

Sent via e-mail

June 13, 2022

Ms. Eshe Collins, Chair
Atlanta Board of Education

Dr. Lisa Herring, Superintendent
Atlanta Public Schools

Ms. Collins and Dr. Herring:

The following organizations, on behalf of both parents and students within the school district, are reaching out to the leadership of Atlanta Public Schools to request a response with regards to the rights of transgender students. On Wednesday, May 4, the Georgia High School Sports Association's Executive Committee voted 61-0-1 to prohibit transgender students in our k12 public schools from participating in gendered sports teams that do not align with their gender assigned at birth. This decision impacts transgender, nonbinary, and LGBTQ+ students in your school district among many others.

Considering your county was among many who have policies that are supportive of LGBTQ+ students we ask that Atlanta Public Schools' athletic representatives in the GHSA join a vote to reverse this policy this month. Exclusion and discrimination carry serious implications for vulnerable trans youth - as waves of legislation nationwide target young people, we are investigating options to ensure the rights of trans youth remain protected in our schools.

GHSA has stated this decision is in part a response to the passage of House Bill 1084 into law by Georgia's Governor this spring. HB 1084 included a last-minute, politicized amendment which invited GHSA to consider discriminating against transgender athletes on sports teams in k12 schools. The exact language of the amendment states that "if the athletic association determines that it is necessary and appropriate to prohibit students whose gender is male from participating in athletic events that are designated for students whose gender is female, then the athletic association **may** adopt a policy to that effect; provided, however, that such policy shall be applied to all of the athletic association's participating public high schools;".

However, this legislation does not mandate the exclusion of trans athletes - nor does it mandate GHSA take up a vote on a blanket, statewide policy with regards to transgender athletic participation. Thus, GHSA's most recent ban on transgender youth participation in Georgia school sports is reversible. The decision to discriminate against trans athletes has not been mandated by our legislature.

A number of transgender students, cisgender student athletes, and Atlanta parents have contacted us expressing serious concerns with the implications of GHSA's vote on their schools. Georgians agree - discrimination is wrong, all children should be able to play sports with their peers, and local control should not be replaced with political mandates. Our organizations are committed to the rights, safety, and full participation of LGBTQ+ Georgia students. As such, we are reaching out to you to ask for clarity on your position with regards to GHSA's vote and the rights of transgender students in Atlanta Public Schools.

We look forward to hearing from your leadership soon as stakeholders and advocates within our schools discuss options to protect children's' rights through the reversal of GHSA's decision. We can be reached at the emails below. Thank you.

Best,

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