

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #285 (2005-2006)

May 22, 2006

TO: SCHOOL BOARD  
FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT  
SUBJECT: TITLE IX GENDER EQUITY TASK FORCE REPORT

*ASD Goal: Establish and maintain a supportive and effective learning environment by promoting health and wellness; continuing to retain, recruit and train highly qualified staff; and offering reinforcing extracurricular activities.*

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the administration's recommendation that the following recommendations of the Title IX/Gender Equity Task Force be approved:

1. Consider student input from the interscholastic athletic interest survey as paramount in the process of adding sports wherever financially feasible and where adequate facilities are available.
2. Expand opportunities within existing sports to build skills and interest.
3. Evaluate existing and probationary sport programs based on objective criteria in order to enhance decision-making beginning with the fall of the 2006-2007 school year.
4. Expand and fund middle school sports opportunities to strengthen high school athletic programs wherever financially feasible and where adequate facilities are available.
5. Expand soccer options with artificial turf fields when they become available.
6. Continue pursuit of OCR sanction for competitive cheerleading as a sport.

It is further recommended that \$150,000 be approved to begin a pilot program for Girls' Flag Football in the 2006-2007 school year.

## PERTINENT FACTS:

Title IX requires schools to maintain policies, practices, and programs that do not discriminate against anyone based on sex. Although the law applies to every element of education, including employment, curriculum, extracurricular activities, and access to all school programs and services, in sports Title IX addresses the availability, quality, and opportunities which athletes receive. Schools can comply with this federal law by showing they have a proportionate number of athletic opportunities for males and females or by continuing to expand opportunities for the under-represented sex. Schools do not necessarily need to offer identical sports but they must provide an equal opportunity for females to play in sports of interest.

The Anchorage School District's goal is compliance with Title IX. To that end, a Gender Equity Task Force was formed this school year to develop new standards for successful sports programs. The task force gathered information and discussed various ways to increase the participation of female athletes in order to more closely align with enrollment figures. An interscholastic athletic interest survey was assembled and later administered to students. The task force held a series of public forums for the purpose of discussing Title IX requirements, identifying potential gender equity issues in our schools, and gathering input and suggestions from the Anchorage community. Meetings were held over the next four months and included the expertise of committee members selected from the community and the District. Community volunteers included Don Winchester, Rod Hill, Steve Nerland, Ron Henderson, Linda Anderson, Gladys Langdon, Brad Gamblin, and Gary Matthews from the Alaska School Activities Association. District personnel working on the GETF included Margo Bellamy and Val Woods (EEO Office), Sue Holway (Assistant Principal, East High School), Patsy Chapple, (Assistant Principal, Chugiak High School) and Lisa Keller (Coach, East High School), and Todd Arndt (Supervisor, High School Education). Don Winchester was selected to chair the group.

The Title IX/Gender Equity Task Force presented their report (Attachment A) to the School Board at a work session on May 1, 2006.

The Task Force felt that it is essential to evaluate existing sport programs based on objective criteria in order to enhance decision-making. Beginning with the school year 2006-2007, it is recommended that all programs be required to meet a minimum participation level at both individual schools and the District level. This would serve as a tool for evaluating successful programs and assure the District's resources are serving the interests of the greatest numbers of athletes

Female athletes have reported a significant interest in a Flag Football program through survey results. The Task Force and the Administration have recommended that \$150,000 be appropriated to fund a Girls' Flag Football pilot program to enhance the

number of female athletes competing in the ASD. This funding would pay for coaches, equipment officials and field fees.

The public and staff continue to advocated for the expansion and funding for middle school sports opportunities to strengthen the high school athletic programs. Currently there are five interscholastic sports offered in middle school. It is recommended that interscholastic sports programs be expanded at the middle school level which could increase participation at the high school level. Participation numbers from middle school to high school indicate that female athletes involved at the middle school level are more likely to continue at the high school level. This recommendation has a significant cost impact and will have to be reviewed carefully in light of all school district priorities.

It is also recommended that the ASD continue to pursue the development of a competitive cheer program following the direction as outlined by OCR. Currently OCR has indicated a lack of support for Competitive Cheer as a sport due to the lack of significant competitive events. It is recommended that the ASD continue to fund this opportunity for female athletes and pursue new dates for competition. It is also recommended that the ASD continue to investigate the option of an indoor soccer program should the participants be counted by OCR in the equity equation.

Finally, it is recommended that the ASD continue to support the current sports offered to male athletes. Reducing the number sports offerings for male athletes would not promote a healthy interscholastic program. We need to continue to expand opportunities for our female students.

Attachment

CC/RG/MH/TA

Prepared by: Mike Henry, Executive Director, High School Education  
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Carol Comeau, Superintendent

Approved by: Rhonda Gardner, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction