

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

IS IT TIME FOR US TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?

The issue of student-athlete transfers is a constant topic for discussion inside and outside of our office. At the CIF State and Section levels, we track the number of transfers each month and publish those numbers for all to see.



We do so in an effort to monitor and review what is going on with this situation and determine if the current transfer rules we have in place are adequate, or there may be a need to explore potential changes to them. Always keeping in mind that it is our member schools who make the rules that govern our organization, I do believe that we have a responsibility as leaders to be in touch with our membership on important issues related to education-based athletics and transfer rules are certainly one of the most prominent ones. In my 18 years working for the CIF Southern Section, I have seen a variety of different provisions related to transfer rules. All of them were designed to serve our member schools in the best way possible at the time they were enacted. However, based on some recent developments in the states of Ohio, Michigan and Colorado, I am wondering, is it time for us to have a conversation about transfer rules

in California? Here is what I am referring to...

5/16/18 – Cincinnatti.com – Ohio High School Rule Change Affects Transfer Athletes' Eligibility for Postseason

"The Ohio High School Athletic Association passed a key referendum item. By a vote of 450-244 among member schools, transfers that don't meet a list of exceptions must now sit out the second half of the season, including the postseason. Previously, players had to sit during the opening half of the season with eligibility coming mid-way."

5/14/18 – MLive – MHSAA Toughens Transfer Rules for Student-Athletes

"The Michigan High School Athletic Association approved stricter transfer restrictions. Instead of sitting out one semester after transferring, athletes will have to sit out an entire school year in their specific sports. Previously, a transfer student would be ineligible to participate in any sport for one semester. Residence exceptions, where a student moves into a district, remain unchanged."

4/26/18 – Pueblo Chieftain – Changes in High School Sports Transfer Rule Coming Soon

"The Colorado High School Activities Association passed new rules Thursday during its Legislative Council meeting in Aurora. The biggest change is that student-athletes will lose 365 days of varsity eligibility if transferring schools without a hardship waiver or a bona fide move by their family. Previously, student-athletes who transferred without the hardship waiver or a family move had to sit out 50 percent of varsity contests. The transfer rule passed by a 55-15 vote."

In various discussions with our stakeholders, as well as with many of our sport advisory committees, and other important groups like our Superintendents Advisory Committee, Private School Leadership Advisory Committee, Athletic Administrators Committee and Public/Private Committee, I don't think there is any question that principals, athletic directors and coaches have expressed a preference for stricter transfer rules and parents would prefer that we didn't have any transfer restrictions at all. Would stricter transfer rules result in less transfers, and if that is the case, would less transfers mean more stability for programs, both academic and athletic? Are our member schools willing to pay the cost of potential increases in legal costs? Those would be important questions for our member schools to consider if our current rules were to change. Therefore, I leave you with this question...Is it time for us to have a conversation? Thank you very much for your help and support, it is truly appreciated.

All the best,

Rob Wignel

