



David Dude, Ph.D.
Superintendent

Vision

We will build the foundation for all children to be their best, achieve their dreams and make the world a better place.

February 2, 2017

Gary Phillips
Executive Director
Georgia High School Association
PO Box 271
151 S. Bethel Street
Thomaston, GA 30286

Dear Mr. Phillips,

I understand that our Athletic Director, Carter Wilson, contacted you this morning to inquire about the possibility of our students competing “unattached” in the state meet and you told him that was not an option due to a rule that “exhibitions” are not allowed at the state meet. This reference to the rules, and the fact that I continue to be astonished by the willingness of an organization to punish students for the actions of adults, left me wondering what the GHSA Constitution and By-Laws say about such a situation. I was unable to find such a reference and would appreciate you pointing me to where this is addressed in the GHSA Constitution or By-Laws.

While reviewing that document, I couldn't help but notice section 2.27 of the By-Laws, which states that “member schools that fail to follow stated procedures and deadlines may be assessed a fine for each violation” (emphasis added). Furthermore, in Appendix P (“GHSA Fines Structure for Rules Violations”), it is clear that the Executive Director (i.e., you) is “empowered to make a determination as to whether a violation of GHSA rules has occurred, and to assess an appropriate penalty” (emphasis added), and that the “amount of such fines and the imposition of other penalties shall be determined by the Executive Director upon consideration of the facts and circumstances of the violation....” When we spoke on the phone, I was under the impression that “your hands were tied” due to direction from the Executive Committee. However, the GHSA By-Laws appear to give you extreme latitude in these situations.

When I contacted you on Tuesday, January 31, I was truly hopeful that a rational outcome was imminent. The fact that our students continue to be punished for the actions of adults is incredibly frustrating, aggravating, and disappointing. For a violation of “failure to follow GHSA procedures and deadlines [By-laws 2.27, 2.31 and 2.53]” you had the power to fine us (and the other two school districts who are allegedly in the same situation) “\$50.00 - \$250.00” but instead

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chose to punish the students for adults failing to meet a deadline. Please let me know which of the six factors listed in Appendix P, or any other factors, you used in determining your course of action. Please also let me know why you chose this course of action as opposed to the myriad other options available to you.

I noticed that the Constitution specially provides for “two female members appointed by the Executive Committee.” I hope you will consider amending your Constitution to also require two advocates for children, since that role appears to be missing in the current actions of this institution.

I look forward to your timely responses to my requests for information, above.

Sincerely,

David Dude