



October 11, 2023

Dear Union High School Football Parents —

Thank you for your patience and continued dedication as we've dealt with unexpected changes in the leadership of our football program.

I also want to thank the football staff for stepping up to lead for our scholars.

Grand Rapids Public Schools has completed an internal investigation following the arrest of Don Fellows and determined that he will not return to coach the football team.

Having received feedback from many of our families on this matter, I know this change brings about mixed emotions. This has not been an easy situation for anyone to navigate.

Our focus must now shift to what's next for our scholars and the Union Football program we are so proud of.

I'm grateful that Scott Van Essen has agreed to step into the role of head coach. Mr. Van Essen is a valuable member of the GRPS team both on and off the football field. He has great relationships with the players and coaching staff. He is ready to continue in this leadership role.

These changes are difficult to navigate and we understand those who may have feelings of frustration but I'm confident that with the support of one another we will get through this together.

If you have any concerns, please reach out to Coach Van Essen, Athletic Director Justin Walker, or Principal Aaron Roussey.

Kurt Johnson  
Executive Director of Athletics  
Grand Rapids Public Schools

