

2025 March 11 Mead School Board Press Release

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Mead School Board Calls for Federal Intervention Over State-Mandated Gender Policy, Parental Rights, and Women's Sports Protections

MEAD, Wash. – The Mead School Board has formally requested urgent federal intervention in response to a state-mandated Gender-Inclusive Schools Policy that conflicts with federal directives, undermines parental rights, and fails to protect fairness in women's sports. In letters sent to U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon and U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi, the board outlined its legal and financial predicament, citing the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)'s demands as a direct challenge to recent Executive Orders issued by President Donald J. Trump.

At the heart of this dispute is OSPI's requirement that Mead School District adopt a statewide model policy (WSSDA 3211/3211P) under RCW 28A.642.080. The Mead community and school board oppose this mandate, arguing that it:

- Infringes on parental rights by preventing school staff from notifying parents of a child's gender identity decisions without the student's consent.
- Mandates that schools allow students to compete in sports based on gender identity rather than biological sex, which undermines fairness in female athletics—a debate currently at the forefront of the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA).
- **Forces schools to prioritize state policies over federal Executive Orders, putting critical Title I and IDEA funding at risk.**

“The vast majority of our community has made it abundantly clear that it does not support a policy that excludes parents from critical decisions regarding their children,” said Michael Cannon, President of the Mead School Board.

“This is not just about policy – it’s about the rights of our parents and the safety of our students,” said BrieAnne Gray, Vice President of the Mead School Board. “We must uphold their trust and ensure their voices are heard in decisions affecting their children.”

Legal and Financial Consequences

The Mead School Board has been placed in an impossible position:

- Compliance with OSPI’s mandate would put the district in direct violation of federal Executive Orders, risking the loss of crucial Title I and IDEA funding.
- Failure to comply with OSPI’s directive could result in state-imposed financial penalties and loss of funding.

President Trump’s Executive Orders issued on January 20 and February 1, 2025, explicitly tie federal funding to policies based on biological sex rather than gender identity. Mead’s current policy, though modified to comply with OSPI’s directive, still falls short of federal requirements, forcing the district into a no-win situation.

Threat to Women’s Sports

One of the most pressing concerns is the state-mandated allowance of students to compete in sports based on gender identity rather than biological sex, contradicting President Trump’s Executive Order "Keeping Men Out of Women’s Sports" (Feb. 1, 2025). This directive ensures that federal funding is tied to maintaining fair competition in female athletics, an issue currently under intense scrutiny within the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA).

“Our board strongly believes that female athletes deserve a level playing field,” said Mead School Board member, Alan Nolan. “This policy strips protections from young women in sports, dismissing concerns about fairness and safety. The federal government has taken a clear stance, and we are asking for support to uphold it.”

Call for Federal Action

The Mead School Board is urgently requesting the U.S. Department of Education and the Department of Justice to:

1. **Protect Federal Funding:** Provide assurance that Mead School District's adherence to federal mandates will not jeopardize Title I, IDEA, or other critical funds.
2. **Clarify Federal Preemption:** Issue guidance affirming that federal policy takes precedence over conflicting state mandates.
3. **Investigate Civil Rights Violations:** Examine OSPI's directive as a potential violation of Title IX and federal parental rights protections.

A Fight for Local Control, Parental Rights, and Women's Sports

The Mead School Board strongly opposes OSPI's attempt to override local governance, parental rights, and fair competition in women's athletics. Added Cannon, "We are fighting to protect the educational stability of over 10,000 students, and we will not stand by as state agencies trample parental rights, put female athletes at a disadvantage, and jeopardize our ability to serve students."

The Mead School Board will continue working with federal and legal authorities to resolve this crisis in a manner that upholds both federal law and the voices of the Mead community.

For further inquiries, please contact Michael Cannon at michael.cannon@mead354.org or (509) 954-8192.