



SOUTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

Jerome P. Singleton, Commissioner
P. O. Box 211575
Columbia, South Carolina 29221-6575
Phone: 803-798-0120 www.schsl.org

TO: Superintendents, Principals, and Athletic Directors
FROM: Dr. Jerome Singleton, Commissioner *J.S.*
SC High School League
SUBJECT: Save Women's Sports Act and Girls Wrestling
DATE: May 8, 2024

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Greetings,

As you are aware, in 2022, the South Carolina General Assembly passed legislation related to athletic participation based on the gender of the student as determined by the student's biological sex at birth. As part of this legislation, the following was also added:

Article 1, Chapter 63, Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

"Section 59-63-72. A public school district supported by state funds shall not use any funds or permit any school within the district to use any funds to join, affiliate with, pay dues or fees to, or in any way financially support any interscholastic athletic association, body, or entity unless the constitution, rules or policies of the association, body, or entity recognizes, sanctions, and regulates interscholastic competition of wrestling teams composed exclusively of female students."

After this law was passed, the League has recognized, sanctioned, and regulated the sport of girl's wrestling. However, given the newness of the sport, the League never received notice that enough member schools were fielding the team sport of girls wrestling in order to meet the threshold for a duals state championship tournament. Instead, the League has sanctioned a girls wrestling individual state championship tournament for the past two years. In an effort to continue the growth of girls wrestling, the League has intentionally allowed girls to wrestle on boys wrestling teams while allowing the female wrestlers to maintain their eligibility to compete in the girls wrestling individual state championship tournament sanctioned by the League.

On May 6, 2024, I received the attached letter from Rep. Shannon Erickson, Chair of the Education and Public Works Committee, and Rep. Neal Collins. After further discussions with Rep. Collins, we are encouraging all member schools to offer the team sport of girls wrestling during the winter sports season next year so that girls wrestling teams will have sufficient opportunities for competition. Our hope is that we get at least 16 schools to field a girls wrestling team with the appropriate number of weight classes so that the League can offer a duals state championship tournament for girls wrestling teams. We would also ask all schools that choose to offer a girl's wrestling team for the 2024-2025 school year to please notify the League as soon as possible so that we can begin to organize and prepare for a season that will hopefully culminate in a duals state championship tournament for girls wrestling teams.

Additionally, please find attached a copy of the correspondence from Representatives Erickson and Collins, along with my email response to them.

If you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to contact the League Office.



Education and Public Works Committee

South Carolina House of Representatives

P. O. BOX 11867 TELEPHONE: 734-3053

Room 429, Blatt Building
Columbia, SC 29211

May 6, 2024

Mr. Jerome Singleton
Commissioner
South Carolina High School League
121 Westpark Blvd.
Columbia, SC 29210

Dear Commissioner Singleton:

With General Assembly's enactment of the "Save Women's Sports Act" (Act 193 of 2022), state law was amended to include the following provision:

A public school district supported by state funds shall not use any funds or permit any school within the district to use any funds to join, affiliate with, pay dues or fees to, or in any way financially support any interscholastic athletic association, body, or entity unless the constitution, rules or policies of the association, body, or entity recognizes, sanctions, and regulates interscholastic competition of wrestling teams composed exclusively of female students (see, §59-63-72).

Given this clear and unambiguous language, it is clear that girls' wrestling should have been sanctioned by the South Carolina High School League (SCHSL) for the 2022-2023 school year. As you are aware, it was not.

In addition to our strong concerns that state law is being ignored, we are equally dismayed at what appears to be a violation of Title IX of the of the Education Amendments of 1972. According to the United States Department of Education:

Title IX requires schools to effectively accommodate the athletic interests and abilities of their students, regardless of sex, and provide equal opportunity in the benefits, opportunities, and treatment provided for their athletic teams.

Clearly, female wrestlers are not being provided the same opportunities as their male counterparts.

In order to remedy this situation quickly and fairly for South Carolina's female athletes, Representative Collins and I respectfully and ardently request SCHSL to fully sanction girls' wrestling by May 31, 2024. We look forward to hearing your reply soon.

Sincerely,

Representative Shannon Erickson
House District 124
Chair, Education and Public Works Committee

Representative Neal Collins
House District 5

CC: The Honorable G. Murrell Smith
The Honorable Thomas Alexander
The Honorable Greg Hembree
The Honorable Ellen Weaver
The Honorable Alan Wilson
Ms. Beth Phibbs
Mr. Scott Price



Fwd: Letter to SCHSL

1 message

Jerome Singleton <jsingle@schsl.org>
To: Deanna Lott <deanna@schsl.org>

Wed, May 8, 2024 at 9:18 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Jerome Singleton <jsingle@schsl.org>

Date: Tue, May 7, 2024 at 9:57AM

Subject: Re: Letter to SCHSL

To: Lauren Nelson Sheorn <LaurenNelsonSheorn@schouse.gov>, Shannon Erickson <ShannonErickson@schouse.gov>, Neal Collins <NealCollins@schouse.gov>

Cc: Pierce McNair <PierceMcNair@schouse.gov>, <thomasalexander@scsenate.gov>, <greghembree@scsenate.gov>, <murrellsmith@schouse.gov>, iheadley@ed.sc.gov <iheadley@ed.sc.gov>, <sprice@scsba.org>, Beth Phibbs <Beth@scasa.org>, <agwilson@scag.gov>, Michael Montgomery <mmontgomery@robinsongray.com>

Dear Representatives Erickson and Collins,

I am in receipt of your correspondence referencing the sanctioning of girls' wrestling.

Girls' wrestling has been sanctioned. Currently, there are not enough girls teams with enough

wrestlers to meet the threshold for a duals state championship tournament. The South Carolina

High School League has sanctioned a girls' wrestlers' individuals state championship tournament for the past two years.

In an effort to continue the growth of girls' wrestling, the League has been intentional by relaxing the rule which would prohibit

girls wrestling on boys' wrestling teams while maintaining their eligibility to compete in the girls' wrestlers' individuals state

championship tournament. The League will continue to monitor the growth of girls' wrestling in its member schools in hopes of

offering a girls' wrestling duals state championship(s) tournament in the near future.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter with you in greater detail.

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Dr. Jerome Singleton
SCHSL- Commissioner

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Dr. Jerome Singleton
SCHSL- Commissioner