



PRESS RELEASE

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Oakland Unified School District Settles Legal Dispute about Gender Inequity in its Girls' Athletics Programs

SAN FRANCISCO (June 22, 2020)—Oakland Unified School District (“OUSD”) and the **Fair Play for Girls in Sports Project of Legal Aid at Work** have entered into a settlement agreement to address gender inequity in OUSD’s interscholastic sports programs, including a three-year monitoring term. The agreement will spur significant changes that will level the playing field by providing equal athletic opportunities, treatment, and benefits for female students attending OUSD schools offering interscholastic athletic programming. Given June 23, 2020 is the 48th anniversary of Title IX, it is fitting to announce the sweeping and critical changes embarked upon by OUSD and spurred by Fair Play to ensure girls and boys are able to equally benefit from the school-centered athletics.

Upon learning of gender inequity in the interscholastic athletic programming of the District, Legal Aid at Work sent a letter to OUSD on behalf of girls and parents alleging that the administration of OUSD’s athletic program violated OUSD’s obligations under Title IX, the nearly 50-year-old federal law that requires gender equity in education, including in K-12 athletics. Since then, OUSD and Legal Aid at Work have worked cooperatively and with key stakeholders toward ensuring that girls have the opportunity to play and are afforded the equal treatment and benefits they deserve as student-athletes.

Fair Play for Girls in Sports is focused on ensuring girls of color and girls of low-income communities can once and for all experience equity in athletics programming, [given lacking access and equality](#). OUSD is comprised of over 30,000 students—and thus, approximately 15,000 girls. [Recent data](#) demonstrate that 88.3% of its students are persons of color and 71.2% are eligible for free- and reduced-price lunch.



The settlement agreement, providing for a three-year monitoring period, will run through June 2023, and applies to all OUSD schools with any form of interscholastic competitive athletics, from elementary schools, to middle schools, and high schools. By the end of the monitoring term, OUSD will afford girls equitable opportunities to play sports. The agreement also requires equalizing the amenities girls experience when they do play—such as athletic facilities, transportation, scheduling, and publicity, among other program components—in accordance with well-settled law. Title IX complaint and anti-retaliation policy measures are further included in the agreement to protect those reporting gender inequity issues throughout OUSD.

Furthermore, OUSD will conduct annual surveys of female students to determine what athletic opportunities the District should offer to meet the interests of girls, a provision in line with existing Title IX guidance. In addition, the District has hired a Title IX expert-consultant, to examine athletic programming District-wide to ensure gender equity issues are addressed.

This settlement represents an amicable, partnered resolution of the disputes between OUSD and Legal Aid at Work, **Kim Turner**, the **Director of Legal Aid at Work's Fair Play for Girls in Sports Project** said. "We look forward to continuing to partner with OUSD in coming years to help girls experience equity in school athletics." Turner added, "Girls of OUSD not only will get equal chances to play as a result of this Agreement, but also will receive the many lifelong benefits associated with athletics participation: higher grades and graduation rates, better health, and higher wages as adults."

About Legal Aid at Work & the Fair Play for Girls in Sports Project:

Legal Aid at Work is a nonprofit legal services organization that has been assisting low-income, working families for more than 100 years. Fair Play for Girls in Sports is a Project of Legal Aid at Work that promotes the health, safety, well-being, educational achievement, and future employment opportunities of girls in grades K-12, particularly girls of color and girls who live in low-income communities. Fair Play advocates for equity for girls to ensure that public schools and park and recreation departments offer everyone equal athletic opportunities, treatment, and benefits as required by Title IX and California state law. More information can be found at www.legalaidatwork.org and www.fairplayforgirlsinports.org