

Community Letter

To the Communities and Alumni of Arriba-Flagler and Hi-Plains School Districts:

The purpose of this communication is to discuss the Flagler/Hi-Plains Athletics Cooperative and plans for community involvement in the next steps of the development of its identity. First, and foremost, we want to acknowledge our pride in how communities, fans, and most importantly, students, have embraced each other and developed a team spirit that embodies true collaboration.

The high school athletics collaborative was approved by both school districts out of necessity for participation and safety of students in Fall 2016. The athletics cooperative is truly based on an equal relationship, an investment of time, money, and resources by both school districts in a 50-50 relationship, no matter how many students participate from each school. In the athletics cooperative, no school is the “smaller” district and no school is the “larger” district. Student participation may vary, but the cooperative relationship will not.

Both school districts have declining enrollment, as well as declining state funds. Due to cuts in state funding over the last eight years, both Arriba-Flagler and Hi-Plains have not received what is now totaled to over one year’s funding. This money will not be “paid back” to the school districts. Thus, at the school district level, the decision to form a cooperative is also a fiscally responsible, and sometimes, necessary, one.

Now, a year and a half later, the Flagler/Hi-Plains Athletics Cooperative Committee is tasked with creating an identity for this cooperative team, or entity that has developed between the two separate athletics programs. Along with this identity, we must identify a mascot and colors. Fans, and most importantly, teams need this identity to keep moving ahead. Students must be able to identify themselves. We want to start with a mascot, and in doing so, the distinction must be recognized between high school identities and mascots and the sports

collaborative identity and mascot. Many more programs and activities exist in each high school, such as Knowledge Bowl, FFA, Speech, etc. We will not be changing the high school mascots; Flagler High School's mascot will still be the Panthers and Hi-Plains High School mascot will still be the Patriots. Therefore, the sports athletic cooperative mascot should be reflective of the cooperative spirit representing both high schools' athletic teams.

We are seeking your input to help establish this cooperative identity through a survey for the mascot. After a mascot is identified, we will then seek input on name and colors. The survey will be available on both schools' websites and we will have paper copies available at the offices. Student Council representatives from both schools, including students who participate in athletics and those who do not, will developed that survey for the community.

The Flagler/Hi-Plains Athletics Cooperative Committee

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