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**Santa Clara Unified School District to Resolve Title IX Concerns About Female Athletics**

**San Francisco, CA:** Legal Aid at Work, and Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP (Simpson Thacher) partnered with Santa Clara Unified School District to reach an agreement to resolve Title IX gender equality concerns affecting female athletes at Wilcox High School in Santa Clara, CA. The agreement leads to significant changes that will continue to level the playing field by providing equal athletic opportunities, treatment, and benefits for female athletes at Wilcox.

For more than 45 years, Title IX has required gender equity in public education, including athletics. Legal Aid at Work and Simpson Thacher represented a family whose daughter attends Wilcox and alleged that their school was unfair to female athletes.

Once notified of the family's allegations that it was not in compliance with Title IX, Wilcox High and Santa Clara Unified worked with counsel for the family to address concerns and make program improvements while implementing best practices.

"Sports equality is vital to girls," said Elizabeth Kristen, who is co-counsel for the claimants and directs the "Fair Play for Girls in Sports" program at Legal Aid at Work. "When girls participate in sports they develop so many long-term life skills in addition to the more immediate physical and educational benefits. For example, girls who play sports in high school earn seven percent (7%) higher wages later in life."

"Title IX was passed more than forty-five years ago," said Jayma Meyer, of Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP. "I am encouraged to see that the district is making a good-faith effort to address compliance issues at Wilcox High without the need for legal action."

"Wilcox staff and administration uphold the belief that all students deserve an education that prepares them for higher education, work, and life," stated Wilcox Principal Kristin Gonzalez. "Equal access to athletic opportunities is a vital part of that preparation. Wilcox High School is committed to ensuring that all female students are afforded such access."

The school is adopting new policies and procedures to ensure fairness in adding athletic opportunities for girls, including new gymnastics and field hockey teams and possibly more teams for girls in the future. The school also has agreed to review and remedy any gender inequalities it may find for girls in other components of athletics such as uniforms and equipment, facilities amenities and usage, coaching, transportation, fundraising, and publicity.

The school will train staff and coaches regarding Title IX athletics and will monitor and assess compliance with this agreement for the next two years, ensuring lasting change.

Wilcox has denied any violation of Title IX and reassures that the school and District are committed to a course of action to promote and develop female athletics. This settlement represents an amicable, partnered resolution of the disputes between Wilcox High and the claimants.

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### **Legal Aid at Work**

Legal Aid at Work, founded in 1916, is committed to protecting the rights and economic self-sufficiency of low-income workers and their families. Legal Aid at Work's Fair Play for Girls in Sports project spurs schools and parks and recreation departments to treat girls equally on and off the field. Focusing particularly on girls of color and girls who live in low-income communities, this work promotes the health, educational achievement, and future employment opportunities of girls in grades K-12.

**Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP** ([www.simpsonthacher.com](http://www.simpsonthacher.com)) is one of the world's leading international law firms. The Firm was established in 1884 and has more than 900 lawyers. Headquartered in New York with offices in Beijing, Hong Kong, Houston, London, Los Angeles, Palo Alto, São Paulo, Tokyo and Washington, D.C., the Firm provides coordinated legal advice and transactional capability to clients around the globe. Simpson Thacher has an abiding commitment to public service and devotes tens of thousands of hours each year to pro bono projects.

### **Santa Clara Unified School District**

Santa Clara Unified School District serves over 15,500 TK-12 students, in addition to students in Preschool through Adult School. Neighborhoods in the Cities of Santa Clara, Sunnyvale, San Jose, and Cupertino comprise the District's 56 square-mile area. Santa Clara Unified prides itself on having teachers, classified employees and administrators who are dedicated, experienced professionals who care about each student's well-being and academic preparation.

### **Dannis Woliver Kelley**

Dannis Woliver Kelley is a full-service education law firm focused entirely on serving the legal representation needs of California public school districts, county offices of education, community colleges and other educational organizations. Since 1976, DWK has developed the premier school construction practice in California. From bond finance and property transactions, to environmental compliance, contract procurement, and construction contracting, to closeout and litigation, DWK has your program's legal needs covered.