

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: FILE

FROM: Jeffrey A. Thomas, Ed. D., Executive Director of Human Resources

DATE: May 17, 2016

RE: INVESTIGATIVE REPORT RE: Follow-up from WIAA investigation regarding coaches

I. SUMMARY OF COMPLAINT

Dr. J. Tim Mills, Superintendent of the Bellevue School District requested an additional inquiry into items identified in the WIAA Report on Bellevue Football conducted by Carl Blackstone and Robert Westinghouse. Specifically, I was asked to focus on three areas; 1) allegations that the head football coach "directed and encouraged football players to attend or take classes at the Academic Institute;" 2) that "District and BHS administrators and coaches cultivated a close relationship with the Academic Institute;" and 3) that "BHS Coaches received excessive payments for coaching high school football."¹

II. FACTUAL BACKGROUND

- a. Who, what, when, where, how.
- b. Identify a reference after each statement of fact.
- c. Identify the credible evidence that supports the factual summary. (Attach exhibits).

On April 25, 2016 I interviewed Victor "Butch" Goncharoff, head football coach at Bellevue High School. In this interview I asked Goncharoff ten questions aligned with the three areas of the WIAA report referenced previously. My summary notes of the interview indicate cooperation from Goncharoff (Exhibit A). Through correspondence with Goncharoff and his legal counsel, Malaika Eaton, Exhibit A is an agreed upon record between Goncharoff and the District.

On May 2, 2016 I conducted a follow-up interview with Goncharoff for additional information (Exhibit B). Goncharoff continued to be cooperative and openly answered questions (Exhibit B). The summary notes in Exhibit B are an agreed upon record between Goncharoff and the District.

On May 6, 2016, I interviewed Pat Jones, assistant head football coach at Bellevue High School. In this interview I asked Jones six questions based upon information

¹ The report and its Exhibits are several hundred pages long. Only specific pages of the report are included in this review. The report in its entirety is available with appropriate redactions. Carl Blackstone and Robert Westinghouse are the authors of the report and conducted the investigation on behalf of the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA).

High School or at the Academic Institute or any other educational institution where his players attended classes. The investigators incorrectly correlated a visit from the coach to a student in the classroom as some type of illicit activity. Quite the contrary, it is an expectation for Bellevue coaches, and coaches at public high schools across the country in general to be engaged with their students and actively monitor their academic success. By failing to calibrate Goncharoff's involvement with academics for students at both Bellevue High School and Academic Institute, the investigators came to an erroneous conclusion. To the degree that there may have been a close relationship as asserted by the WIAA investigators, I did not find any evidence that the relationship between Goncharoff and the Academic Institute was a violation of District policy.

BHS Coaches received excessive payments for coaching high school football

Of the three items I reviewed, this item is of the greatest concern. The general assertion in the WIAA report is described as being a violation of WIAA Rule 23.1.1 (Exhibit H) from the 2015-2016 Washington Interscholastic Activities Association Handbook. The key is the language "in a season," alluding to the \$500 threshold that would require approval by the Board of Directors of the Bellevue School District for any stipend or payment to a coach. Both Goncharoff and Jones believe that the reference to "in a season" means that any additional compensation received outside of the identified season for football would not be subject to this rule. Unfortunately, WIAA has created a significant dilemma in defining a season by referencing football as having the Senior High School Football Season, 57.1.0, and the Senior High Summer Football Season, 57.1.1, essentially two seasons (Exhibit I). Rule 23.1.1 does not define what constitutes a season. WIAA Appendix 5 provides some definition (Exhibit J), noting that a season is defined and has a maximum number of contests allowed. Based upon this partial definition, the season for football is established by WIAA Appendix 7 (Exhibit K) and Appendices 8.1 and 8.2 (Exhibit L, Exhibit M). Because the summer football season has a beginning date and an ending date, it meets the defined season as stated in Appendix 5 (Exhibit J). The rules for Summer Football also stipulate practices and Jamboree (Exhibit I). Therefore, Summer Football is treated as a season. Based upon this, the \$500 rule would be in effect between May 29 and July 31, 2016 as an example. Although my investigation is limited to Bellevue Football, I believe this rule and my analysis would conclude that many other programs are also in violation of this rule both with other high schools in the Bellevue School District and high schools across the state of Washington. The WIAA will need to address this on a larger scale.

Jones argued that because he is a seasonal employee and not paid by the District during the summer the \$500 provision would not apply. He stated that if he was considered an employee, then the District should compensate him for the extra hours he would work during the summer and not be compensated by other entities. The WIAA investigators stated they were unable to verify the additional income of coaches due to a lack of cooperation from Goncharoff or the Boosters. When asked directly about compensation from other sources, Goncharoff answered openly, citing