

# District unveils new website for student-athletes

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By Thomas Franz✉

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Chippewa Valley High School athletic director Chad Hottle speaks during a Feb. 7 event at which the district's "Life of an Athlete" website was unveiled. (Photo by Thomas Franz)

CLINTON TOWNSHIP — Chippewa Valley Schools has unveiled a new website designed to educate student-athletes on how to improve performance while avoiding harmful activities.

The district's "Life of an Athlete" website started up Feb. 7 before a crowd of administrators, coaches and student-athletes in the district's administration building.

Several years of work and discussion went into creating the website, which is based on the work of John Underwood, who has visited the district twice over the past few years to instill a message of healthy living for student-athletes.

Ed Skiba, assistant superintendent of educational services, played a key role in creating the website. He was the first of several speakers during the launch event, and said that a death of a Chippewa Valley student two years ago demonstrated the need for a website like this.

"At that point in time, we were more determined than ever that this was going to become a reality," Skiba said. "While we can't predict or control human behavior, we want to make sure we've done everything we can to ensure the safety of every single student-athlete we have."

The website provides, students, parents and coaches with resources on improving performance by avoiding alcohol and drug use, eating properly, and getting ample sleep to allow for body recovery, along with physical training tips. The information is contained in a 35-page pamphlet on the website.

"A lot of what we've learned, we've already incorporated," said Chippewa Valley football coach Scott Merchant. "I think the unique part of this program is that it's educational too. It's not just to say no to drugs or alcohol. It talks about the effects drugs or alcohol have on you specifically as an athlete, and then it has information on proper diet, rest and nutrition."

Merchant said the website will provide added reinforcement for what coaches have been preaching to their student-athletes already.

Students will have to take a survey each year they participate in district athletic programs to prove they have studied the website.

“Our goal as coaches is to see our kids improve and be as good as they possibly can be. This is a nice tool to show them the research, the hard data and brain scans to show them what they’re doing to themselves,” Merchant said. “If you’re really serious about being a student-athlete and want to win a championship or scholarship, there’s no way you can do those things and be able to obtain your best.”

Chad Hottle, the Chippewa athletic director, explained that the website will ensure that a constant and consistent message is being relayed to students rather than having Underwood or other speakers visit the district.

“If it’s not revisited often, the message goes away,” Hottle said. “We wanted to unveil it as perfect as possible so it’s fully functional, and we hope every kid is going to visit it often and use it.”

Dakota Athletic Director Mike Fusco said coaches will be key to the success of the program.

“I believe strongly that the people who carry the torch for providing a good experience for our student-athletes are our coaches,” Fusco said. “We have a lot of coaches at Dakota that have already bought into the program that were involved when we brought it to the surface six years ago.”

“Life of an Athlete” can be found at [www.cvsloa.org](http://www.cvsloa.org).

