



## Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District

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#WeAreDR



**Mr. Bill Runey**  
Superintendent of Schools

**Dr. Frederick Souza, Jr.**  
Assistant Superintendent

**Dr. Marie-Juanita DiGioia**  
Director of Special Education

**Mr. Brian Hyde**  
Interim Business Administrator

November 3, 2023

Dear DRRSD School Community,

Last night, a female field hockey player for the Dighton Rehoboth Regional High School girls' field hockey team sustained significant facial and dental injuries when she was struck in the face by a shot in the third quarter versus Swampscott in an MIAA state playoff contest. The shot was taken by a male member of the Swampscott girls field hockey team. This injury required hospitalization. The player, her family, teammates, and coaches remain in my prayers.

While I understand that the MIAA has guidelines in place for co-ed participation under [section 43 of their handbook](#), this incident dramatically magnifies the concerns of many about player safety.

In speaking with a representative of the MIAA this morning, she shared that the MIAA handbook has a legal note ([see their legal note](#)) explaining how the Massachusetts Equal Rights Amendment makes the participation of males on female teams legal. I understand that the Mass ERA legislation is voluminous; and therefore, is very difficult to modify in total. However, seeing the horror in the eyes of our players and coaches upon greeting their bus last night is evidence to me that there has to be a renewed approach by the MIAA to protect the safety of our athletes. In years past, there were provisions in girls' volleyball that, although boys could participate, they could not play on the front line because their ability to spike the ball created a higher level of risk. I have been told that those restrictions were deemed illegal and no longer exist. Athletics has come so far in the realm of safety, but the equipment and the training that our athletes are receiving in today's day and age requires us to be more thoughtful about all of our rules and policies regarding safety.

To be clear, I have the utmost respect for the abilities of female athletes. I am the father of three and all three were very successful in their high school athletic careers. My two daughters remain in the athletic realm today due, in large part, to their positive experience in high school athletics. We have a responsibility to preserve that positivity for all of our athletes today and in the future.

Thank you.

*Together, we are DR!*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Runey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bill Runey  
Superintendent

*The mission of the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District, in partnership with parents and the community, is to provide students with the tools, including technology, to acquire knowledge, apply skills, critically analyze information and issues, and develop social responsibility.*

*Dighton-Rehoboth does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, marital status, veteran status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other legally protected group.*