

EQUITY CONCERNS ACROSS CENTRAL HIGH ATHLETICS

Equal Means Equal is a coalition of Little Rock Central High female student athletes and parents seeking a full Title IX review and correction of inequities across Central athletics. The campaign began with the softball team, whose experience raises broader questions about equity that LRSD has not yet fully answered.

01 WHAT IS DOCUMENTED

New facilities drive participation

Central opened an approximately \$5 million baseball facility in March 2026 while softball remained off campus. On September 4, Athletic Director Earnie McGee said football grew from the 40s before the new building and new coach to about 140-150 players this year. He also said baseball has grown, but no current count has been produced.

A locker room plan is moving forward

LRSD plans to convert a former boys' locker room for softball and girls soccer. McGee said it has more than 80 lockers and that bathroom renovations are planned. He expected the work before the season but did not give a firm completion date.

The shared field remains temporary

To accommodate softball, LRSD has ordered a portable outfield fence for the baseball field and is seeking a workable backstop. Athletics staff or hired workers are expected to set up and remove equipment. Game scheduling and several field details were still being developed on September 4.

02 WHAT TITLE IX EVALUATES

Federal Dept. of Education rules evaluate the overall opportunities and treatment provided to girls' and boys' teams. Relevant areas include equipment, scheduling, travel, coaching, locker rooms, practice and competition facilities, medical and training services, publicity, and support services. Participation is assessed separately through a three part test.

03 LRSD HAS BEEN ON NOTICE

4/23 Players and parents raised softball disparities publicly before the LRSD Board. District leaders said they would address the problem.

8/19 District representatives agreed Central's facilities were not equitable. Superintendent Jermall Wright accepted responsibility for coordination failures. Officials discussed an incomplete plan and no identified funding beyond approximately \$1 million.

9/4 McGee presented a possible adjacent site, but no land had been acquired. McGee could not confirm that LRSD had committed construction money or would build immediately after a purchase. A parent assisting with the task force estimated at least a year to complete a permanent field if the property process advances.

STILL WAITING A funded written plan, a project lead, measurable deadlines, public progress reports, and a district Title IX review.

04 WHAT THE CAMPAIGN IS ASKING

- Conduct a full Title IX review of Central High's athletic programs
- Share the findings publicly, including all inequities girls' teams face
- Correct immediate disparities while the permanent solutions are being developed
- Issue a written plan naming responsible officials, funding sources, measurable steps & deadlines
- Report progress publicly until every corrective action is complete



SOURCES

1 KATV and THV11, Mar.-June 2026. 2 Blaire Jedlicka, For AR People, May 14, 2026. 3 THV11, Apr. 23, 2026. 4 U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Title IX and Athletics. 5 KATV, June 4, 2026. 6 Aug. 19 parent-administration transcript and follow-up letter. 7 Sept. 4, 2026 meeting transcript with Athletic Director Earnie McGee and softball parents.