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## **Coronado Unified School District Releases Investigation Report; Concludes CIF Appeal Process**

“The Sobel Group investigation reveals the complexities of intent versus perception, as the individual first-person accounts of events illustrate how different perspectives and experiences can exist simultaneously,” Coronado Unified School District Superintendent Karl Mueller.

The events following the June 19, 2021 Southern California Regional Boys Basketball Championship game between Coronado High School and Orange Glen High School generated an unprecedented amount of public interest locally and nationally. The school community is aware that a CIF Appeal Panel recently issued a decision modifying the original sanctions. As noted in the Appeal Panel’s decision, the district’s legal counsel at the hearing retained a private investigator, the Sobel Group, to conduct an investigation. At the time, the investigation was conducted to assist legal counsel with the appeal, and it was therefore an attorney’s work product. Following the Appeal Panel’s ruling, the district received several requests for the report under the California Public Records Act.

After a careful review, it has been concluded that the report is no longer privileged and that the public has a right to review portions of it. In light of this determination and in the interest of transparency to the school community, the district has decided to disclose a redacted copy of that report. Due to significant interest in protecting the privacy and safety of students, all student interviews have been redacted. Witness names and other private information not directly relevant to the events following the Basketball Championship game have also been redacted. The district believes this strikes the appropriate balance between protecting privacy and safety and providing public access to this document.

The investigation provides multiple first-person accounts of the incidents which transpired before, during, and after CHS defeated OGHS in the Division 4-A Regional Championship basketball game. Investigators contacted 40 people including administrators, coaches, students/players, parents, and other witnesses present at the event. Not all witnesses agreed to interviews. The Sobel Group submitted the 128-page report to CUSD attorneys on September 10, 2021. On December 10, the district’s legal counsel released the Sobel report to CUSD understanding there was no further legal action.

The report did not provide a summary or conclusion. Information in the report which supported the appeal position was used in the hearing.

Not included in the report, but relevant to the timeline:

On June 21, CIF Executive Director Ron Nocetti sent a letter to CUSD Superintendent Karl Mueller giving CUSD two days to submit an investigation. Mr. Nocetti verbally extended the investigation submission date to the close of business day on June 25.

On June 22, the district took action to release CHS Men's Basketball Head Coach JD Laaperi, citing a clear violation of both the CIF Code of Conduct, California Education Code, and CUSD Board Policy related to disciplinary action. No other disciplinary action was taken by CUSD.

On June 25, Superintendent Mueller sent a letter to Mr. Nocetti. Mueller summarized evidence collected from multiple witnesses, audio-visual footage, and personal statements related to the incident. Mueller concluded that "...we have seen no evidence of antagonization by the players actions or behaviors that justify forfeiting the game. The young men on the court played hard, fairly, and earned the championship win." [June 25, 2021, CIF Letter](#).

On June 30, Nocetti took unilateral action, issuing seven sanctions against CHS.

On July 6, CUSD submitted an appeal of the sanctions.

On November 1, attorneys for CUSD presented an appeal to a three-member panel of the CIF Executive Board.

On November 22, the CIF Appeal Panel issued its ruling. Four of the director's sanctions were modified or withdrawn and three were upheld. Ultimately the final sanctions against CHS were: vacating the state championship; a three-year probation for the boys basketball program ('probation' was not defined by CIF); one year suspension from hosting boys basketball postseason contests after completion of a sportsmanship workshop by the team and game management training for CHS administrators and athletic director.

A summary of the original and amended sanctions can be found here: [CIF Appeal Ruling](#)  
The redacted copy of the investigation report can be accessed here: [Sobel Report](#).

On November 30, the CUSD Governing Board met in closed session and decided not to pursue any further legal action.

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