

## **34. Policy and School Recommendations for Transgender Participation**

The Illinois High School Association approves this policy and process to address the participation of transgender students in all IHSA state series in athletics and activities. The IHSA allows participation by students consistent with their gender identity subject to applicable federal and state laws.

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions will be in place:

- Transgender: a person whose gender identity is different than the sex assigned to them at birth.
- Gender Identity: a person's internal sense of being of a certain gender. Note – Although an individual may sense that they are gender fluid, non-binary, gender nonconforming, pangender, gender neutral, etc., or may be intersex (i.e., born with reproductive or sexual anatomy and /or chromosome pattern that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male), for purposes of this policy pertaining to participation in gender specific athletics or activities, the individual's gender identity must be either male or female.
- Gender Expression: The external expression of a person's gender identity, typically reflected through behavior, clothing, body characteristics, voice, mannerisms, social interactions, speech and other characteristics and behaviors, which may or may not conform to behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either male or female.

### **Procedure:**

Students wishing to participate in gender specific state series athletic events or activities who have a gender identity different from the sex assigned to the student at birth shall receive an eligibility ruling from the IHSA prior to participation in a state series event aligned with their gender identity.

Schools shall notify all students who wish to participate in state series athletic events or activities that any student who wishes to participate in gender specific state series athletic events or activities under a gender identity different from the sex assigned to the student at birth shall be required to obtain an eligibility ruling from the IHSA prior to participation.

1. Students requiring a ruling shall be advised to contact the school's official representative to the IHSA (or their designee) on a confidential basis to facilitate the ruling, notifying them that their gender identity differs from the sex assigned to them at birth and that the student wishes to participate in state series athletic events or activities in a manner consistent with their gender identity.

2. Following the receipt of the request for an eligibility ruling, the school shall submit a written request to the IHSA for an eligibility ruling, indicating that the student would like the opportunity to participate in state series athletics or activities if they are selected through the team try-out process (if any) and accompanied by such of the following information as the student, their parent(s) and/or the school deem appropriate:
  - a. Current transcript and school registration records, including gender identity used for school registration records (if any).
  - b. Documentation of consistent gender identity, including but not limited to statements of parent(s), school personnel, clergy, or other individuals familiar with the student's gender identity, and other evidence of gender expression.
  - b. Medical documentation relating to the student's gender identity (i.e. hormone supplementation or suppression treatments, sexual re-assignment surgery, other medical treatment, counseling, statements of medical or mental health personnel, etc.).
  - d. Student statement affirming their gender identity.
  - e. Records of past participation in athletics or activities.
  - f. Such other information as the student, their parents, or the school (if involved) deem relevant.
  
3. IHSA will make final rulings on student participation. The Executive Director shall make the eligibility ruling, subject to appeal to the IHSA Board of Directors as set forth in Section 1.460. The IHSA will establish a panel of medical personnel to act in an advisory role, as necessary, when making eligibility rulings.

In ruling on the eligibility of a student to participate in athletics or activities consistent with a gender identity which differs from the sex assigned to them at birth, the IHSA shall consider:

- Whether the claimed gender identity is bona fide and/or for the purpose of gaining competitive advantage; and
- Whether allowing eligibility would be inconsistent with concepts of fairness in competition or present a risk of injury to the participants.

In considering the ruling, the IHSA may request additional information from the student, their parent(s) or the school. While the determination of what information to submit shall be left to the student, their parent(s) and the school, the IHSA shall not be required to presume that any information not provided

would weigh in favor of the student's eligibility consistent with their gender identity. The student, parent(s) and school are therefore encouraged to provide complete information in requesting a ruling.

The IHSA shall make its ruling based on the individual circumstances presented and not based on preconceived notions or assumptions. The IHSA will seek to minimize harm to students whose opportunity to participate on a team consistent with their gender identity would be limited or denied.

The IHSA will notify the member school in writing of its decision on the eligibility ruling. Once the student is ruled eligible under this Policy, participation consistent with the student's gender identity shall be allowed through the duration of the student's high school career, and does not need to be annually renewed, unless the student, parent(s) or school report that there has been a change in the medical circumstances or documentation submitted (if any) or a further change in the student's gender identity. At that time the school shall contact the IHSA in writing, advise the IHSA of the changes and request an updated ruling. A student to whom eligibility is allowed under this Policy shall only be permitted to participate in athletics or activities consistent with their gender identity unless a subsequent ruling has been obtained.

A student who is denied eligibility to participate in an athletic event or activity consistent with their gender identity shall be permitted to participate in athletic events or activities consistent with the sex assigned to them at birth.

**Privacy and Confidentiality:** All discussions and documents at all levels of the process either by a member school, appeals panel, and/or IHSA shall be kept strictly confidential unless specifically requested by the student and/or their parent(s). Only those individuals at the school and IHSA with a "need to know" shall be privy to the request for ruling, the information provided in support thereof, and the ruling.

**Areas of Awareness:**

- Have a plan in place
- Use correct names/pronouns according to student's self-identification
- Allow gender appropriate restroom and locker room accessibility
- Provide educational training for teachers, counselors, coaches, administrators and students on transgender sensitivity in relation to student
- Permit and be sensitive to students' gender expression according to their gender identity
- Provide access to resources and accurate information