



# OSAA Equity and Diversity Newsletter

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## S.T.A.R. Initiative Fall Launch

### Oregon School Activities Association Launches S.T.A.R. Initiative to Disrupt Racism and Combat Discrimination at Oregon High School Athletic Events

**WILSONVILLE, ORE. (October 1, 2021)** — The Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) announced today the launch of S.T.A.R., a new initiative that provides a model for racial equity awareness, action, and resources on how to prepare for, educate and interrupt discriminatory behaviors occurring during high school sporting events. Standing for Safety, Tolerance, Acceptance and Respect, the S.T.A.R. initiative provides training and resources to help schools become more equity minded in events they host and eradicate discriminatory behaviors safely and respectfully.

“S.T.A.R. provides our athletic directors and coaches with tools to navigate discriminatory incidents that occur and puts a structure in place to support their actions,” said Peter Weber, OSAA executive director. “We believe this program is going to set the bar for non-discrimination in Oregon high school sports and activities.”

S.T.A.R. evolved in answer to Oregon House Bill (HB) 3409, which was passed and placed into effect in the fall of 2019 following years of incidents of cultural, racial and ethnic transgressions during state high school events. Sponsored by Oregon State Rep. Janelle Bynum, House Speaker Tina Kotek and House Majority Leader Barbara Smith Warner, HB 3409 stated that school districts can’t be members of an interscholastic association unless that body has a process to sanction discriminatory behavior at events.

“We fought for HB 3409 because we believe that awareness and education will lead to the eradication of racial transgressions during high school events,” said Rep. Bynum. “With the S.T.A.R. program, OSAA has developed a positive and supportive way to put HB 3409 into practice within the four walls of a school and on every field, course and court.”

OSAA worked collaboratively with a number of state entities—including the Oregon Department of Education, the Coalition of Oregon School Administrators, the Oregon School Boards Association and the Oregon Association of Student Councils—as well as students, educators, and administrators on how to respond, create an action plan and move forward with the requirements of HB 3409.

“All students deserve the ability to compete in interscholastic events without feeling discriminated against or fearful of how we will be treated at an event,” said Yosalin Arenas, a 2021 graduate of South Medford High School. “I’m hopeful that S.T.A.R. will help combat the racism and discrimination that students like myself have faced in the past.”

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## **S.T.A.R. Initiative Fall Launch**

Starting this fall, OSAA is running S.T.A.R.-themed pregame announcements at high school athletic events that proclaim “Greatness Is Hateless.” These announcements encourage a positive focus on the student competitors and brand S.T.A.R. behavior on and off the field by positioning hateful, intimidating, and bullying behavior by anyone, including athletes, parents and community members, as completely unacceptable.

“S.T.A.R. is doing its part to reverse the trend of divisive behaviors seen in the outside world,” said KT Emerson, OSAA assistant executive director. “Respect for difference is mandatory, awareness of it is a virtue and appreciation for it is success. We are striving for success for our students throughout all Oregon schools.”

### **Becoming an Official S.T.A.R. School**

The S.T.A.R. initiative is focused on helping schools create a safe, welcoming, and validating environment by specifically disrupting racism and combating discrimination so every student can thrive. Each Oregon school will have the opportunity to opt in as an official S.T.A.R. school. The OSAA, affiliated organizations and its membership want the program to grow, evolve and develop over time, and the program will incentivize schools and communities to do more through a tiered structure that allows schools the flexibility to introduce S.T.A.R. into their communities and a framework where communities can set goals for the future. The system includes blue, silver and bronze levels during year 2 of implementation of S.T.A.R.

As part of the S.T.A.R. guidelines, schools are encouraged to post signage to help visiting participants and spectators know where facilities are and how to navigate an event; read a required S.T.A.R. public address at each OSAA-sanctioned event; and conduct a preseason meeting with student-athletes, coaches and parents to review the S.T.A.R. sportsmanship standards.

For more information about S.T.A.R., photos, logos and videos, visit [www.osaa.org/equity/star-resources](http://www.osaa.org/equity/star-resources).

## **S.T.A.R. Resources**

To set the tone of an event, it is important that there are announcements made regarding behavior expectations. The S.T.A.R. Public Address Scripts give multiple options for making such announcements. The scripts are also provided in multiple languages. Here are the links to the Public Address Scripts and some recordings of announcements on the OSAA [S.T.A.R. and Resources](#) page.

[NOMINATE a S.T.A.R. School](#): This form is for schools to nominate other schools, communities, and individual programs for exhibiting the traits of S.T.A.R. (Safety, Tolerance, Acceptance, Respect) sportsmanship expectations. Your nomination will be shared with the coach and principal of the school you nominate.

Some of the other links available:

[S.T.A.R. Sportsmanship Expectations at OSAA Events](#)

[Oregon Department of Education: Guidance on Discriminatory Harassment and Bullying in Student Activities and Athletics](#)

[S.T.A.R. Store](#) for apparel including school specific apparel. Proceeds go to the OSAA Foundation Equity Fund which allows schools to apply for grants to continue equity initiatives within their school and programs.

## **NFHS: Title IX Continues to Fuel Growth of Girls and Women's Sports, Olympic Dominance By: Dr. Karissa Niehoff**

To say that American female athletes dominated the recent Olympics in Tokyo would be an understatement.

Among the 66 medals earned by American female Olympians – most by any country in the history of the Games – were gold-medal performances by the U.S. basketball, volleyball, water polo and beach volleyball teams. Eighteen medals were earned by the U.S. women swimmers, female track and field athletes claimed 15 medals, and the U.S. women's softball and soccer teams won silver and bronze medals, respectively.

In the past 30 years of the Olympic Games, the United States has dominated the women's team sports of basketball (nine golds), soccer (four golds, one silver, one bronze) and softball (three golds, two silvers)—not to mention the untold number of medals in track and field. And this past summer, the U.S. women's volleyball team claimed its first gold medal.

These performances by some of our nation's most skilled female athletes never would have been possible without the passage of Title IX and the offerings of these sports through our nation's schools. With the chance to play afforded by the landmark Title IX legislation in 1972, girls participation in several high school sports skyrocketed in the years that followed.

When the NFHS conducted its first participation survey in 1971, basketball and outdoor track and field were the primary girls sports, comprising about two-thirds of the 294,000 total. However, with the opportunity to play additional sports, girls flocked to volleyball and softball first, along with cross country and eventually soccer.

Soccer, in fact, has had the most remarkable growth. In 1971, only 700 girls were playing high school soccer. Twenty-five years later, that number had climbed to almost 210,000; and as the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Title IX approaches, there are now almost 400,000 girls playing high school soccer – a staggering 56,200 percentage increase in 50 years. Soccer now ranks fourth in popularity among girls high school sports – all because of that opportunity in 1972.

There are many other success stories, however. The pre-Title IX survey in 1971 indicated that 1,719 girls were participating in cross country. With increases every year until 2015, today, there are 219,345 girls competing in high school programs and the sport ranks sixth in popularity.

Although participation numbers have leveled a bit the past 10 years, fast-pitch softball is another sport that flourished after the passage of Title IX. With fewer than 10,000 participants in 1971, the numbers quickly rose to 220,000 by 1985 and 343,000 by 2000, and softball is currently fifth among girls sports with 362,038 participants.

Since track and field and basketball were the primary sports in the early days of girls sports programs, increases in those sports have not been as dramatic; however, they remain the first and third most-popular sports, respectively, today. Volleyball, however, much like soccer, continues its upward climb.

Without a doubt, volleyball has seen the steadiest increases among girls high school sports the past 50 years. After starting with 17,952 participants in 1971, the numbers jumped to 300,810 by 1990 and 409,332 by 2010 and 452, 808 by 2018. During its climb, volleyball surpassed basketball as the No. 2 girls sport.

And among the top six girls sports from 2010 to 2018 (numbers are not available the past two years due to the pandemic), volleyball has gained the most participants (43,476), followed by soccer (32,549). And all of this has occurred thanks to legislation passed in 1972 that was not fundamentally meant to address opportunities for girls to participate in high school sports.

The NFHS is leading a yearlong celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Title IX, which officially occurs on June 23, 2022. "Title IX at 50 – Celebrating and Growing Opportunities" is highlighting the law's impact by celebrating the inspirational individuals and landmark moments in the history of Title IX, and continuing to grow the educational and competitive opportunities for the future.

More information, including a Title IX Timeline, Title IX Milestones, The History and Importance of Title IX, Title IX Fact Sheet, Title IX Frequently Asked Questions and several Title IX videos, can be accessed on the NFHS website at (<https://www.nfhs.org/resources/title-ix/>).

# **U.S. Department of Education Confirms Title IX Protects Students From Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity**

The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights today issued a [Notice of Interpretation](#) explaining that it will enforce Title IX's prohibition on discrimination on the basis of sex to include: (1) discrimination based on sexual orientation; and (2) discrimination based on gender identity. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity offered by a recipient of federal financial assistance.

The Department's interpretation stems from the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Bostock v. Clayton County*, issued one year ago this week, in which the Supreme Court recognized that it is impossible to discriminate against a person based on their sexual orientation or gender identity without discriminating against that person based on sex.

"The Supreme Court has upheld the right for LGBTQ+ people to live and work without fear of harassment, exclusion, and discrimination – and our LGBTQ+ students have the same rights and deserve the same protections. I'm proud to have directed the Office for Civil Rights to enforce Title IX to protect all students from all forms of sex discrimination," said U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. "Today, the Department makes clear that all students—including LGBTQ+ students—deserve the opportunity to learn and thrive in schools that are free from discrimination."

As OCR recently [reported](#), LGBTQ+ students often face additional challenges in schools, including disproportionately experiencing persistent bullying, harassment, and victimization. The vulnerability of LGBTQ+ students has only increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, leaving them without access to school-based mental health services and other supports. One [survey](#) found that 78 percent of transgender and nonbinary youth reported that their mental health was "poor" either most of the time or always during COVID-19, compared with 61 percent of cisgender youth.

"The Department of Education strives to provide schools with the support they need to create learning environments that enable all students to succeed, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation. Equity in education means all students have access to schools that allow them to learn and thrive in all aspects of their educational experience," said Acting Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Suzanne B. Goldberg. "As part of our mission to protect all students' civil rights, it is essential that OCR acts to eliminate discrimination that targets LGBTQ+ students."

Today's Notice of Interpretation continues OCR's sustained effort to promote safe and inclusive schools for all students, including LGBTQ+ students. This action is part of the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to advance the rights of the LGBTQ+ community, set out in President Biden's [Executive Order on Guaranteeing an Educational Environment Free from Discrimination on the Basis of Sex, Including Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity](#) and the [Executive Order on Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation](#).

The Department of Education's Notice of Interpretation is available [here](#).

More information and resources for LGBTQ+ students are available [here](#).

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