

PENNSYLVANIA INTERSCHOLASTIC
ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.



550 Gettysburg Road • P.O. Box 2008
Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania 17055-0708
(800) 382-1392 • (717) 697-0374
FAX (717) 697-7721
WEB SITE: www.piaa.org

December 11, 2018

Superintendent William Hall
Millcreek School District
3580 West 38th Street
Erie, PA

Superintendent Leonard Rich
Laurel School District
2497 Harlansburg Road
New Castle, PA 16101

Dear Superintendents Hall and Rich:

At its meeting of December 5, 2018, the PIAA Board of Directors directed that I contact you relating to two matters.

First, as you know, PIAA has a number of official steering and advisory committees. We have recently received evidence by member schools and others who are confused as to the relationship between PIAA and the "PIAA Equity Steering Committee." Your use of the terms "PIAA" and "Steering Committee" in the group's name incorrectly suggests that it is affiliated with, or endorsed by, PIAA. This is of particular concern since "PIAA" is a federally registered trademark (registration number 2,361,556) and PIAA has a legal duty to protect that mark from any unauthorized use. For that reason, and to prevent ongoing confusion, we must insist that you immediately cease referencing "PIAA" as part of the name of your group.

Second, at its December 5 meeting, the PIAA Competition Committee discussed the proposal presented by your group at the Committee's meeting of November 14, 2018 to separate PIAA championship tournaments into boundary and non-boundary classifications. The Board of Directors also then considered the proposal and, at the recommendation of the Competition Committee, voted not to proceed further to pursue such an option. Its decision was based on the view of the Committee and Board, and the advice of legal counsel, that the 1972 legislation directing PIAA to accept private schools as PIAA members was specifically intended to result in championship competition between the public and private schools. Unless and until the General Assembly, or its Athletic Oversight Committee, provides an opinion to PIAA suggesting that our interpretation is incorrect, PIAA will not act contrary to this legislative intent.

The Board recognizes that competitive fairness issues exist but also believes there are alternatives to segregated tournaments. It has adopted significant changes to the transfer rules and developed a competition classification formula to go into effect next cycle. The Board intends to further investigate other options and will continue to seek input from all interested parties. The Board believes that further dialogue between the interested parties may identify these alternatives. To this end, and consistent with the Board's efforts to identify alternative solutions, the following statement was authorized for release and will be posted to the PIAA website for public distribution:

The PIAA Board of Directors, at the recommendation of counsel, concludes and therefore reaffirms that the separation of playoffs with regard to public, charter and private schools is contrary to the publicly documented legislative intent of Act 219 of 1972.


The PIAA Board of Directors in conjunction with its many advisory and steering committee groups will continue to study and consider proposals brought forward that may further enhance equity for all member schools within the association.

To that end, the PIAA Board of Directors recommends that the PA Equity Group, the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference and the Pennsylvania Charter School Coalition attempt to work in unison to find common ground within their respective groups in providing proposals for consideration that are consistent with the intent of Act 219 and further aids in establishment or revision of policies for the betterment of all student-athletes.

The PIAA Board of Directors looks forward to a continuing dialogue with these and all other constituent groups.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. It is appreciated.

Sincerely,


Dr. Robert A. Lombardi
Executive Director

RAL/bl

cc: Administrative Staff
Board of Directors
Alan R. Boynton, Esq., Legal Counsel
Carol Steinhour-Young, Esq., Legal Counsel
Michael L. Solomon, Esq., Director of Legal Affairs