

**Hashimoto, Becky D**

**From:** Riley, Mike (Michael N)  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 12, 2006 4:54 PM  
**To:** - Board; - Cabinet  
**Subject:** FW: A Question

A little more

**From:** Riley, Mike (Michael N)  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 12, 2006 4:54 PM  
**To:** 'Greg Johns'  
**Subject:** RE: A Question

I really do understand how this "looks" – no question. Allegations of recruiting are exactly what we investigated and I do think we were aggressive about it. While there will always be questions raised when an entity investigates itself, I'm not sure there's much I can do about that. If I hired a private company to do it, the company would still report to me. As I said in what I thought was a private email that subsequently became a public document, we set out to either exonerate Butch or fire him. Throughout this experience my admiration for Butch has only grown stronger. I think he has tremendous integrity and is good down to his bones. What is less controllable is what others do – especially those who do whatever it is they do unofficially, not as representatives of the team or district. I had a dad tell me today that he lives on Mercer Island, his middle school son plays three sports, and if the boy decides that football is *the* sport, he's buying a house in the Bellevue High neighborhood because Bellevue High is the place for football. I don't think anyone is recruiting this kid, I don't think anyone is encouraging dad to sell his house and move, but if this kid were to become a superstar and his dad a volunteer coach, I know how that would "look."

I'm not discounting the "look," and I know what looks bad can actually be bad – that's why we investigate. I also am not relinquishing responsibility, throwing up my hands. On the other contrary, when we conduct what we think is a good investigation and we don't find evidence of wrong doing, I think I have a responsibility to support the coach -- even when it looks bad and brings us criticism.

**From:** Greg Johns [mailto:gjohns@juno.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 12, 2006 2:57 PM  
**To:** Riley, Mike (Michael N)  
**Subject:** Re: A Question

Hi Mike,

Thanks much for the reasoned response to what I'm sure is a difficult situation. You raise a very legitimate point and clearly these things are never as easy as those of us on the outside would like to think.

My counter perspective, however, would be that while the district (or football program, more accurately) can't discourage parents who want to bring their students into a certain school, it certainly shouldn't ENCOURAGE such transfers for obvious athletic purposes either. Whether Bellevue High does that or not appears to be the great debate. But when I see the fathers of 1A 10A and 1A 10A being added to Butch's coaching staff when their sons transferred to Bellevue High, that certainly seems to fall into the "encouragement" category. I realize these were volunteer positions, but how does it look when two different kids transfer from another district and both immediately have their dads added to the coaching staff?

These are the type of situations that have raised considerable anger in other quarters. The word is out that Bellevue will do whatever it can to attract top football players. Maybe that word is wrong, but it surely is out there. Where the responsibility lies with encouraging or discouraging that is a matter of interesting debate. From what you say, a district can only throw its hands up in those situations. So maybe it's just the way life is these days, with our public schools heading toward a sort of free-for-all for obtaining athletes. I would hate to see that, though that already is in place with some private schools.

Anyway, I do appreciate your perspective and welcome any further thoughts you have. I do try to consider all angles when formulating opinions and value your input greatly.

Take care,  
Greg

On Thu, 12 Oct 2006 14:05:16 -0700 "Riley, Mike \(\Michael N\)" <RileyM@bsd405.org> writes:

Hi Greg,

I'm Mike Riley, the superintendent of the Bellevue School District. I think your article is balanced and I appreciate the accuracy of your information. I have one question, however. Do you think the district or the school could have told parents and kids that they could not attend the school or play on the team during the years of open enrollment? I doubt that we could do so legally, but even if we could, what would I say to someone: "I'm sorry, we think your kid should play football at some other school so we've denied your transfer"? Isn't it highly likely that the parent would have a legitimate gripe that her child was being deprived of attending his or her school of choice because he was, what, too talented in athletics?

I'm not trying to be glib, but I do think when we make choices we have to consider how things appear from multiple perspectives and play out for everyone involved.

Mike