

PENNSYLVANIA ATHLETIC OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

MEMBERS:

**Representative Gene DiGirolamo,
Chairman**

Representative Mike Reese
Representative Tony Payton Jr.

**Senator Jane Orié,
Vice Chairman**

Senator Joseph Scarnati
Senator Richard Kasunic



STAFF:

House:

Sean Harris, Executive Director
Pamela Huss, Administrative Assistant

49 East Wing
P.O. Box 202018
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2018
(717) 783-7319

MEMORANDUM

TO: PA Athletic Oversight Committee Members

FROM: Representative Gene DiGirolamo, Chairman
PA Athletic Oversight Committee

DATE: January 4, 2012

RE: PA Athletic Oversight Committee Meeting

Please join me for an informational meeting of the PA Athletic Oversight Committee on January 25, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 14 East Wing. This meeting is to hear information regarding the PIAA's proposal to implement new definitions concerning "boundary schools" and any other business that may come before the committee.

Please email phuss@pahousegop.com or call our office at 783-7319 to let us know if you are able to attend. Thank you!

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CLERK

Committee Attendance Record

DATE: 1/25/12

COMMITTEE: PA Athletic Oversight Committee

DATE: 1/25/12

PLACE:

60 East Wing

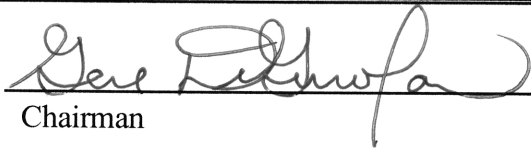
TIME CALLED TO ORDER: 10:02 a.m.

TIME ADJOURNED:


10:59 a.m.

MAJORITY MEMBERS	PRES	ABS	ON LEAVE	MINORITY MEMBERS	PRES	ABS	ON LEAVE
Rep. Gene DiGirolamo, Chairman	X			Senator Jane Orie, Vice Chair	X		
Rep. Mike Reese	X			Senator Joseph Scarnati	X		
Rep. Tony Payton	X			Senator Richard Kasunic	X		

Total Present 6
Total Absent 0


Chairman

Total Absent with Leave 0


Administrative Assistant

**PA ATHLETIC OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (PAOC)
REP. GENE DIGIROLAMO, CHAIR
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2012
Room 60 East Wing**

AGENDA

Meeting Called to Order

Roll Call

Chairman's Remarks

Vice Chairman's Remarks

Testimony regarding a proposal by the PIAA to amend the Glossary of the PIAA Bylaws concerning "boundary" and "non-boundary" schools and any additional business that may come before the Committee.

PANEL A: PIAA Representatives 10:00 AM – 10:15 AM

- W. Rodney Stone, President of the PIAA
- Raymond J. Wotkowski, Vice President of the PIAA
- John P. Wabby, PIAA Treasurer

PANEL B: PA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE 10:15 AM – 10:30 AM

- Philip Murren: Counsel for the PA Catholic Conference
- Sean McAleer: Director of Education, PA Catholic Conference
- Hal Griffith: PIAA Private School Representative
- Ben Brous, Athletic Director, Esperanza Academy Charter HS

Other Business

Adjourn



Pennsylvania Athletic Oversight Committee

Testimony of Ben Brous
Director of Athletics, Esperanza Academy Charter School
January 25, 2012

Honorable Members of the Oversight Committee:

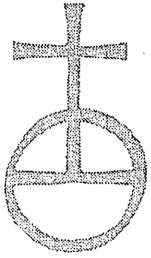
It is with great sadness and bewilderment that I and the entire charter school community come to you. It is our understanding that the Board of Directors intend to vote on verbiage that would severely and adversely affect all charter schools be they brick and mortar or cyber. The amendment to change Charter School's identity from a public institution to a non public institution, according to Act 22 (The charter school law), appears to be both unlawful and out of the jurisdiction of PIAA Directors. The charter school law specifically states "A charter school is an independent public school established and operated under a charter from the local board of school directors. Charter schools must be established as public nonprofit, nonsectarian entities by teachers, parents, institutions of higher education or museums." According to this clear and unambiguous definition, the Board would be stepping out of its bounds in attempting to redefine charters as anything other than a public institution or otherwise known as a "BOUNDARY SCHOOL".

Perhaps what is more troublesome to comprehend is why the PIAA Board would go to such great lengths to adopt or amend by-laws that would treat some public schools different than others. Why would the Board choose to consider Philadelphia Public Schools "BOUNDARY SCHOOLS" and charter schools as "NON-BOUNDARY SCHOOLS" when both institutions have an identical admissions policy? According to the Philadelphia School District's directory of high school admissions for 2012, "Neighborhood High Schools – These (25) high schools have open admission to students who attend a grade eight school that is within the feeder pattern. Students from outside of the feeder pattern may apply. However, admission is based upon space availability and selection is made by computerized lottery." This Philadelphia admissions policy is identical to a charter school's admissions policy which doesn't grant charter schools an advantage over any Philadelphia Public School or any other public school in the Commonwealth.

Now that we have established, according to Act 22, that Charter Schools are in fact public schools and are entitled to all that is afforded to any other public school, couple with the fact that admissions into a charter school is identical to that of a Philadelphia Public School, why would the PIAA want to embark on creating an unnecessary system that discriminates against children living on the same street desiring a fare and appropriate education? If we are truly concerned about educating our children and assuring they are given the best regardless of what public school they choose to attend, why then would we place unnecessary constraints on a system that currently adequately facilitates all public schools athletic needs?

It is our recommendation that the PIAA Board strongly reconsiders redefining charter school's identity and therefore allows charter schools to have equal access to all that the PIAA offers all its public schools.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my testimony. I'm more than happy to answer any questions you may have.



PENNSYLVANIA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

223 North Street • Box 2835 • Harrisburg, PA 17105 • (717) 238-9613 • FAX (717) 238-1473

January 9, 2112

Representative Gene DiGirolamo
49 East Wing
P.O. Box 20218
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Chairman DiGirolamo:

We wish to bring to the attention of the members of the Athletic Oversight Committee a matter which is of grave concern to the private school members of the PIAA.

The PIAA has been in operation for nearly one hundred years. Over its first sixty years it was exclusively a public school entity. Nonpublic schools were not able to participate until Section 511(b.1) of the School Code was added by Act 219 of 1972. That amendment required the PIAA to allow nonpublic schools to become full members of that organization. Nonpublic school membership continued to grow in the PIAA from that point on.

The PIAA's Bylaws (Article XII) prohibit any member school from playing any contests against any school that is not a member of the PIAA, or of another state athletic association that is affiliated with the same national organization of which the PIAA is a member. As a practical matter, this provision effectively locks Pennsylvania schools into the PIAA structure.

Article XVI-A of the School Code was adopted in 2000, conferring legislatively-delegated authority on the PIAA to regulate interscholastic athletics in the Commonwealth. That authority may, of course, be withdrawn if the General Assembly should so choose, but until that withdrawal should occur, the PIAA is acting in the name of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in its treatment of its member schools and their students and families.

Article XVI-A of the School Code mandated, for the first time, that the PIAA must include a nonpublic school representative on its governing board. Although nonpublic schools enroll 13% of the students in Pennsylvania, and private schools comprise 18.7% of the senior high school membership of the PIAA, the nonpublic school community only has one voting representative out of the 31 members of the PIAA board. There are also currently 12 separate districts within the PIAA, each of which is governed by a district committee. Neither the School Code nor the PIAA Constitution requires those district committees to include any nonpublic school representatives.

The nonpublic school community's experiences with the PIAA have taught it that circumstances and factors currently beyond the control of the nonpublic school membership presently deny nonpublic schools and their students any effective and enforceable guarantees of equitable treatment.

There is currently no provision in law that protects the nonpublic school minority from being overwhelmed (all quite democratically) on any matter in which there is a public-nonpublic divide.

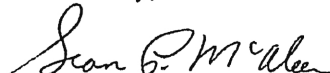
In fact, the PIAA is currently considering a change to its bylaws defining its member schools according to criteria that will divide public school district member schools from nonpublic member schools. A copy of the current text of that proposed bylaws amendment is appended hereto.

Nonpublic schools quite reasonably fear that this change is intended as a prelude to the PIAA either segregating public and nonpublic school interscholastic championships, or intentionally disadvantaging nonpublic schools in the competition for those championships by affixing unequal classification criteria to schools other than traditional district-operated public schools.

The proposed bylaw change has no purpose other than to set the table for subsequent action that would accord favored treatment solely to district-operated public schools. This despite the mandate of the PIAA's own Constitution (Art. II, §1.C) that requires it to "promote uniformity of standards in interscholastic athletic competition." Discriminatory treatment of nonpublic schools in the context of classification standards is the very antithesis of "uniformity."

We therefore ask that the members of the Athletic Oversight Committee intervene in order to prevent the PIAA's public school majority from trampling the rights of that organization's nonpublic school minority to equal treatment.

Sincerely,


Sean P. McAleer

cc: Senator Jane Clare Orie
Senator Richard A. Kasunic
Senator Joseph B. Scarnati, III
Representative Tony J. Payton, Jr.
Representative Mike Reese
Sean Harris
Brad Cashman
PIAA Private School Steering Committee Members
Diocesan School Superintendents
Diocesan PIAA Representatives
Hal Griffiths

ATTACHMENT – PIAA BOUNDARY/NON-BOUNDARY SCHOOL DEFINITIONS

XV. The PIAA Board of Directors took the following action on the recommendations from the Thursday, December 15, 2011 meeting of the PIAA Strategic Planning Committee:

A. Tabled until the Thursday, January 26, and Friday, January 27, 2012 meeting of the PIAA Board of Directors either the adoption of or amendment to the GLOSSARY, of the PIAA By-Laws, to read as follows:

BOUNDARY SCHOOL: All Public Schools.

CHARTER SCHOOL: An independent public school, which is organized as a non-profit corporation, established and operated under a charter from a local School Board.

CYBER CHARTER SCHOOL: An independent public school, which is organized as a non-profit corporation, established and operated under a charter from the Department of Education, in which the school uses technology to provide a significant portion of its curriculum and to deliver a significant portion of instruction to its students through the Internet or other electronic means.

NON-BOUNDARY SCHOOL: All schools that are not Public Schools.

PRIVATE SCHOOL: A nonpublic school that is not an Alternative School, a Charter School, a Cyber Charter School, a Magnet School, a Public School, or a Technology School.

PRIVATE SCHOOL'S SCHOOL DISTRICT: A Each Private School, including each Private senior high School's and its Feeder Schools, shall have its own "school district". Regardless of the location of its Feeder Schools, the geographic boundaries of the Private senior high School's "school district" shall be considered the boundaries of the public school district in which it is geographically located. The Private School's school district and the public school district are separate school districts.

PUBLIC SCHOOL: A school which is owned and funded by a Public School District and governed by a School Board.

PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT: An entity created pursuant to the Pennsylvania Public School Code, which is charged with the responsibility of public education and which is authorized to assess taxes on properties located within its geographic boundaries.

Proposed Private School Amendment to the Original PIAA Glossary Definition:

Boundary School: (a) All Public Schools, (b) All diocesan-affiliated private schools, a school therein that resides within the boundaries of the diocese. (c) All other religiously-affiliated private schools, a school therein who are members of the religious denomination that sponsors the school.

Non-Boundary School: A school not meeting the definition of a Boundary School.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT OF MR. STONE

GOOD MORNING! THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME TO PROVIDE YOU WITH INFORMATION REGARDING THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE GLOSSARY SECTION OF THE PIAA BY-LAWS. I AM HAPPY TO RESPOND TO ANY QUESTIONS THAT YOU MAY HAVE BUT, IF YOU DO NOT OBJECT, I THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO PROVIDE YOU WITH SOME BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT ON THE MATTER.

AS MOST OF YOU ARE PROBABLY ALREADY AWARE, FOR MUCH OF ITS HISTORY, PIAA WAS AN ORGANIZATION CONSISTING SOLELY OF PUBLIC SCHOOL MEMBERS. IN OCTOBER 1972, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADOPTED LEGISLATION REQUIRING THAT PIAA ACCEPT PRIVATE SCHOOLS INTO ITS MEMBERSHIP.

BECAUSE PRIVATE SCHOOLS ROUTINELY DRAW FROM A MUCH BROADER GEOGRAPHIC AREA THAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, THE ADDITION OF THESE SCHOOLS REQUIRED CONSIDERABLE EFFORT TO DEVELOP POLICIES AND APPROACHES TO BOUNDARIES FOR SUCH SCHOOLS.

IN RECENT YEARS, THE PROLIFERATION OF CHARTER SCHOOL MEMBERS OF PIAA HAS ADDED A NEW DIMENSION TO THE DISCUSSION. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE BOUNDARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, THESE SCHOOLS OFTEN HAVE NO LIMITATIONS OF ANY KIND. BY ILLUSTRATION, AT A RECENT ELIGIBILITY HEARING, WE LEARNED THAT ONE PARTICULAR CHARTER SCHOOL CURRENTLY HAS STUDENTS ENROLLED FROM SEVENTEEN DIFFERENT PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND FEELS FREE TO RECRUIT FROM EVEN MORE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS. WE ANTICIPATE A CONTINUED GROWTH IN THE NUMBER OF CHARTER SCHOOL MEMBERS.

IN DISCUSSING WHETHER AND, IF SO, HOW TO ADDRESS THE BOUNDARIES ISSUE GENERATED BY THESE CHANGES, A PROBLEM THAT HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED IS A LACK OF CONSENSUS ON WHAT IS MEANT BY VARIOUS TERMS BEING BANDIED ABOUT. CONSEQUENTLY, FOR PIAA PURPOSES – AND ONLY FOR PIAA PURPOSES – WE HAVE UNDERTAKEN TO DEFINE CERTAIN TERMS. THE PROPOSED DEFINITIONS ARE ATTACHED TO THESE REMARKS. THEY MAY OR MAY NOT BE CONSISTENT WITH

THOSE USED BY OTHER ORGANIZATIONS OR ENTITIES. THEY DO, HOWEVER, ATTEMPT TO MEET PIAA'S NEEDS.

THE PROPOSED DEFINED TERMS WERE FIRST PRESENTED TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR CONSIDERATION AT ITS JULY 21, 2011 MEETING. BY A VOTE OF 27-2, THE DEFINITIONS WERE APPROVED ON A FIRST READING BASIS.

ON OCTOBER 6, 2011, THE TERMS WERE CONSIDERED ON A SECOND READING BASIS AND WERE APPROVED BY A VOTE OF 28-2. THE TERMS WERE PLACED ON THE AGENDA FOR A THIRD AND FINAL READING AT THE DECEMBER 16, 2011 MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

ON DECEMBER 16, AT THE REQUEST OF CHAIRMAN DIGIROLAMO, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AGREED TO TABLE THE MATTER UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING OF THE BOARD, WHICH IS SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY, JANUARY 26 AND FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 2012, SO THAT THIS COMMITTEE COULD CONSIDER THE PROPOSED CHANGES.

I SHOULD NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT PRIOR TO THE CHAIRMAN'S REQUEST, AND WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE PRIVATE SCHOOLS' STEERING COMMITTEE, PIAA HAD NOT RECEIVED FROM ANY PARTY ANY WRITTEN OBJECTIONS TO THE PROPOSED CHANGES. MOREOVER AND AS PREVIOUSLY NOTED, THE TERMS WERE OVERWHELMINGLY SUPPORTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF WHOM ARE EMPLOYED AT PRIVATE SCHOOLS.

YOU WILL NOTE THAT THE PROPOSED CHANGES ARE TO EIGHT TERMS. TWO OF THE CHANGES MERELY REMOVE THE TERM "INDEPENDENT PUBLIC" FROM THAT OF CHARTER AND CYBER-CHARTER SCHOOLS. TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, THERE HAS BEEN NO CONCERN EXPRESSED ABOUT THESE TWO CHANGES.

OF THE REMAINING SIX CHANGES, FOUR ARE NEW TERMS AND TWO ARE REVISIONS TO EXISTING ONES. ALL FOUR OF THE NEW TERMS RELATE TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS, WHICH HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY BEEN DEFINED. OF THOSE, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE PROPOSED DEFINITIONS OF A PUBLIC SCHOOL AND A PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT ARE OBJECTED TO BY ANY PARTY.

TWO OF THE REMAINING FOUR DEFINITIONS RELATE TO REVISIONS OF THE DEFINITIONS OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND PRIVATE SCHOOL DISTRICTS. YOU WILL NOTE THAT THE NEW DEFINITION OF A PRIVATE SCHOOL, AS WITH THE PRIOR ONE, SPEAKS IN THE NEGATIVE. HOWEVER, RATHER THAN DEFINING PRIVATE SCHOOLS AS SIMPLY BEING NON-PUBLIC ONES, WE SPECIFY THE OTHER CATEGORIES OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS. SIMILARLY, WE DEFINE A PRIVATE SCHOOL'S DISTRICT AS BEING THE SCHOOL AND STUDENTS ENROLLED AT ITS FEEDER SCHOOLS. WE, AGAIN, DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE PROPOSED REVISIONS ARE PARTICULARLY CONTROVERSIAL

THE FINAL TWO DEFINITIONS ARE THOSE OF BOUNDARY AND NON-BOUNDARY SCHOOLS. BOUNDARY SCHOOLS ARE DEFINED AS ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND NON-BOUNDARY SCHOOLS ARE DEFINED AS ALL OTHER SCHOOLS. THE PURPOSE FOR DOING SO IS TO CREATE A CATEGORY CONSISTING OF THOSE SCHOOLS - INCLUDING CHARTER SCHOOLS - WHICH IN THIS RESPECT ARE COMPARABLE TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN THAT THEY DRAW STUDENTS FROM MULTIPLE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

WE UNDERSTAND THAT THERE MAY BE OBJECTIONS FROM CERTAIN PARTIES BECAUSE SOME NON-BOUNDARY SCHOOLS, PARTICULARLY IN THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, MAY OPERATE IN A MANNER MORE ANALOGOUS TO BOUNDARY SCHOOLS THAN DO SOME PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE CITY. WE BELIEVE THAT, TO THE EXTENT THAT THESE DISTINCTIONS EXIST, THEY CAN BE ADDRESSED IF AND WHEN THE DEFINITIONS ARE TO BE APPLIED IN A PARTICULAR CONTEXT.

ALONG THESE LINES, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE DEFINITIONS DO NOTHING OTHER THAN TO DEFINE. THEY DO NOT REQUIRE OR PROHIBIT ANYTHING. SIMILARLY, IF OBJECTIONS TO THEM ARE TENDERED BECAUSE OF A FEAR THAT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS COULD TAKE SOME ACTION IN THE FUTURE UTILIZING THEM, IT SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED THAT, IF THE BOARD WERE SO INCLINED, IT COULD TAKE ANY SUCH ACTION REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THESE DEFINITIONS ARE ADOPTED. WHAT THESE TERMS DO IS AT LEAST DEFINE THE PARAMETERS OF WHAT IS BEING DISCUSSED WHEN WE AT PIAA USE CERTAIN TERMS.

I AGAIN THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME TO TESTIFY AND WILL ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS THAT YOU MAY HAVE.

GLOSSARY

* * *

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Below is a summary of the new transfer rule. The entire Private School Community opposes this amendment.

In addition to the points below the transferring student would now have to present evidence to the district committee why she/he should be eligible to participate in a sport. In the current form of the transfer rule the district committee would have to present the evidence. This would deem most of the financially challenged student athletes in Pennsylvania ineligible to participate.

Transfer Rule Proposal (2012)

Summary and Notes:

- Any student who enrolls in the 9th grade for the first time would have full athletic eligibility.
- Unless the student can demonstrate that one of the specified exceptional circumstances is met, any student who transfers after the beginning of the 9th grade would be denied eligibility to compete in any sport in which s/he had participated within one year prior to the transfer.
- The period of ineligibility for a transferring student would be the number of games equal to 50% of her/his new school's regular season games in the particular sport. The period of ineligibility could extend into the postseason and into the following season if 50% of the regular season games had already been played at the time of the transfer.
- Any student who transfers after the beginning of the 9th grade could petition the district committee for immediate eligibility if s/he can meet one of the specified exceptions, the most common of which would involve a bona fide change of residence from one public school district to another. {Note that a student whose family moves from one section of a large city to a distant portion of the same city would be ineligible even if the student transfers to a school that is close to the family's new residence.}
- Transfers for economic reasons could result in potential eligibility only in cases of "severe and unusual hardship" (which are to be "rarely" granted).
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Transfers for bona fide academic reasons would not qualify for potential eligibility unless the prior school certifies that the student would not have been promoted to the next grade level due to academic deficiencies.

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Transfers for bona fide religious, cultural, disciplinary or academic reasons (other than impending failure) could never result in potential athletic eligibility. {Note: Compare Boyle v. PIAA, 676 A.2d 695 (1996), in which the Commonwealth Court invalidated the PIAA transfer rules that did not allow a student to be eligible in spite of having demonstrated that his transfer was for non-athletic reasons. }

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Any transferring student who is petitioning for eligibility under one of the exceptions must present certifications from the principals of both high schools that the transfer is not athletically motivated. However, unlike the present transfer rule, obtaining those certifications and demonstrating lack of athletic intent would not be a separate sufficient basis for eligibility. {Note again the incongruity of this proposed provision with the holding of the Commonwealth Court in the Boyle case. }

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Any transferring student, even though otherwise eligible under one of the stated exceptions, may be denied eligibility if a district committee would conclude that there is a “reasonable likelihood” that the transfer was “materially motivated in some way by an athletic purpose.”

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Comment: While the proposed rule does not facially discriminate against nonpublic school students, it does make eligibility following transfers between public and nonpublic schools altogether unlikely, even where the transfer would have occurred irrespective of any athletic considerations. Thus the rule would potentially restrict or penalize the free choice of parents to select the school that is overall best suited for their children.

Thanks,
Sean



Bible Baptist School

201 West Main Street
Shiremanstown, PA 17011
www.bbsk12.org

Tel: (717) 737-3550
Fax: (717) 761-3977

Testimony before the Pennsylvania Athletic Oversight Committee January 25, 2012

Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss these issues with you today. I will not take much of your time as my presentation is brief.

As the Private School's Representative for the PIAA I represent all of the private schools in the state. I am also representing the silent majority. The majority of private schools who are never in the spot light, who are never in the state tournaments. There are private schools with male enrollments in the state of Pennsylvania with over 800 students and there are private schools that have less than 25 males in their high school. I am completely convinced that we are not addressing this issue in the proper manner. I understand we are here today to discuss definitions. Each of us here wants what is best for the student athletes of the state of Pennsylvania. My friends on the PIAA board are convinced that the way to solve a perceived inequity between private and public schools is to establish separate classifications, and that apparently starts by establishing definitions. Accepting these definitions will be an extreme injustice to most of the private schools in the state.

To state that every private school has an advantage over the public schools is wrong. You never see schools like The Christian School of York, or Meadowbrook Christian in Milton, or Johnstown Christian in state or district championship games. These are small schools, schools with often a male enrollment of not more than 60-70 boys in the high school. In fact, of the 138 private schools in the state that have declared for basketball, approximately one half of those schools have male enrollments of under one hundred students. These are the same schools who charge tuition, who have inadequate facilities, and who in many cases have religious qualifications for acceptance. My school, for example has a policy that for a student to be accepted into the high school, at least one parent must be a born again Christian. Believe me, with stipulations like this, my school does not have a recruiting advantage. In fact, boundaries are established just by these acceptance criteria. In District 3 alone there are currently 24 A schools. 19 of these A schools are private schools with male enrollment declarations of under 100 boys. 14 of the schools have male enrollments under 50 boys. In these financial times, many of these schools are struggling just to stay open. Of these 19 schools, the overwhelming majority of them have never appeared in a district championship basketball game, and several have appeared just once. And I am talking about the district level, not the state. These are the schools that will be thrust into the same classification as Pittsburg Central Catholic or Allentown Central Catholic, or Father Judge high school in Philadelphia.

There is no equity in that kind of scenario. It actually creates a real and true injustice, not just a perceived injustice, to the students in those schools.

The bottom line is this, establishing definitions as the first step in establishing separate classes is simply a step in the wrong direction. If there is a problem, then the problem should be solved in a way that would deal with the schools that are causing the problem, both public and private. This discussion comes up because of the percentage of private schools that are consistently in the state championships. Yet no one says a word when the same public schools are in the same championships on a regular basis. If we want to fix the situation, let's treat everyone fairly. I am asking that each school, public and private be treated in the same way. If we think we need to change the system, then let's change the system that treats everyone the same. Dividing the state based on boundary/non-boundary does not create a fair situation for many schools. This should not be a boundary/non-boundary issue.

Thank you very much for your time and your concern for this issue.

Harold A. "Hal" Griffiths
Secondary Co-Principal, Bible Baptist School
PIAA Board of Directors, Private Schools Representative