



YARMUTH WILSDON PLLC

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**INVESTIGATIVE REPORT  
RE: BELLEVUE HIGH SCHOOL  
FOOTBALL PROGRAM**

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**Carl  
Blackstone**

**Robert  
Westinghouse**

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2. Coach Goncharoff directed and encouraged BHS football players to take classes at the Academic Institute to obtain minimum grade standards, which such players would not, in all likelihood, otherwise have been able to achieve in violation of WIAA Rules 18.7.0 and 18.7.4 and District rules.
3. District administrators, BHS administrators and football coaches have failed to exercise appropriate oversight to ensure that BHS football players did not use false addresses or provide other false information to create the illusion that such players resided within the boundaries of the District and/or the designated attendance area for Bellevue High School in violation of WIAA Rule 18.10.1.
4. District and BHS administrators and football coaches failed to cooperate with, and in some instances deliberately interfered with or obstructed, the investigation of the BHS football program in violation of the WIAA Code of Ethics and in contradiction of Bellevue High School's implicit obligations as a WIAA member to support and cooperate with a WIAA fact finder appointed pursuant to the authority and responsibility of the WIAA Executive Board as set forth in WIAA Rule 8.12.9 "to investigate alleged WIAA rule(s) violations."
5. We recommend that WIAA adopt a new rule explicitly requiring that all member schools must cooperate with all investigations of WIAA rules violations.
6. BHS coaches have received payments for coaching in excess of \$500 per year without first obtaining approval from the school's board of directors in violation of WIAA Rule 23.1.1. The evidence establishes that for at least the years 2008 through 2012, the Booster Club has paid Coach Goncharoff and BHS assistant coaches \$312,059. We believe the bulk of this money has been paid to Coach Goncharoff but we do not know whether there were additional payment made because the Booster Club has refused to provide us with any financial records and Coach Goncharoff has refused to answer any questions relating to payments he received from the Booster Club. Although the District was aware of or should have been aware of these payments, they failed to (a) properly question Coach Goncharoff about these payments; (b) ensure that the Booster Club comply with Rule 23.1.1; (c) notify the Bellevue School Board about the payments; and, (d) report the alleged violation to the KingCo Conference.
7. BHS football players attended, participated in, and received the benefits of, a summer camp at Ft. Worden, Washington, which was paid for in whole or in part by the Booster Club in violation of WIAA Rule 27.1.0, which prohibits any student athlete from receiving "any remunerations of any kind" or "any special inducement of any kind which is not made available to all applicants who enroll or continue to be enrolled in the school." The evidence establishes that for the years 2008 through 2014, the Booster Club reported on its tax returns payments averaging close to \$80,000 a year to cover a portion of or all of the costs associated with the BHS football team's Ft. Worden summer camp. Although we have some evidence that a portion of these expenses may have actually been

funneled to Coach Goncharoff and other coaches, we have been unable to either confirm or deny this concern because the Booster Club has refused to provide us with financial records and Coach Goncharoff has refused to answer any questions relating to payments he received from the Booster Club.

The Booster Club's financial support of the football summer camp clearly constitutes a remuneration or inducement not available to all BHS students. To the extent that this financial support is not deemed a violation of Rule 27.1.0, it clearly violates the spirit of WIAA's core mission to promote fair play on a level playing field. Few if any other high schools in the State have resources to fund such summer camps for football teams. It also raises questions regarding compliance with Title IX requirements to ensure equality between programs for each gender. Allowing one school or one gender to benefit from such largesse, not otherwise available to other member schools or both genders, flies in the face of fundamental fairness. Financial support of this type from a school's booster club should not be permitted.

8. The District failed to self-report two violations of WIAA rules in violation of WIAA Rule 28.1.0, to wit: (1) the payment to coaches by the Booster Club in violation of WIAA Rule 23.1.1; and (2) the payment of tuition at the Academic Institute for one student player in violation of WIAA Rule 27.1.0(A)(1).
9. The District and BHS lack appropriate controls and oversight over the activities and expenditures of funds by the Booster Club. As noted in this report, the Booster Club has operated for its entire existence with minimal, if any, oversight or involvement from the District or BHS administrators. Such lack of involvement and control from either the District or BHS exacerbates the potential for rules violations and excessive financial support. It also directly correlates with the lack of cooperation provided by the Booster Club during this investigation.
10. The District and BHS administrators should structure a formal arrangement to ensure oversight of the Booster Club's relationship with the BHS football program, including the monitoring of all payments to coaches and financial support to the team. In cases where there is reason to scrutinize or question Booster Club activities or financial support after the fact, such involvement and oversight would greatly enhance the District and BHS' ability to insist on Booster Club cooperation. If such cooperation was not forthcoming, the District and BHS administrators should sever the relationship with the organization. During this investigation, we suggested to District representatives that they take action to sever all ties with the Booster Club, if it would not cooperate in this investigation. To our knowledge no such action was taken or even proposed.
11. We recommend that WIAA adopt a new rule requiring member schools to exercise appropriate oversight and control of booster clubs. Such a rule should

also expressly make the actions of booster clubs the direct responsibility of the schools with which they are associated.