

Audubon Community Athletics & Activities Information Meeting

Tuesday, July 28, 2026

7:00 p.m.

Audubon High School Auditorium

Dear Audubon Community Members,

The Audubon Community School District invites students, parents, coaches, staff, alumni, and community members to attend an informational community meeting regarding the future of several athletic sharing opportunities and recent changes to Iowa legislation affecting 8th-grade athletic eligibility and waiting periods.

The purpose of this meeting is to present factual information, answer questions, and gather feedback from our community. No decisions will be made during the meeting. Instead, this meeting is intended to ensure everyone has access to the same information and an opportunity to ask questions and share perspectives before any future action is considered.

We recognize that members of our community hold differing opinions regarding athletic sharing. Our goal is to provide accurate information, answer questions openly, and ensure every voice has the opportunity to be heard before any decision is made.

We also want to explain why this meeting is being held on Tuesday, July 28. Next week, our Exira-EHK-Audubon softball team will be competing at the State Softball Tournament. With the new double-elimination state tournament format, the schedule remains uncertain, making it difficult to know when players, coaches, families, and community members may return home. Rather than asking anyone to leave the tournament early, the Board felt it was important to support our student-athletes and allow our community to fully enjoy and celebrate this accomplishment. For that reason, the meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, July 28, 2026.

We recognize that some families may be away for Family Week. However, with fall sports camps beginning on August 3, discussions regarding athletic sharing opportunities need to occur before practices begin, as they may impact athletic programs and students. If you are unable to attend but would like to provide comments or ask questions, please contact Mr. Sean Birks or Mr. Trevor Miller prior to the meeting.

Over the past several years, the partnership between Audubon and Exira-EHK has provided outstanding opportunities for our student-athletes. Together, our shared programs have experienced tremendous success, including:

- **Girls Basketball** – Three seasons of sharing, with all three teams advancing to the Regional Final, including one State Tournament appearance.
- **Softball** – Three seasons of sharing, with all three teams advancing to the Regional Final, including two State Tournament appearances and a State Runner-Up finish.
- **Girls Tennis** – Participation has continued to grow, with more than 20 student-athletes on last fall's roster.
- **Wrestling** – Continued opportunities for boys and girls through the Audubon, Exira-EHK, and IKM-Manning partnership including two girls and three boys state qualifiers, including a state runner-up, during the 2025–26 season.
- **Cross Country** – Continued participation opportunities through athletic sharing.
- **Junior High Football** – Continued participation opportunities through athletic sharing.

These partnerships have helped both districts sustain competitive athletic programs despite changing participation numbers. For Audubon, the partnership has been especially beneficial in girls' athletics, where participation numbers have declined in several sports. As participation trends continue to evolve in both districts, school leaders have continued to evaluate additional opportunities that best serve student-athletes now and into the future.

As both districts continue to monitor participation numbers and enrollment trends, the Exira-EHK Board of Education approved additional proposed athletic sharing agreements for Audubon's consideration on July 20. Those proposals include:

- A three-year agreement for boys' programs.
- A four-year agreement for girls' programs. (*The girls' basketball sharing agreement has already been approved by both school boards through a four-year agreement.*)

Summary of Proposed Athletic Sharing Agreements

The list below summarizes the athletic sharing proposals approved by the Exira-EHK Board of Education for Audubon's consideration:

Fall

- *HS Football Independent*
- *JH Football Shared (Audubon)*
- *JH & HS Volleyball Independent*
- *JH & HS Cross Country Shared (Exira-EHK)*
- *HS Girls Tennis Shared (Audubon)*

Winter

- *JH & HS Wrestling Shared (Audubon)*
- *HS Boys Basketball Shared (Audubon)*
- *HS Girls Basketball Shared (Exira-EHK)*
- *JH Girls & Boys Basketball..... Independent*

Spring

- *HS Boys Track Shared (Audubon)*
- *HS Girls Track Shared (Audubon)*
- *JH Girls & Boys Track..... Independent*
- *HS Boys Tennis Shared (Audubon)*
- *HS Boys Golf Independent*
- *HS Girls Golf TBD (see note below)*

Summer

- *HS Baseball Shared (Audubon)*
- *HS Softball Shared (Exira-EHK)*

Note: Girls golf remains under consideration and will be determined based on coaching availability and roster sizes.

Scheduling Expectations

If approved, the proposal is intended to balance home contests between both communities whenever practical.

- **Basketball:** The intent is to schedule girls and boys varsity doubleheaders on the same evening at the same site, allowing each district to host approximately five to six varsity dates each season. This may look different for the upcoming season due to non-conference games that are already scheduled.
- **Baseball & Softball:** The intent is to schedule JV/Varsity doubleheaders in both Audubon and Elk Horn/Kimballton, allowing each district to host approximately five to six varsity dates each summer season.

The districts currently operate under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that outlines how shared activities are administered. If additional athletic sharing agreements are approved, representatives from both districts—including two board members from each district, Mr. Petersen, Mr. Miller, and Mr. Birks—will update the MOU to include expectations for coaching assignments, facilities, transportation, communication, and a clearly defined process, should either district choose to discontinue a sharing agreement in the future.

Current enrollment projections indicate that Audubon's girls participation numbers and Exira-EHK's boys participation numbers are expected to improve over the coming years. While no one can guarantee future participation, those projections were used in developing the proposed timelines and agreement lengths.

During the meeting, district administration will:

- Review current participation numbers across Audubon athletic programs.
- Share enrollment trends at the junior high and youth levels.
- Review the athletic sharing proposals approved by the Exira-EHK Board of Education.
- Explain recent Iowa legislation regarding 8th-grade athletic eligibility, including the change from 90 school days to 140 calendar days for periods of ineligibility.
- Answer questions and gather community feedback.

The Audubon School Board and administration deeply value the tradition, pride, and history of Wheeler athletics. Community input is an important part of the decision-making process as we evaluate opportunities that will best serve our students both now and in the future. Following the community meeting, the Audubon Board of Education will consider the information presented, the feedback received, and any additional questions before determining next steps. If the Board chooses to move forward, any action would occur at a separate special meeting of the Board of Education.

We encourage all interested community members to attend, learn more about the proposals being discussed, ask questions, and share their perspectives.

Thank you for your continued support of Audubon Community Schools.

Sean Birks

Activities Director / Assistant Principal

Trevor Miller

Superintendent / Acting Secondary Principal