

July 16, 2024
City of Utqiagvik
2022 Ahkovak Street
Barrow, Alaska 99723

Dear Mayor Toovak,

My name is Herman Reich, and I am writing on behalf of the Barrow Whaler Wrestling Team. I am currently the head coach for going on 6 seasons. In the last few years, we've had many kids grow as student athletes and learn about the rewards that wrestling brings. We've had six state champions in the last 5 seasons, four state champion runners-up, multiple state placers as well as multiple regional champions. This spring, we had our first national placer as well as first wrestling All-American from Barrow. We have even seen four of our wrestlers in the last 5 seasons move onto wrestle at the college level with athletic scholarships. We are always looking to grow and improve our program to the benefit of our athletes.

Our current wrestling season is set to begin on October 2nd. We're expecting at least 18 of our previous year's wrestlers to return, a solid team of young men and women. We're excited about the growth of our program because the tools, knowledge, and self-discipline that wrestling teaches will benefit them for the rest of their lives. The lessons and morals they learn will help guide them when they become young leaders in our community. Not only does wrestling keep our youth active, but it teaches them how to strengthen their mental health. They learn how to balance their diet and eat foods that will nourish them and improve their performance. They learn the importance of persistence, hard work, self-discipline and teamwork.

We were notified last year that the district would be cutting three tournaments from our budget (two travel weekends and one home tournament). This adds up to 4 out of town tournaments and 1 home tournament total. The average number of matches that most high-school wrestlers in Alaska get before regionals is between 20-40. The average number that our wrestlers will get with the budget cuts is between 12-20. This affects the weight that they can enter the regional tournament at, and affects their seeding for the state tournament, as well as limits their experience.

We don't want our wrestlers to be affected by the new schedules and are currently fundraising to cover the cost of an extra tournament in Sitka on October 25th-26th. We would need to cover the cost of round-trip tickets to Sitka and hotels for overnighting in Anchorage on the way through. We are humbly asking you to consider making a monetary donation the Barrow Whaler Wrestling Program to help with what our fundraising efforts cannot cover. Attached is our budget and season schedule. Any and all help that you can give would be greatly appreciated.

Quyanaqpak for your consideration,

Coach Herman Reich and the Barrow Whaler Wrestling Team
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