



CARROLL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dragon Community,

Below is detailed information being released by the Carroll ISD Communications & Marketing Department in an effort to keep you informed of an ongoing media situation. It is important for our Dragon families to have the facts regarding a story that will be aired tonight on WFAA Channel 8. While we are not exactly sure how the information will be presented, it appears the story will cast doubt on the eligibility of a Carroll ISD student athlete.

CISD has worked cooperatively with the Texas University Interscholastic League and will continue to follow their procedures and guidance in all matters related to our athletic program and player eligibility. We anticipate there will be questions or comments with this coverage that will attempt to discredit our program, our staff, our district and unfortunately, even a minor and that student's family. This will not deter us from our mission to provide excellence for all Dragon students.

We appreciate your support of our athletes and coaches and pledge to you that we will hold true to our core values. While we openly share this information with you so that you will know the facts, we cannot and will not jeopardize confidential student information protected by federal law.

Thank you for considering these facts and formulating your own opinion.

Julie Thannum
Executive Director of Communications & Marketing

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Carroll Officials Share Facts About WFAA Plans To Air Eligibility Story

WFAA Channel 8 plans to air a story this evening questioning the eligibility of a Carroll player already ruled eligible by the Texas University Interscholastic League. Throughout WFAA's inquiry, CISD has continued to look into the matter and verify eligibility with the UIL.

Carroll ISD wants Dragon families and other high school athletic programs to know that the district offered to WFAA on multiple occasions to accept and respond swiftly to any new information or evidence the station may have that shows non-compliance with UIL rules. Carroll ISD would have certainly self-reported to the UIL any new evidence that caused uncertainty about the player's eligibility. WFAA provided no such evidence.

Last spring, CISD had the UIL District Executive Committee and the state staff review this case on multiple occasions and the resulting ruling was that the player was deemed eligible. The district has even gone a step further to ask our new District Executive Committee (DEC) of opponent schools to review this player's eligibility, turning all available documentation over to that new DEC for consideration in their ruling. The meeting is scheduled later this week.

Any family moving to our district must first establish proof of residency and enroll before filling out paperwork to determine athletic eligibility. After Carroll officials completed all the necessary verification of paperwork, the student's eligibility was reviewed by members of the DEC, comprised of high school principals from Carroll's opponent schools. The District 6-5A Committee Chairman approved the student for eligibility last spring, and the UIL state office reviewed the case and agreed.

This summer, WFAA reporters and cameramen showed up on CISD property unannounced, taking video of students and confronting coaches about possible UIL violations. The station did not follow district policy and school resource officers were called to the campus. For safety purposes and to protect the academic and extracurricular environment from unnecessary interruptions and distractions, CISD requires the media to schedule visits to campuses and/or to organize interviews with the Communications & Marketing Department. These procedures have been in place since 1998 to ensure school officials can account for everyone on school property while students are present. The district has an ongoing, good rapport with all of its regular reporters and simply must ensure that individuals on campus are known and accounted for at all times. WFAA has been given the district's procedures, and CISD will consistently enforce the measures put into place.

Carroll Athletic Director Kevin Ozee agreed to sit down with WFAA to do an interview on this matter. Despite the reporter's attempts to raise questions about the player's previous eligibility in another state, Mr. Ozee explained that the Texas UIL does not require a district or its Athletic Director to conduct that type of inquiry. Proof of residency is accomplished through rental or housing contracts, utility bills, voter registration, change of driver's licenses, and in the case of this particular Carroll family, surprise on-site visits. At all times, the family proved to be residing in CISD.

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When it became clear that the reporter was simply repeating the same questions CISD had already answered, school officials ended the interview.

Individuals may question or not agree with the UIL's eligibility procedures, but Carroll followed the appropriate steps, sharing information with the UIL at all times while also following federal law by maintaining student confidentiality.

This is a complicated matter that should be decided within the UIL's eligibility process. All information in CISD's possession has been turned over to the new DEC for review. Carroll ISD will abide by that committee's decision, regardless of the outcome. Our athletic program will continue to follow the UIL's guidance in handling eligibility matters and our Dragon families need to know that we will respond when necessary to new information or evidence that leads us or the UIL to believe that a rule has been broken. If we find ourselves to be in violation, we'll handle that swiftly and effectively according to UIL procedures.

Carroll ISD has a long history of academic, fine arts and athletic excellence. For this reason, we understand that we'll continue to be in the public's eye. We base our day-to-day decisions on our core values and will continue to inform the Dragon community about issues that affect our students and staff. Thank you for your continued support.

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