



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For more information

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JSD to Pursue Consolidation of JDHS & TMHS Teams

Juneau - By November 1, 2017, the Juneau School District will send a formal request to the Alaska School Activities Association (ASAA) to consolidate its football and cheer teams at Juneau-Douglas High School (JDHS) and allow Thunder Mountain High School (TMHS) students to participate in football, football cheer as well as hockey at JDHS.

The decision has been two years in the making, taking into consideration important issues such as player safety and development, season cost, program debt and repayment progress, continued shortage of activities funding, realignment of Southeast Conference, and ASAA's willingness to consider a consolidation request. A number of informational meetings to solicit input from stakeholders and administrators have taken place with the goal of finding an affordable way to continue to provide athletic opportunities to the broadest number of students.

Over the past three years, football programs at JDHS and TMHS have faced deficits in activities accounts despite significant fundraising efforts and generous community support. At the beginning of the 2017 football season, accounts for both teams were in the red. JDHS had a negative balance of \$5,689 and TMHS a negative balance of \$100,821. Both schools fielded only Varsity teams and travel schedules were reduced to three out of town games for each school to reduce costs. Estimated annual budgets for each team are about \$70,000. The district established procedures for budgeting, planning fundraising activities and tracking account balances. Teams have shown good faith efforts at fundraising, but the school district and community have been unable to financially support two football programs.

During this same time period, participation in football has declined, following a nationwide trend. This has led to underclassmen playing Varsity football against upperclassmen, raising safety concerns for players and reducing the opportunity for player development through a Junior Varsity program.

Juneau has only one high school hockey team, which is housed JDHS. The inclusion of hockey in the request is intended to add new opportunities for high school students at TMHS and to be consistent in allowing students from both high schools to participate in activities that are housed at only one school.

If the request is approved by ASAA for football and football cheer, the district will begin the process of consolidation and work through a long list of decisions that will need to be made between now and the beginning of the next football season. A consolidation of football teams in Juneau would likely move the district back into Division I as part of the Railbelt Conference. Approval of this request for hockey will allow incoming hockey players to choose the Juneau high school they wish to attend and allow current students at TMHS to join the sport.

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