

News From Senator Shirley K. Turner



FOR RELEASE: Immediate
August 2, 2017

CONTACT: Senator Shirley Turner
(609) 323-7239

SENATOR TURNER REQUESTS LEGISLATION TO PREVENT END TO WWP FOOTBALL PROGRAM

(TRENTON) – Senator Shirley K. Turner (D-Mercer/Hunterdon) announced today that she has requested legislation that would allow high schools within the same school district to combine sports programs. The request comes after the West Windsor-Plainsboro High School North announced that they must suspend their football program for the coming school year.

“The situation is really unfair to the entire school community,” said Senator Turner. “Football is a large part of the high school experience and many school events and activities are associated with football. This doesn’t just impact football players; it also affects marching band, cheerleading, homecoming events, pep rallies, and the spirit of the school. The closing of the football program is a big loss to High School North.”

A New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) rule prohibits the combining of sports programs. However, the West Windsor-Plainsboro School District sought a waiver of the rule due to safety issues created from High School North’s low participation in the football program. The waiver would have allowed the district to combine the football programs at High School North and High School South. The district’s waiver request was denied at every level of review, which included the West Jersey Football League, the NJSIAA, and the New Jersey Department of Education.

In June, Senator Turner was contacted by school superintendent, Dr. David Aderhold, and several parents requesting support for the district’s last-attempt appeal to the New Jersey Department of Education. Senator Turner, along with her Assembly colleagues in the 15th District, wrote a letter to the Acting Commissioner of Education urging her to support the district. They have yet to receive a response. The Acting Commissioner ultimately denied the request, leading to the district’s decision this week to end the football program at High School North.

“The district’s hand was forced, in this case, because the students’ safety takes precedence,” said Senator Turner. “However, it is a huge disappointment to the athletes and students who looked

forward to cheering on their team this school year. A flat out denial is wrong; there are too many gray areas that test the need for a hard and fast rule.”

West Windsor-Plainsboro is the third school in the state to end their football program.

#