

SB 1831 by Senator Patrick and HB 1829 by Representative Corte
Relating to participation by private school students in University Interscholastic League sponsored activities.

The Texas Girls Coaches Association supports the University Interscholastic League (UIL) and the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools (TAPPS) as the governing bodies for their members' schools for extracurricular activities in Texas.

MAJOR AREAS OF CONCERN:

SB 1831 and HB 1829 are companion bills for the purpose of allowing private schools to become members of the UIL. Under the current language of the bill, these schools would be placed in a separate division in UIL for play-offs. The UIL has over 1350 schools, while TAPPS has over 250 schools. If all the TAPPS schools went under the UIL umbrella, this would make a viable separate play-off division. What if, as has been indicated by TAPPS member schools, only a select number of schools elected to leave TAPPS and go under the UIL umbrella? A separate division would not be feasible for play-offs.

What about the question of taxes and rights? Simply paying taxes does not provide an individual with the ability to pick and choose which services one avails. Taxes support the public education system as well as many other systems. Parents have the right to choose what type of education is best for their children, however there is not a right to selectively opt into the part of the public education system one deems advantageous while opting out of the part one determines to be less advantageous. The UIL does not offer benefits to the general public through their tax payments, but it offers benefit to the public schools. Attendance in a public school inherently corresponds with that benefit. Under a court ruling, public educational systems may provide and fund programs open only to public schools and public school students without infringing on the rights of non public school students. Parents and schools making this request desire a benefit offered to public school that they lost through their own decision to attend a non public school. This was part of their education process in deciding between public and non public education students.

The academic standards of private schools are not mandated by statute, while public schools are heavily regulated and under rigorous assessment guidelines. Private schools would not be subject to state laws that are applicable to extracurricular activities. Examples: No Pass No Play; eight (8) hour practice rules; and limitations on contests during the school week. Private schools are not subject to state accountability standards and testing.

Public schools are required to enroll or service special education, learning disabled, low socioeconomic or limited English proficient students. Private schools do not have to admit or service all children and can be selective in choosing which students to enroll, while a public school must educate all students who reside inside their set ISD boundaries. Private schools control the number of students who attend and would have the capability on controlling their UIL classification. A suburban or urban private school can have a student enrollment of 200 students selectively vetted and drawn from a surrounding population of approximately 2 million citizens, where a public school's attendance zone which has a student population of 200 students is drawn from its small community of approximately 1,000 citizens.

Private schools have the ability to be 100% selective in their recruitment and enrollment of students. Public schools have the ability to be 0% selective in their enrollments and must enroll all students in their attendance zone as required under state law. Private schools choose as to which attributes they prefer in their students.

The UIL and TAPPS have established rules and regulations to govern their member schools which have given a level playing field for all participants in these organizations. Under the TAPPS umbrella, excluding the two Jesuit schools, all private schools in the state have a viable organization of which to be a member.

It is important you phone or e-mail your state Senator and Representative as to your position on private schools being allowed under the UIL jurisdiction.

Sam Tipton
Executive Director
Texas Girls Coaches Association