

BANGOR SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

183 Harlow Street

Bangor, Maine 04401

Telephone 207-942-5266

July 25, 1973

Ms. Natalie R. Smith
Heart of Maine Chapter
National Organization for Women
P. O. Box 1166
Bangor, Maine 04401

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am in receipt of your letter dated June 13, having just returned from a brief vacation.

The situation referred to in the letter by Jane Lundquist is doubtless true, but I feel that I can clarify it somewhat for you without resorting to a full investigation. To begin with, interscholastic sports for junior high school students has not been encouraged very strongly by educators, including me. There are inevitable tendencies to limit participation to the few very skillful, and perhaps the largest and oldest players; there are strong inclinations to emphasizing winning rather than learning the game; and there are costs of travel, equipment and coaching.

To be sure, in recent years junior high school boys have been afforded an opportunity to play interscholastic football, basketball and baseball. However, there has not been such authorization for girls interscholastic activity, nor do I recall a request having been made to the superintendent or School Committee for such authorization. Consequently, Ms. Lundquist has been participating on a team which has been playing without funding because there were no funds authorized. Naturally, the use of the gymnasium was granted to the authorized activities.

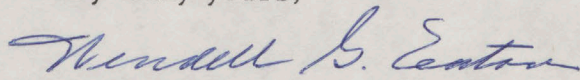
While my personal proclivity is for the development of a strong intramural program rather than an interscholastic schedule, there is the possibility that the Department will take the same approach with junior high school activities as it has with those at the high school level. At that level, the scope of girls' athletic activities has been increased by authority of the School Committee. Girls have, in addition to an intramural program, competition on

-- 2 -- Ms. Natalie R. Smith

the interscholastic level in field hockey, basketball, swimming and softball. They compete on a team composed of both boys and girls in tennis, seeking competition with boys' teams. Since these activities are authorized, uniforms, equipment, transportation and coaching are all provided from public funds.

I trust that these answers are in sufficient detail. A full-scale investigation would appear unnecessary and the situation as to girls high school athletics has already had a good presentation in the local press since Bangor is a leading exponent of scheduling girls' games before the boys' varsity games in order to create public awareness of these activities.

Very truly yours,



Wendell G. Eaton
Superintendent of Schools

WGE/cm