

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

TRANSFERS – A REALITY CHECK



At the beginning of each school year, we offer members of the media from all over our section the opportunity to conduct interviews with the Commissioner. Some of them come into our office to do it in person and others do it by telephone. All topics are on the table for discussion and it has been a great way for us to inform the media of what issues are at the forefront of this particular year and also get an understanding of what is of interest to them and to their readers.

As these interviews took place, regardless of where the reporter was from, the subject of transfers was something they certainly wanted to talk about. However, in our discussions, I believe there is a disconnect between perceptions regarding the current transfer situation in our section and the reality that exists. Therefore, I believe it is time for a reality check regarding the transfer of students from one high

school to another.

Transfer Numbers are Not Skyrocketing – A prevailing thought is transfers are out of control and the number of students transferring schools keeps growing at an alarming rate. That is simply not the case. Here are the numbers of total transfers in the Southern Section (Valid Residence Change, SOP, Limited Eligibility, Non-Participation, Hardship) over the last three years...

- 2014-2015 – 6,760
- 2015-2016 – 6,876
- 2016-2017 – 6,999

Yes, an increase of slightly more than 100 transfers in each of the last three years. However, over a period of 12 months, that increase translates to approximately 10 transfers a month, certainly not an overwhelming number in a section of 586 member high schools. Also, with 400,000 student-athletes participating in athletic programs in the Southern Section, 7,000 transfers in one year is only 1.75% of the total number of student-athletes in our section. 98.25% of our student-athletes do not transfer schools during their high school experience.

CIF Bylaws are in Place to Reduce Transfers – When the most recent revisions to transfer bylaws were implemented, the Sit-Out Period, the reduction in the categories that can be considered for Hardship, etc., some people believe that those adjustments would reduce the number of transfers. That was never the intention of the rules changes put in place by our member schools at that time. The philosophy behind our transfer rules was to understand that transfers will occur, but there needed to be appropriate responses for transfers in the various scenarios that present themselves: Valid Residence Change, not a Valid Residence Change, Hardship, etc., and that we needed to improve our management of the transfer process. There are certainly bylaws that could be passed that would reduce transfers. For example, a student who transfers schools, regardless of the reason, would not be eligible to compete at the varsity level for one year in the sport(s) they participated in at their former school during the last 12 calendar months prior to their transfer. A bylaw like that would

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TRANSFERS - A REALITY CHECK (Cont.):definitely influence a student's decision to transfer schools, yet that potential bylaw would encounter stiff resistance from the California Legislature, who authorizes the CIF to administer high school sports in our state, and would also face significant legal challenges as well. We must be able to recognize that our bylaws operate in a larger context and be cognizant of that situation each and every day.

In looking forward, there will always be students/parents who are looking to transfer schools for various reasons. The important thing for us to do is to acknowledge that reality and understand it.

Thank you very much for your help and support, it is truly appreciated, and good luck always.

All the best,

Rob Wigzel

