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WEST SENECA SCHOOLS

Students, parents ask West Seneca board to approve girls ice hockey

By Barbara O'Brien
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

More than a dozen girls and their parents asked the West Seneca Central School Board on Monday night to add a girls ice hockey team.

“We know of 19 in the West Seneca School District who would be eligible to play,” said Christopher Roberts, a parent and hockey coach. “Give the young women the opportunity to grow and continue playing the game that they love.”

Boys varsity hockey is starting this winter at West Seneca, and the girls said they want to be able to play another winter sport. They are looking to have the team running in the 2009-10 school year.

Meghan Roberts, a sophomore at West Seneca West High School, said a lot of girls who play fall sports don't continue with winter sports because there are not as many offered in the winter season.

Sydney Glynn, who has played hockey for five years, said that hockey is her favorite sport and that it doesn't interfere with her schoolwork. “For me to be able to go to a

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hockey practice, I have to have my homework done,” she said.

Jessica Dolac said she tried out for a boys club hockey team at West Seneca East Middle School last year and didn't make it. She said the coach told her she wasn't tough enough.

“We should not be discriminated against by our gender for a sport we love,” she said.

Superintendent Jean M. Kovach congratulated the girls for talking with the board. “I'm not promising anything,” she said. “You made very good points, and you made different points, so that means there were a lot of good points made here.”

She said after the meeting that the School Board would discuss the possibility of adding girls ice hockey to next year's budget. The district is spending about \$50,000 for boys hockey this year.

A question that administrators have is whom the girls would play, since there are no girls varsity teams in Erie County. Last year, Williamsville Central Schools considered adding the sport for girls, but the money was not included in the budget because there were no girls teams in the area to play.

Proponents are asking seven school districts and Catholic schools to add the sport. Supporters would like to see teams at West Seneca, Amherst, Clarence, Lancaster, Orchard Park, Sweet Home and Williamsville, as well as a combined team from Catholic schools. They would become the Western Division of Upstate New York Girls Varsity Ice Hockey.

The girls and their parents can't wait. Katie Zimmer, an eighth-grader at West Seneca West Middle School, said, “Hockey was invented by men but perfected by women.”

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