

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

MEMORANDUM

April 12, 2006

TO: CAROL COMEAU, SUPERINTENDENT

FROM: TODD ARNDT, SUPERVISOR
HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION

SUBJECT: TITLE IX, GENDER EQUITY TASK FORCE

ASD Goal: Establish and maintain a supportive and effective learning environment,...promoting health and wellness,...maximizing opportunities for lifelong learning, (and) offering reinforcing extracurricular activities...

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. Lastly, the task force formulated recommendations intended to take both an immediate and longer range look at athletic opportunities for all students within the District.

The Process

The Gender Equity Task Force (GETF) commenced its work in June 2005, where discussion centered on the mechanics of such a committee, appropriate selection of members, the direction the committee should go, and topics for future investigation and discussion. One early decision was the group's intent to create a relevant process for evaluating the success of all District athletic programs. It

was felt this would help focus efforts to utilize resources to the utmost and provide a way to transition those assets being absorbed by any unsuccessful programs to ones that would better benefit and interest students. This was believed to be a fundamental method to increase participation numbers and alignment with Title IX requirements.

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.

Diverse topics were covered in the task force meetings, including analysis of the existing athletic program; flag football programs in Michigan and Florida; competitive cheerleading which, although a popular activity is not currently sanctioned as a varsity sport by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR); the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) list of emerging sports, middle school feeder programs for various sports; outsourced teams; and ways to evaluate successful athletic programs. Additionally, the task force assembled an interscholastic athletic interest survey, based upon input from athletes, coaches, and parents, in order to see in which sports students asserted they wanted to participate.

Three Title IX Compliance Forums were planned to gather information from the Anchorage community at large. Publicity for these sessions was handled by the District's Public Affairs Office, and the forums on October 27, November 3, and November 17, 2005, received local news coverage. An overview of Title IX and how it applies to the Anchorage School District was given by Andie Stone, an attorney with Jermaine, Dunnegan and Owens. Handout materials were developed for those in attendance, along with a questionnaire. Inquiries included:

1. How can the school district enhance girls' sports to meet gender equity?
2. What girls' sports should the school district offer to meet gender equity?
3. Each year the Anchorage School District surveys student interest. What sport would you like to see added/deleted from the current survey?
4. How should the district evaluate an existing program, i.e. participation level, student interest, etc.?
5. Is the district meeting the needs of the student athletes with existing indoor and outdoor facilities, and would you support facility upgrades?

6. Should the district engage in interscholastic sports at the middle school level?

The work of the GETF continued through the public forums and into the month of December. Subsequent to the community sessions, committee members reviewed the most frequently raised topics, including middle school feeder athletics, a rowing program and other suggested additions to the present offerings, and the public's impression of the "haves and have-nots". Adding middle school sports offerings to increase the experience base of athletes and the question of how to determine which sports might best "grow" high school participation was long debated. More discussion centered on artificial field turf which could provide venue options for existing and new sports, as well as reliable availability of fields. Various enhancements aimed at increasing opportunities for students within existing programs were examined.

A subcommittee of the GETF which had been studying ways to evaluate the success of athletic programs presented participation guidelines they felt would be a minimum required for any interscholastic athletic activity to be considered viable. From that debate evolved the notion of creating a formula which would measure adequate participation numbers to warrant continued support of a program.

Having tackled an ambitious project, received abundant input, and discussed the issues over many months, the GETF systematically developed their conclusions.

Recommendations

1. *Consider student input from the interscholastic athletic interest survey as paramount in the process of adding sports. See attachments 1 and 2.*

It is strongly recommended that student interest be the number one factor in considering pilot programs to be added to interscholastic athletic opportunities within the District. Offerings need to reflect the community's culture and include those activities which spark the interests of those who will participate. Students were surveyed this year concerning their specific desires, and it is the task force's belief that the District should earnestly contemplate those results before it considers instituting any other options. Budget limitations and scholarships (which make up 2.2 percent of those awarded) should be a secondary consideration.

2. *Expand opportunities within existing sports to build skills and interest.*

Due to the demonstrated appeal of middle school volleyball (see appendix A), it is recommended that the current high school volleyball program be expanded to include a 9/10 A and B team. See appendix B. Athletes who come into high school with or without middle school playing experience are more likely to continue participation

throughout their high school careers if there are more opportunities for them to compete at developmental levels. These interscholastic teams would, besides having regular practices and contests, engage in an end-of-season championship.

3. *Evaluate existing and probationary sport programs based on objective criteria in order to enhance decision-making.*

Beginning with the school year 06-07, 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. Each program would have to demonstrate their viability by the actual participation of students.

- Participation guideline identified: the number of athletes required for a team, plus half that number for substitutes required for a team, times two (Varsity and JV team).
- Four of the eight high schools must meet the mark or the program would be put on notice of probation.
- Probation would continue for two years before being referred to the Executive Director of High School Education for further action.

Newly piloted programs will have a three-year grace period before having to meet the guidelines. Coaches, athletes, parents, and booster clubs would be expected to take steps to invigorate participation as a means to maintain their sport's standing. If a program were dropped as a result of this process, the District would divert those resources and launch a new activity based upon preferences declared by students. The viability of the entire interscholastic activities program with optimum student participation should be considered more important than any individual sport or advocacy group.

4. *Expand and fund middle school sports opportunities to strengthen high school athletic programs.*

Currently there are five interscholastic sports offered in middle school (see appendix A). 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. High School programs with no middle school interscholastic feeder program have lower participation numbers.

It is further recommended that the district begin with the addition of interscholastic soccer and basketball. These sports are currently offered

as intramural sports with an established program, and can accommodate many athletes.

5. *Expand soccer options with artificial turf fields*

Due to the substantial and continuing interest in soccer at every school (see attachment 2), it is recommended the District address the issue of artificial turf fields. Currently the sport is highly weather-dependent, with a schedule that is too short to adequately develop skills for beginning and non-club players. Maintenance of grass fields continues to be expensive and difficult, given the short growing season and high demand for use of these spaces. As a result, the safety and availability of fields throughout the community are ongoing concerns. The addition of artificial turf fields would greatly enhance the high school soccer program and build on the popularity and continuity of middle school soccer.

6. *Continue pursuit of OCR sanction for competitive cheerleading as a sport.*

Competitive cheerleading is a very popular activity in the District and one that is more strenuous and athletic than many people realize. To demonstrate meeting OCR criteria for what constitutes a sport, the district has increased the number of competitive events and the requirements for coaches to be certified. The potential exists to increase participation numbers for the Title IX report and more accurately represent the efforts of its participants. It is recommended the District pursue OCR requirements to acknowledge competitive cheerleading as a sport.

Attachments 1 and 2
Appendix A and B

APPENDIX A

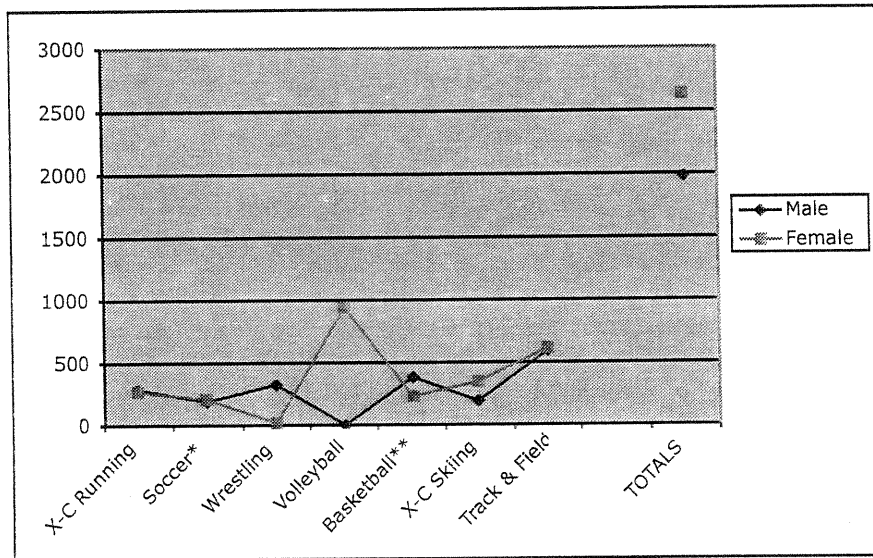
MIDDLE LEVEL EDUCATION SPORTS - 2004-05

	Male	Female	Expenditures	Addenda Cost	Number
<i>X-C Running</i>	282	265	\$174	\$31,754	23
<i>Soccer*</i>	190	209	\$71	\$10,815	15
<i>Wrestling</i>	334	27	\$1,069	\$37,123	21
<i>Volleyball</i>	7	950	\$280	\$56,409	29
<i>Basketball**</i>	384	229	\$849	\$23,433	34
<i>X-C Skiing</i>	187	348	\$460	\$33,319	20
<i>Track & Field</i>	595	606	\$1,775	\$83,102	45
TOTALS	1979	2634	\$4,678	\$275,955	187
	Per Athlete		\$1	\$60	

Soccer* - Intramural , 4 week season

Basketball** - Intramural, usually two sessions per gender of 4 weeks each

Other sports are Interscholastic, typically 8 week season



APPENDIX B

Current Teams

Varsity
Jr. Varsity
C Team

Proposed

Varsity
Jr. Varsity
C Team
9/10 A Team
9/10/ B team

Please darken
circles
completely

INTER-SCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC INTEREST SURVEY 2005-2006



Current school: Central Clark Goldenview Gruening Hanshew
 Mears Mirror Lake Romig Wendler Bartlett Dimond East
 Chugiak Eagle River Service South West Other

Gender Male Female

Grade 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th

1. Are you interested in participating in high school athletics? Yes No

2. If you answered No to question #1, please indicate your reason(s):

- Not interested in sports Not good enough to make the team
 Working Too busy with other school activities
 None of my friends are involved My sport is not offered by my school
 Only offered to girls Only offered to boys
 Other reason (describe): _____
 Prefer not to respond

3. If you answered Yes to question #1, indicate all the sports or athletic activities in which you would be interested in participating:

- Baseball Table Tennis Martial Arts
 Cross country running Track & Field Soccer
 Rowing Competitive Cheerleading Skiing/Snowboarding
 Softball Golf Wrestling
 Tennis Bowling Cheerleading
 Hockey Swimming & Diving Other (list) _____
 Basketball Volleyball
 Football Gymnastics
 Riflery-Air Cross country skiing

4. Please check or list any sports or athletic activities which are not presently offered at your school in which you would be interested in participating, if they were offered. (Some examples are provided for you to consider.)

- Girls Flag Football Golf Water Polo
 Table Tennis Rowing Badminton
 Field Hockey Lacrosse Other (list) _____
 Racquetball Snowboarding
 Downhill skiing Triathlon
 Indoor soccer Competitive cheerleading
 Martial arts

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Continue on the other side →



5. Indicate any interscholastic high school sport (junior varsity or varsity) in which you participated in previous years at this school or at any other high school you attended.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baseball | <input type="checkbox"/> Bowling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cross country running | <input type="checkbox"/> Golf |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rowing | <input type="checkbox"/> Soccer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Softball | <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming & Diving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis | <input type="checkbox"/> Volleyball |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wrestling | <input type="checkbox"/> Cheerleading |
|
 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basketball | <input type="checkbox"/> Martial Arts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Football | <input type="checkbox"/> Hockey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Riflery-Air | <input type="checkbox"/> Cross country skiing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Table Tennis | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Track & Field | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (list) _____ | |

6. Indicate any sports activities in which you have participated through MOA Parks and Recreation, YMCA, YWCA, Boys & Girls Club, your church, or any other community sports program such as AYSO, Little League, Pop Warner, etc.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baseball | <input type="checkbox"/> Basketball |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cross country | <input type="checkbox"/> Football |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rowing | <input type="checkbox"/> Riflery-Air |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Softball | <input type="checkbox"/> Table Tennis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis | <input type="checkbox"/> Track & Field |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hockey | <input type="checkbox"/> Competitive Cheerleading |
|
 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Golf | <input type="checkbox"/> Martial Arts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bowling | <input type="checkbox"/> Soccer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming & Diving | <input type="checkbox"/> Skiing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volleyball | <input type="checkbox"/> Wrestling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gymnastics | <input type="checkbox"/> Cheerleading |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (list) _____ |

7. If the sports listed below were offered, what would you most likely participate in?

Rank your top four choices, 1 being your top choice.

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| ___ Girl's flag football (fall) | ___ Golf | ___ Water polo |
| ___ Table tennis | ___ Rowing | ___ Badminton |
| ___ Field hockey | ___ Triathlon | ___ Snowboarding |
| ___ Downhill skiing | ___ Racquetball | ___ Lacrosse |
| ___ Competitive cheerleading | ___ Indoor soccer | |



**Activities Interest Survey
Summary of December 2005 Results**

Surveys were distributed to students in grades 8-12. Completed surveys were received from 10,203 students. This was approximately 53% of the surveys that were distributed. Fifty-one percent (51%) of students who returned a survey were female.

Seventy-six percent (76%) of all students responded that they were interested in participating in high school athletics. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the girls responded that they were interested in athletics.

Twenty-four percent (24%), of the students who responded, indicated that they were not interested in participating in athletics (this was 2,337 of the 10,203 who responded). These students chose the following reasons for their non-interest:

Boys and Girls Combined - Grades 8-12 (n = 2337)

Reason	Percent of Respondents Who Indicated This Reason for No Interest	Number of Respondents Who Indicated This Reason
Not interested in sports	38%	882
Working	22%	522
None of my friends are involved	7%	163
Only offered to girls	1%	29
Other reason	14%	325
Not good enough to make the team	11%	256
Too busy with other school activities	15%	348
My sport is not offered in my school	10%	237
Only offered to boys	1%	34

Girls Only - Grades 8-12 (n = 1180)

Reason	Percent of Girl Respondents Who Indicated This Reason	Number of Girl Respondents Who Indicated This Reason
Not interested in sports	40%	468
Working	24%	287
None of my friends are involved	8%	99
Other reason	14%	163
Not good enough to make the team	14%	163
Too busy with other school activities	17%	198
My sport is not offered in my school	8%	90
Only offered to boys	1%	15

When asked about sports that are not offered, the students who responded indicated interest in the following (many students wrote comments about interest in martial arts):

Boys and Girls Combined - Grades 8-12 (n = 10203)

	Percent of Respondents Who Indicated Interest	Number of Respondents Who Indicated Interest
Snowboarding	32%	3246
Lacrosse	20%	2000
Martial Arts	18%	1852
Badminton	17%	1705
Water Polo	15%	1529
Indoor Soccer	14%	1408
Golf	13%	1314
Downhill Skiing	11%	1155
Table Tennis	11%	1148
Racquetball	10%	1039
Field Hockey	9%	928
Rowing	9%	906
Competitive Cheerleading	8%	863
Triathlon	8%	820

Girls Only – Grades 8-12 (n = 4825)

	Percent of Respondents Who Indicated Interest	Number of Respondents Who Indicated Interest
Snowboarding	32%	1527
Girls Flag Football	24%	1151
Badminton	19%	911
Martial Arts	17%	794
Indoor Soccer	15%	736
Lacrosse	15%	736
Water Polo	15%	715
Competitive Cheerleading	14%	660
Downhill Skiing	11%	527
Field Hockey	9%	414
Rowing	9%	449
Table Tennis	8%	398
Racquetball	8%	409
Golf	8%	402
Triathlon	8%	371
JV Softball	0%	0

Students were asked to rank their top four choices of sports that are not currently offered from a list. The results are listed below in ranking order, with the highest ranking sport being at the top:

Boys and Girls – Grades 8-12
(Total # who responded = 7985)

- Snowboarding (1st choice for 2117 students)
- Indoor soccer (1st choice for 874 students)
- Badminton (1st choice for 640 students)
- Lacrosse
- Girls Flag Football
- Table Tennis
- Golf
- Downhill skiing
- Competitive Cheerleading
- Water polo
- Field Hockey
- Racquetball
- Triathlon
- Rowing

Girls Only – Grades 8-12
(Total # who responded = 3922)

- Snowboarding (1st choice for 838 students)
- Girls Flag Football (1st choice for 586 students)
- Indoor soccer (1st choice for 471 students)
- Badminton
- Competitive Cheerleading
- Downhill skiing
- Table Tennis
- Lacrosse
- Water polo
- Field Hockey
- Triathlon
- Racquetball
- Rowing
- Golf

Survey Return Rate by School

Return rate by school:

High Schools (grades 9-12)	Students Enrolled	Surveys Received	Response Rate
Bartlett	1787	1054	59%
Chugiak	1489	689	46%
Dimond	1940	1457	75%
Eagle River	720	432	60%
East	2240	728	33%
Service	1721	932	54%
South	1796	862	48%
West	1910	709	37%
Middle Schools (grade 8 only)	Students Enrolled	Surveys Received	Response Rate
Central	323	280	87%
Clark	375	268	71%
Goldenview	405	350	86%
Gruening	289	230	80%
Hanshew	487	390	80%
Mears	548	307	56%
Mirror Lake	261	145	56%
Romig	405	235	58%
Wendler	481	224	47%