

MEMORANDUM

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TO: John Miller
Assistant Executive Director
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Brian Smith
Assistant Executive Director
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FROM: Carl Blackstone
Robert Westinghouse

DATE: May 25, 2016

RE: WIAA Response to Bellevue School District's Violation Report dated May 23, 2016

On March 22, 2016, Carl Blackstone and Robert Westinghouse submitted an Investigative Report to the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association ("WIAA") relating to the Bellevue High School ("BHS") football program. The WIAA Investigative Report ("Investigative Report") contained findings that BHS and the Bellevue School District ("BSD") had violated a number of WIAA rules. WIAA provided the Investigative Report to BSD on April 1, 2016. On May 11, 2016, BSD/BHS presented a WIAA Violation Report ("Violation Report" or "District's Report") to the KingCo League during a self-report hearing. On May 13, 2016, George Crowder, KingCo League President, requested that WIAA and its investigators evaluate the information contained in the BSD/BHS Violation Report.

The May 11 Violation Report identifies 10 allegations in the Investigative Report. The Violation Report provides substantive responses to only six of the allegations. On May 18, 2016, the WIAA investigators submitted a response to the six allegations addressed in BSD's Violation Report.

On May 23, 2016, BSD presented a supplemental Violation Report to KingCo addressing the four remaining allegations. On the same day, George Crowder requested that the WIAA and its investigators evaluate the information contained in BSD's supplemental Violation Report.

Allegation #1 – Whether coaches directed players to the Academic Institute

The WIAA investigators responded to BSD's response to this allegation in their May 18 report, which is incorporated herein by reference.

Allegation #2 – Whether boosters paid for tuition of athletes at the Academic Institute

WIAA Rule 27.1.0 provides that “no student may receive, or be offered, any remunerations of any kind, or to receive or be offered any special inducement of any kind which is not made available to all applicants who enroll or continue to be enrolled in the school or apply to the school.”

WIAA Rule 27.1(A)(1) provides that “Special inducement shall include, but not be limited to “the offer or acceptance of money or other valuable consideration such as free or reduced tuition during the regular year or summer school by anyone connected with the school.”

WIAA Rule 27.1(C) provides that “Member schools shall be responsible for any violation committed by any person associated with the school, including principals, assistant principals, coaches, teachers, any other staff members or students, or any organization having any connection to the school. The member schools shall be responsible for any violation committed by any person acting at the direction of the school.”

BSD admits that the Booster Club paid the tuition for one football player in violation of WIAA Rule 27.1.0. BSD claims, however that the violation was “inadvertent” and blames the violation on Jennifer Vice, the director of the Academic Institute. The facts indicate that this violation was far from “inadvertent” and that it was not an isolated violation. More significantly, Coach Goncharoff, Assistant Coach Richard Brown, and the Booster Club through its vice-president Joe Razore, played a large role in this violation.

BSD largely places the blame on Jennifer Vice, while exonerating the Booster Club. BSD's conclusion is not supported by the facts. The player in question entered BHS in September 2011. He attended BHS for one year. The player was struggling academically during that year, causing his father to look for other academic options. He learned about the Academic Institute from a father of another player who was attending the Academic Institute. The father then contacted BHS Assistant Coach Richard Brown, Sr. and asked him about the Academic Institute. Coach Brown said that he was not familiar with the Academic Institute but that he would look into it and get back to the father. After a period of time, the father talked to Coach Goncharoff, who told him it was a great idea for his son to attend the Academic Institute. The