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TO: John Miller
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Brian Smith
Assistant Executive Director
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FROM: Carl Blackstone
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DATE: May 18, 2016

RE: WIAA Response to Bellevue School District Violation Report dated May 11, 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 Violation Report identifies 10 allegations in the Investigative Report. The Violation Report provides substantive responses to only six of the allegations. BSD reports that it is continuing to investigate the remaining four violations and represented that it would respond by May 16, 2016. To our knowledge, BSD did not respond by that date.

In this memorandum the WIAA investigators will respond to the six allegations addressed in the Violation Report. The investigators will submit a supplemental response after BSD provides a substantive response to the four remaining allegations.

BSD claims that it is still investigating this allegation and that the “hearing panel can expect a response to this allegation by May 16, 2016.” To our knowledge BSD did not respond by May 16. Once BSD submits a response to this allegation, the WIAA investigators will respond.

Allegation #9 – Whether BSD failed to self-report violations of WIAA Rules.

WIAA Rule 28.1.0 requires that “when a school or the WIAA staff becomes aware that a rule has been violated, the offending school principal (or designee) must report the infraction and any action taken by the school in writing within five (5) school business days to 1) the superintendent of the offending school, 2) the league of school membership for review and action, and 3) the appropriate WIAA District.”

The WIAA Investigative Report found that BSD failed to report several violations of WIAA rules as required under WIAA Rule 28.1.0. BSD denies this allegation. BSD’s denial is not supported by the facts.

1. Payments by Coach Goncharoff to a player’s father

On June 1, 2015, Jeff Lowell and Lauren McDaniel on behalf of BSD/BHS orally reported to KingCo that Coach Goncharoff had given a player’s father \$300 to “assist with food and rent” in violation of WIAA rule 27.1.0.A.7. (Investigative Report at 61-63, Exhibit 35). BSD failed to report that the player’s father had told BSD that Coach Goncharoff had actually given him \$1,200. In fact the player’s father told the WIAA investigators that Coach Goncharoff had provided him with \$1,200 in cash on two separate occasions. He also said that he had provided this information to Mr. Lowell. (Investigative Report at 39, footnote 40). In any event, BSD claimed that it was not required to disclose the information it had learned from the father.

This is inconsistent with the self-reporting rule. WIAA operates on a honor system. Implicit in the self-reporting rule is that member schools must fully and completely disclose all facts relating to a rule violation. A member school cannot report only those facts which minimize the rule violation. All facts must be disclosed so that the KingCo League and WIAA can understand the seriousness of the violation and impose appropriate sanctions.

BSD’s decision to disclose that Coach Goncharoff only gave the player’s father \$300 was misleading. BSD knew that the players’ father claimed that the payment was significantly higher and Mr. Lowell admitted that he had no reason to question the father’s credibility. As between Coach Goncharoff and the father, Coach Goncharoff arguably had much greater motive to lie about this event.