

# GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Executive Office of the Mayor

Office of Communications



## PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Doxie McCoy (EOM) 202.727.9691; [doxie.mccoy@dc.gov](mailto:doxie.mccoy@dc.gov)  
Clark Ray (OSSE) 202.277.8395; [clark.ray@dc.gov](mailto:clark.ray@dc.gov)

### Mayor Vincent C. Gray, Education Officials and Student-Athletes Launch D.C. Statewide Athletic Association

*Unified Association to Establish Shared Rules, Award D.C. Boys' and Girls' State Championships*

**(WASHINGTON, D.C.)** – The District's public, private, parochial, independent and charter school sports teams will have the opportunity to compete against each other in the first-ever D.C. state championship games starting this fall as a result of the newly formed D.C. State Athletic Association (DCSAA) announced today by Mayor Vincent C. Gray and the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE).

***"Today is a groundbreaking occasion for the District of Columbia, a showcase for our student-athletes and an amazing opportunity for our schools to perform on a statewide stage,"*** said Mayor Gray, noting that creating the DCSAA also provides unified eligibility rules and regulations under which District schools may compete. ***"Sports promote the teaching and learning of life skills through team participation, and by expanding the athletic platform on which students can grow, we also expand their opportunities for success."***

Consisting of member schools from the D.C. Interscholastic Athletic Association (DCIAA), the Washington Charter School Athletic Association (WCSAA) and area independent/non-public schools, DCSAA will award D.C. State Championship titles in boys' and girls' cross-country, boys' and girls' soccer, and boys' football in Division I and II, beginning in fall 2012.

Mayor Gray also stated that the longstanding ritual of the annual Turkey Bowl would remain intact, with the winner representing DCIAA in the DCSAA Division I State Title Game against the corresponding WCSAA/Independent school tournament winner.

***“The Turkey Bowl means a lot to D.C. history, so we put every measure in place to protect that tradition,”*** added the Mayor. ***“In fact, with the chance for a state title on the line, we feel like DCSAA has raised the stakes even higher for the Turkey Bowl!”***

DCSAA operations will be managed by the OSSE Statewide Athletics Office. State Superintendent of Education Hosanna Mahaley explained that the appointment of an Advisory Board of Interscholastic Athletics and a separate, independent DCSAA Appeals Board will provide added oversight over regulations and activities, including gender balance in statewide sports competition.

“Believing in One City means believing in equity,” she said, noting that, along with DCSAA state championship games proposed for both for winter 2012 (boys’ and girls’ indoor track, boys’ and girls’ basketball) and spring 2013 (boys’ baseball, girls’ softball, boys’ and girls’ outdoor track) sports, girls’ cheerleading has been proposed as well, ensuring boys’ and girls’ sports teams will have an equal amount of state champions. “OSSE and DCSAA take Title IX seriously, and we will provide female student-athletes in the District both the support and standing to compete on equal ground,” Mahaley said.

Echoing that sentiment was Statewide Director of Athletics Clark Ray, citing OSSE’s award-winning Health & Wellness division and the District’s nation-leading student nutrition programs as valuable resources for fulfilling the DCSAA mission to offer District youth top-notch physical education and the opportunity for safe and organized competition. “Sports are a positive gateway for D.C. students, a deterrent to truancy and a path toward discovering their potential,” Ray said. “One of Mayor Gray’s ongoing initiatives is to change what school athletic success looks like in the District of Columbia; establishing DCSAA allows us to do just that.”

The association’s formation means that, for the first time, the District’s public charter school students will be able to compete for citywide titles against their peers in traditional public schools. “This new statewide athletic association truly puts our talented charter school student-athletes on an equal playing field with other public school athletes across the city,” said D.C. Public Charter School Board Executive Director Scott Pearson. “We support Mayor Gray’s efforts to create One City for public school athletics.”

“This city is filled with talented student athletes who can challenge each other to do better on the field and in the classroom. I’m very excited that our student athletes will have the opportunity to compete with their peers from all schools in the District,” said D.C. Public Schools (DCPS) Chancellor Kaya Henderson. “With the bar set higher now across the city, I’m confident DCPS will rise to the challenge – and I look forward to cheering on our students at upcoming games.”

Additional DCSAA information – including the Proposed Division I and Division II State Football Playoff Brackets, Eligibility Criteria, DCSAA Rules and Regulations Handbook and DCSAA League Constitution – is available for review and download online at <http://osse.dc.gov>.

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