



EDDIE BONINE, M.Ed., CAA
Executive Director

LEE SANDERS
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MICHAEL FEDERICO
Assistant Executive Directors

MEMORANDUM

To: LHSAA Member Principal / Athletic Director
Parish Athletic Director / LHSAA Superintendent / Head Coach

Subject: Litigation / *Rapides High School, et al vs. LHSAA*

Date: August 22, 2023

Attached, please find the August 1, 2023 notification sent from this office notifying membership that 9 member schools filed for a temporary injunction disputing the present “select” definition approved by the LHSAA Executive Committee in 2022. Yesterday, August 21, 2023 this case was heard by Honorable William Jordan at the 19th Judicial District Court located here in Baton Rouge, and he granted a preliminary injunction which removes the current definition of “select” from our glossary. Because the LHSAA must have a working definition of “select” for football post season, I will be scheduling a meeting with the LHSAA Executive Officers to discuss potential process(es) for resolve to be presented to the LHSAA Executive Committee for discussion and potential next steps. Once this process is complete, expect a communication from this office with particulars. Thank you for your time and best of luck and safety in the 2023-2024 school athletic seasons.

Regards,

Eddie Bonine
Executive Director

LHSAA

LHSAA... Beyond the Game

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MEMORANDUM

To: LHSAA Principal / Athletic Director / Parish Athletic Director
Head Coach / Superintendent

Subject: *Litigation / Rapides Parish & Monroe City Schools vs. LHSAA*

From: LHSAA Executive Director / Eddie Bonine 

Date: August 1, 2023

Please accept this communication as informational only. This office was notified by a Baton Rouge citizen about the legal filings against the LHSAA in the 19th District Court here in Baton Rouge yesterday July 31, 2023. Shortly thereafter, a Baton Rouge member school administrator sent a copy of the legal action filed in the 19th District Court to this office, which they received by requesting this legal document from the Clerk of the Court. This office has not been officially served of any legal filings as of the time of this communication. This morning, August 1, 2023 an article (see attached) was published by a statewide media outlet, The Advocate. Thank you for your time!

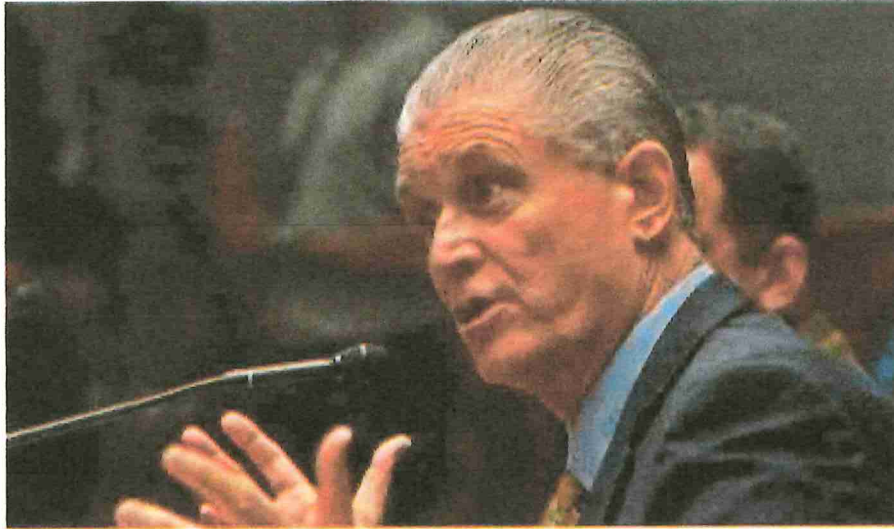
LHSAA... Beyond the Game

ADVOCATE ARTICLE / STAFF WRITER / ROBIN FAMBROUGH

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Nine schools have filed suit against the LHSAA over split. Here's what we know.

- [BY ROBIN FAMBROUGH | Staff writer](#)
- Jul 31, 2023 Updated 11 hrs. ago
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LHSAA Executive Director Eddie Bonine speaks during the House Education Committee meeting about starting high school football games.

PHOTO BY PATRICK DENNIS

Nine schools have filed suit against the LHSAA seeking to overturn the current select/nonselect playoff system by arguing that LHSAA executive director Eddie Bonine did not have the authority to revise a glossary definition that fueled the change.

The schools from the Alexandria and Monroe areas are seeking an injunction before the football season starts. The suit was filed in the 19th Judicial District.

“We are hoping to get a court date by the 31st (of August), which is before the regular season begins,” Baton Rouge attorney Brian Blackwell said. “I have a letter that states Mr. Bonine made the change and that’s the problem.

“Let me read this to you ... this is based on a question that was asked by (principal) Gordon Ford at Lincoln Prep. Gordon asked who made the change and how it was it done, and it (letter) says, ‘The term select is defined in the glossary and was revised by the LHSAA executive director based on issues effecting more than a majority of the (LHSAA) members.’ ”

LHSAA attorney Mark Boyer pushed back on Blackwell's statements.

"That mischaracterizes what actually occurred," Boyer said. "The decision was made by the (executive) committee. It's unfortunate because this option for the definition and several others were on the (executive committee) agenda for months.

"There were three or four executive committee meetings and those items were sent to all the schools. No one ever showed up to discuss them other than Mr. (Ben) DiPalma (Catholic-BR athletic director). No one offered an alternative."

The 11-page suit was filed on behalf of six Rapides Parish schools — Rapides, Glenmora, Northwood, Plainview, Tioga and Buckeye. Neville, Carroll and Wossman are the Monroe schools listed.

Blackwell's argument is that the LHSAA constitution and bylaws can be changed only by a two-thirds vote of member schools and that glossary terms such as "select" and "nonselect" are part of the constitution and not related definitions. Bonine or the LHSAA's executive committee can alter.

The suit lists items from the LHSAA constitution/bylaws that define Bonine's duties. The revamped select/nonselective plan was put in place last fall after the definition change and was scheduled to be voted on by member schools in January. A parliamentary issue with another item on the agenda prompted principals to delay the vote, which is now set for January 2024.

Two attempts to have a special-called meeting to vote on the plan in the spring/summer failed to garner enough support from the LHSAA's 400-plus member principals to meet a required constitutional threshold.

Blackwell met with schools interested in learning about a "legal option" to overturn the revamped split July 12 at Tioga High School. That meeting was closed to the public and media. It attracted 16 schools and approximately 30 people.

The LHSAA's original select/non-select split for championship honors was in 2013 for football. Boys/girls basketball and baseball/softball splits were later added.

In the original split, all private schools, full magnet schools, lab schools and some charter schools were in the select category, leaving nearly all public schools on the non-select side.

The updated definition for select schools was approved by the LHSAA executive committee last summer. It added all schools with magnet components, all charter schools and schools located in open-enrollment parishes to the select side.

Blackwell said Neville spoke about losing money on its playoff games under the revamped split plan. He said softball playoff issues were noted by other schools.

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