

Dear members of the Executive Board,

My name is Seth Balint and I am the Activities Director at Cordova Jr. / Sr. High School. I will be reading a prepared statement that you should have received prior to this meeting. Thank you for the opportunity to speak at this time.

I am commenting on Action Item 7) under Old Business, item O, 2A Basketball Conference Realignment.

Last month, Mr. Strickland proposed a new conference realignment to Region Presidents and Athletic Directors. In the proposal, one of the choices made was to move Cordova, Dillingham, Ninilchik, Unalaska and Seward into its own conference. The rationale for the conference realignment points out that there are too many teams in the Interior Conference and not enough teams in the Western Conference. A discussion on realignment to even the number of teams in each conference does make sense but the teams that were put into each conference in the proposal does not.

This mix of road teams and non-road teams severely impacts the travel costs to the teams on the road system. Seward, Ninilchik and Cordova do not have nearly the same travel budget as Unalaska and Dillingham has. For us, flying into non-road communities only happens on special occasions, like tournaments or an agreed payment by the non-road teams.

Mixing road teams that have a very small travel budget with non-road teams that have a drastically different sized budget is forcing unnecessary costs to more communities. We simply do not have the resources to fund these trips.

To help clear up some possible confusion, Cordova is a coastal community that relies on the Alaska Marine Highway Ferry System to travel in and out of town for 10 months out of the year. That Ferry resides in Cordova and sails 5 days a week to Valdez and Whittier. During the basketball season, this is our primary mode of transportation. We do not fly for conference games, we could not afford to do so. To be put in a conference with the western communities, having to pay for them to fly to Cordova, or to pay our own way to fly into these towns every year, would completely decimate our budget.

From a geographical standpoint, Cordova resides at the end of Copper River. Upstream of the Copper River from Cordova is Glennallen. To get from Cordova to Glennallen, it is a ferry ride to Valdez and drive north a few hours. From Glennallen we move to Tok, from Tok we continue up the highway to Fairbanks to play Effie Kokrine.

This is nearly the same route that Valdez has to take to play Delta, Eielson and Hutchinson High School in their region. Moving Cordova out of the Interior Conference to join Dillingham and Unalaska is the 3a equivalent to removing Valdez from the Aurora Conference and putting them in a conference with Bethel. This is a big leap across the state to make.

In Cordova, we make an effort to collaborate when proper changes are presented. We would like to see a decision made together with the schools that are affected in these drastic regional changes. I have included in my statement a counter proposal as an example of a more reasonable solution for the affected teams.

We believe there is plenty more discussion to be had to decide the fate of the 2A Basketball Conference Realignment. These decisions can greatly impact not only travel budgets, but entire school districts and communities statewide.

I thank you, Board, for the opportunity to let me speak today.
I am open to any questions and am able to contribute to any realignment discussions in the future regarding our school.

Thank you,

Seth Balint
Activities Director
Cordova School District

2a Realignment Counter Proposal

Northwest 2 Seeds

Chevak
Dillingham
Hooper Bay
Tikigaq
Unalakleet

Interior 2 Seeds

Cordova
Effie Kokrine
Glennallen
Nenana
Tok

Southern 2 Seeds

Ninilchik
Seward
Susitna Valley
Unalaska

Southeast 2 Seeds

Craig
Haines
Metlakatla
Petersburg
Wrangell