Case Study Bravo – Needful Things in the Athletics Office

The setting:

Gable High School is a large high school of approximately 1600 students. There are two other high schools in the district. Both are approximately the same in enrollment. The school has approximately 850 computers and is well networked. You are the technology coordinator for the school. The district has recently gone through a migration to a new administrative software package, *EagleSchool*. Though generally successful, the need to change "the way we have always done it" has caused a fair amount of resistance. The majority of the administration has worked well with you; however, the athletic director has been hard to work with. It has been difficult for him to move off of the legacy system, which he is still using. As part of the "good old boy network" in the district, the previous district MIS director had worked to build a number of specific programming modifications in the legacy system for your athletic director. They had been baseball coaches together earlier in their careers. The previous MIS director retired several years ago. The new MIS director is very frustrated with the situation. She has been trying to move the Gable athletic department onto *EagleSchool* and has been having no luck. Since the Gable athletic director is not using *EagleSchool*, the district MIS director is unable to provide the superintendent and the board members with statistics and other data regarding athletic program participation. Recently, the athletic director wrote a long memo to the MIS director and copied you, your principal and the superintendent. He demands that all efforts to move him to the "new and improved software" be stopped and that "we get a new computer person who understands the needs of the athletic department."

Your principal asks you to get to the bottom of the issue and write up a set of recommendations.

In doing a little digging, you come up with the following information:

- ✓ The *EagleSchool* software athletic module is the weakest of the modules of the system. However, since the other high school athletic departments had only used paper systems in the past, they are willing to use it to move into the computer age. Only the Gable HS athletic department ever used the "old system" they are

presently trying to retain. The main complaint is that the EagleSchool software limits the amount of characters that can be entered into the notes field for a given student and the athletic trainers do not have enough room to enter their full treatment procedures in a single record for a student. In addition, the system does not allow for word wrap and the trainer has to manually choose a new line every 80 characters. All of the necessary information can be kept in *EagleSchool*.

- ✓ *EagleSchool* does not customize software for individual districts and is unwilling to make any timely changes to the athletics module.
- ✓ The legacy system is the only system being maintained on the district's old AS/400. The MIS director wants to sell that computer in the next couple of months. All other systems have been moved to newer RS6000 systems. The cost to maintain the AS/400 is approximately $35,000 per year.
- ✓ The MIS director strongly wants to bring every system in the district into the *EagleSchool* umbrella so that reporting and maintenance is streamlined.
- ✓ The previous MIS director is willing to come in and write a new athletic program for his old buddy, but the new MIS director is against him doing so. The cost would be about $10,000 but it would run on the newer RS6000 computers.
- ✓ Currently, one of the district MIS staffers has to query the data out of *EagleSchool* every day and port it into the old athletic system.

The personalities:

The MIS director has been in the district four years. She has had a difficult time dealing with the need to move to *EagleSchool* because of Y2K. In addition, she is the most senior female in the district and has met a great deal of resistance. She is technically very competent and has supported you on a number of issues since you moved up from a teaching position two years ago.

The athletic director is a true curmudgeon. He is nearly 60 and won't be retiring for a couple more years at least. He doesn't understand technology very well. He is extremely frustrated that the MIS girl cannot let him keep his old system. He has let you know he expects you to be loyal to the Gable High School team.

Your next steps:

Write a memo to the principal and the superintendent that outlines your suggestions for resolving this issue.