



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

1999 BRYAN ST., SUITE 1620
DALLAS, TX 75201-6810

REGION VI
ARKANSAS
LOUISIANA
MISSISSIPPI
TEXAS

July 16, 2019

Blaine Dausat, Superintendent
Avoyelles Parish School Board
221 Tunica Drive W.
Marksville, LA 71351

RE: OCR Complaint #06-18-1451
Avoyelles Parish School Board

Dear Superintendent Dausat,

This letter is to notify you that the U.S. Department of Education (Department), Office for Civil Rights (OCR), Dallas Office, has resolved the above-referenced complaint, filed on March 16, 2018, against the Avoyelles Parish School Board (the District). The Complainant alleged that the District discriminated against students on the basis of sex.

OCR is responsible for determining whether entities that receive or benefit from Federal financial assistance from the Department, or an agency that has delegated investigative authority to this Department, are in compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681 et seq., and its implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. Part 106, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex by such recipients.

The District is a recipient of Federal financial assistance from the Department. Therefore, OCR has jurisdictional authority to process this complaint under Title IX.

OCR opened the following issue for investigation:

Whether the District failed to provide equal athletic opportunity to female students in interscholastic athletics at Avoyelles High School regarding: (1) scheduling of games and practice time; (2) assignment and compensation of coaches; and (3) the provision of locker rooms, practice and competitive facilities, in violation of Title IX and its implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.41(c).

During the investigation, OCR received information from both the Complainant and the District. After reviewing the District's response to OCR's preliminary request for data, conducting an on-site inspection of facilities, and interviewing coaches and student-athletes at the Avoyelles High School (the School), OCR identified access to the exercise/weightlifting facilities on campus for female students as a concern with the District's provision of facilities for practice. OCR also identified access to the exercise/weightlifting facilities on campus for female students as a concern with the District's scheduling of practice time for female student-athletes. While OCR's review of

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

the evidence determined that the Complainant's original complaint about the scheduling of practice and competitive games – the denial of Fourth Block access for female student-athletes – had been resolved when the School permitted all student-athletes to participate in Fourth Block practice, OCR found that female student-athletes' inability to access exercise/weightlifting facilities on a regularly scheduled basis presented an issue regarding inequities in available practice time. OCR also identified a concern with the District's compensation of coaches at the School, specifically possible disparities in compensation, defined by a stipend given as a percentage of employee salary, between male and female coaches.

Prior to the conclusion of OCR's investigation, on May 9, 2019, the District informed OCR that it was interested in resolving all complaint allegations. Section 302 of OCR's Case Processing Manual (CPM) provides that a complaint may be resolved at any time when, before the conclusion of an investigation, the recipient expresses an interest in resolving the complaint and OCR determines that such a resolution is appropriate. The provisions of the resolution agreement will be aligned with the complaint allegations or the information obtained during the investigation and will be consistent with applicable regulations. On June 28, 2019, OCR determined that a resolution under Section 302 of the CPM was appropriate.

On July 16, 2019, the District voluntarily signed and submitted to OCR a Resolution Agreement (Agreement) to resolve the complaint allegation. A copy of the Agreement is enclosed. OCR determined that the provisions of the Agreement are aligned with the complaint allegations and appropriately resolves them. Further, OCR accepts the Agreement as an assurance that the District will fulfill its obligations under Title IX with respect to the complaint allegation. The dates for implementation and specific actions are detailed in the Agreement. OCR will monitor the District's implementation of the Agreement.

Effective the date of this letter, OCR is closing the investigation of this complaint. This letter should not be interpreted to address the District's compliance with any other regulatory provision or to address any issues other than those addressed in this letter.

This letter sets forth OCR's determination in an individual OCR case. This letter is not a formal statement of OCR policy and should not be relied upon, cited, or construed as such. OCR's formal policy statements are approved by a duly authorized OCR official and made available to the public. An individual may have the right to file a private suit in Federal court whether or not OCR finds a violation.

Please be advised that the District may not harass, coerce, intimidate, or discriminate against any individual because he or she has filed a complaint or participated in the complaint resolution process. If this happens, an individual may file another complaint alleging such treatment.

Under the Freedom of Information Act, it may be necessary to release this document and related correspondence and records upon request. In the event that OCR receives such a request, we will seek to protect, to the extent provided by law, personally identifiable information, which, if released, could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

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If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Kyle Gruber, the attorney assigned to investigate this complaint, at (214) 661-9613 or Kyle.Gruber@ed.gov. You may also contact me at (214) 661-9638 or Lori.Bringas@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

Lori Bringas
Supervisory Attorney/Team Leader
Dallas Office

Enclosure:
Resolution Agreement