***A Problem at Pacific Central High***

As Alicia Hampton sprinted across the finish line, the crowd went wild. She had just run the final leg of the girls' 400-meter relay race in record time. That race had given Pacific Central High School enough points to win the first state track championship in which both boys and girls competed.

On the way back to Pacific Central High, a few members of the team noticed their coach staring out the window of the school bus. "What are you thinking about, Mrs. Reed?" one of them asked. "Why aren't you celebrating like everyone else?"

"I was just thinking about how different things were the year I started teaching at Pacific Central High," she answered. "We won the state championship that year, too. But the only girls on the field then were cheerleaders."

"Wasn't there a girls' track team in those days, Mrs. Reed?" someone else asked.

"Oh, there was one," she answered. "But we didn't get to go with the boys to the state championship. We were lucky if we could get enough parents to drive us over to Porterville for a meet. Girls' teams took a back seat to boys' teams in those days. There was hardly any money left in the budget for the girls' athletic program."

"I was the girls' coach then. Unlike the boys' coach, I was only paid for teaching during school hours. I didn't get paid for coaching the teams after school. I was asked to volunteer for the job. Our team could only use the track after the boys had finished. Since we never knew exactly when that would be, we had to wait around a lot. We usually finished practicing after dark. That, combined with the hand-me-down equipment we had to use, led to many injuries."

By this time others were listening to the conversation. One of them asked, "Why did things change?"

"Congress passed a law. It requires schools that receive government money to give both boys and girls equal opportunities in all school programs. Most schools receive money from the federal government, so the law made things change. When people from the State Department of Education began checking the schools, the situation improved even more."

"Well, if what you say is true, why does the girls' basketball team only get to use the gym twice a week?" asked Alicia. "And why don't we have a gymnastics team? I know a lot of girls who would like to compete in that sport."

"I heard that girls' coaches don't get paid as much as boys' coaches," Bonnie added. "That doesn't seem fair."

"There's still room for improvement," Mrs. Reed said. "But at least we're catching up. Now let's celebrate. After all, we won the state championship!"

Examining the Situation

1. What problems occurred at Pacific Central High School several years ago?

2. How was authority used to deal with these problems?

3. What problems at Pacific Central High School still have not been solved?

4. What do you think?

5. How might authority be used to deal with these problems?

6. How can you work to promote changes in a situation like this one?