholar athletes and clearer communications among the schools, athletes and coaches.

The initial plan was to hire a part-time athletic director to help organize a comprehensive strategy for the district to follow as it determined its next step. But, Harris said, posting that position did not result in a significant pool of candidates and the job went unfilled.

“Upon meeting with the folks who turned that down, a compensation study for classified employees showed that what we were flying was inappropriate minimum pay for an administrator (who would be) writing and evaluating district policy programs,” Harris said.

“We were almost paying for a full-time position by law, so the board approved creating a full-time position.” Reese was hired from that second group of applicants.

“He comes to us with a ton of background experience coaching at the junior high, high school and college level, officiating at all levels up to semi-pro, from northern California to southern Oregon,” Harris said.

“He’s a person very dedicated to scholar athletes, enhancing the great work by our coaches and athletic directors here. He loves the tradition of the area, very family-oriented, had his own sports radio show in Oregon and even coached against us.”

Harris said Bob Hadfield will remain as the district’s coordinator of high school athletics and Lucas O’Laughlin in that role for middle school sports.

Reese will be responsible for overall sports safety, reporting annually to the school board and working with other school districts’ athletic directors.

“He’ll make sure we don’t have any communication breakdowns that led to forfeited games and families not getting notified. His role will be to bring all the constituents together and bring them to the next level,” Harris said.