

Houston
Dallas
Austin

Kathryn E. Long
Partner

(972) 734-5613 Office
(972) 534-1645 Fax

klong@thompsonhorton.com

Thompson & Horton LLP
Ross Tower, Suite 3150
500 N. Akard Street
Dallas, Texas 75201-3302

August 6, 2018

gvillegascosio@gmail.com

Gerardo Villegas, Esq.
PO Box 1542
Fort Worth, TX 76101

Mr. Villegas:

Our firm is legal counsel to Fort Worth Independent School District (“Fort Worth ISD” or the “District”). I write in response to your July 17, 2018 letter addressing Fort Worth ISD’s plans to conduct a student interest survey as one component of its continuing efforts to ensure the District is accommodating student athletic interests and abilities. The District appreciates your continued efforts to work cooperatively and thanks you for bringing your concerns to the District’s attention. As a leading urban school district in the region, Fort Worth ISD takes its obligations to provide equitable opportunities for female student athletes seriously and remains committed to providing a breadth of enriching opportunities for all of its more than 86,000 students.

Initially, the District would like to clarify some of the information set forth in your July 17, 2018 letter that is incomplete or inaccurate. Fort Worth ISD is not preparing a “budget proposal to support the inclusion of rugby as a girls’ varsity sport at the District’s various high schools this coming fall.” Rather, Fort Worth ISD is preparing a cost analysis regarding the potential addition of rugby at certain District schools in the event the District learns there is sufficient student interest and ability to support the addition of girls’ rugby. Further, Fort Worth ISD has not supported powerlifting District-wide for approximately ten years. Instead, individual campuses and principals may decide to continue to support powerlifting through campus funds. The information in the Compensation Manual serves as a guide to campus principals regarding the appropriate stipend for powerlifting should they choose to support powerlifting at their campus.

As you noted in your July 17, 2018 letter, Fort Worth ISD is in the process of developing a student interest survey as an additional component of its efforts to gauge student athletic interests and abilities. Fort Worth ISD does not intend to use the student interest survey as the sole means to evaluate its continued accommodation of student athletic interests and abilities.



Gerardo Villegas, Esq.
August 6, 2018
Page 2

Rather, the results of the student interest survey will be combined with the District's continued assessment and review of multiple indicators of student interest and abilities to ensure Fort Worth ISD is providing equitable athletic opportunities to its male and female athletes and effectively accommodating students' athletic interests and abilities. Fort Worth ISD is developing the student interest survey in accordance with Title IX guidance and with the input of District personnel with appropriate knowledge and expertise in preparing and administering such surveys. The District, therefore, respectfully declines your request to review and comment on the student interest survey before the survey is administered to students.

In addition, Fort Worth ISD continuously works to ensure that equivalent benefits and opportunities are provided to its male and female student athletes with respect to all its obligations under Title IX, including the "laundry list" of items referenced in your July 17, 2018 letter. These efforts extend to the current renovation and addition of field houses at District campuses. Fort Worth ISD continues to monitor and make changes, as necessary, to further its compliance with Title IX regulations with respect to its athletics program including, but not limited to, the provision of equipment and supplies for its student athletes; the scheduling of games and practices; the assignment and compensation of coaches; the provision of locker rooms, practice and competitive facilities; and the provision of medical and training services and facilities.

The District hopes that you will continue this dialogue and welcomes any feedback or specific concerns you may have that will assist the District in its continued efforts to effectively accommodate the interests and abilities of all of its student athletes. The District plans to evaluate, address, and respond in a timely and appropriate manner to the interests and abilities of its students, including female athletes and strives to continue its compliance with all Title IX regulations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kathryn E. Long', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Kathryn E. Long

KEL:ss