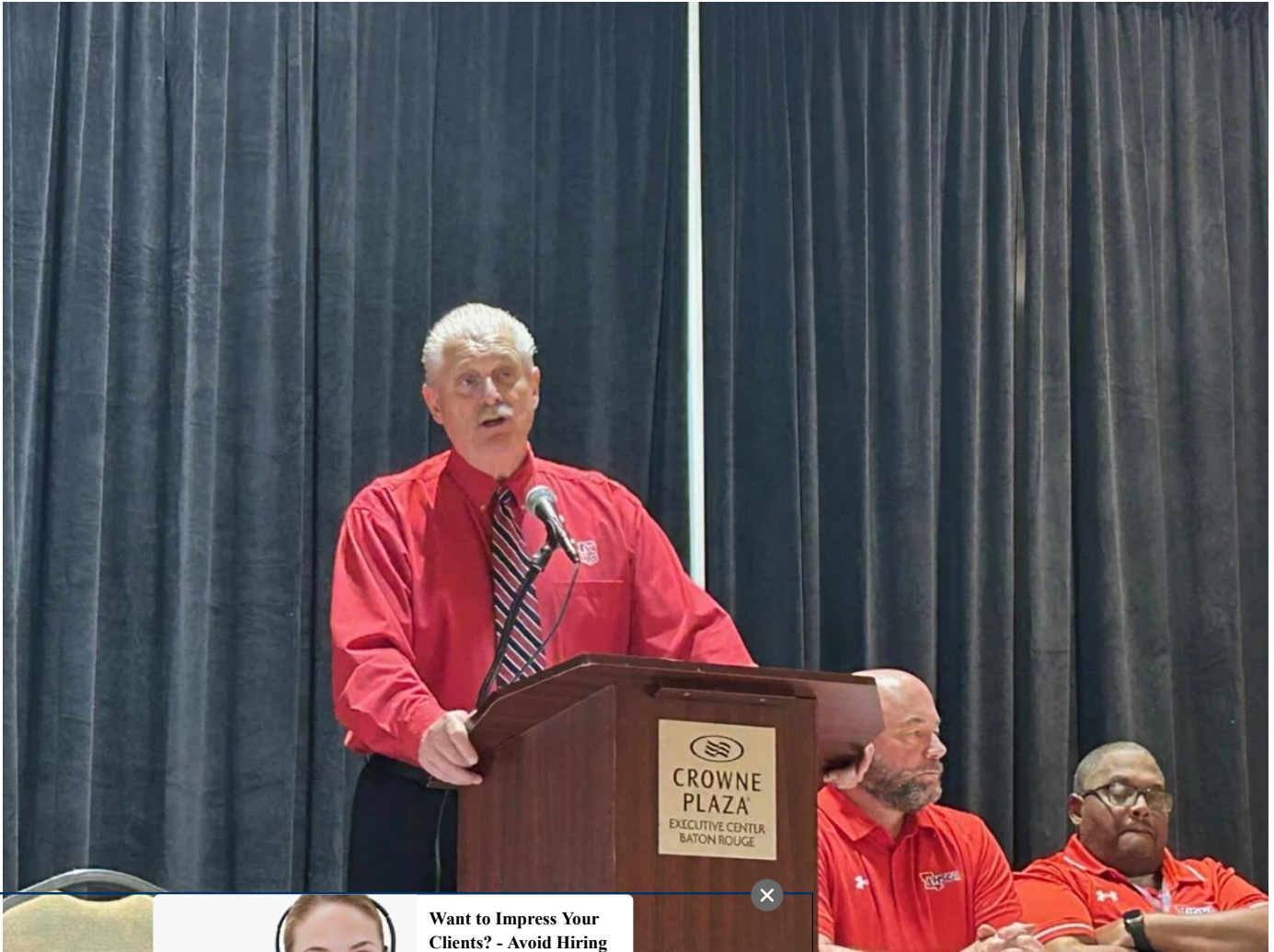


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# LHSAA's executive committee sets path to address lawsuit and plot another major change

BY ROBIN FAMBROUGH | Staff writer  
Sep 20, 2023



Eddie Bonine

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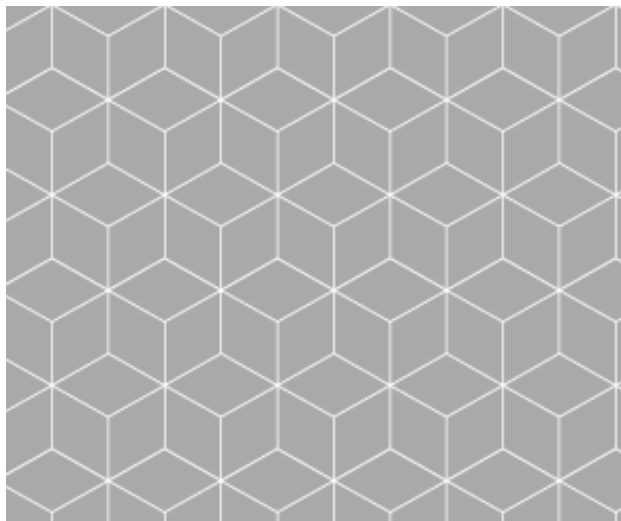
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Wednesday, July 19, 2023.

Two major surprises highlighted the final day of the LHSAA executive committee's annual fall meeting on Wednesday.

First, the committee approved calling a special meeting to have member schools vote on a glossary definition for select schools that is at the heart of a pending lawsuit.

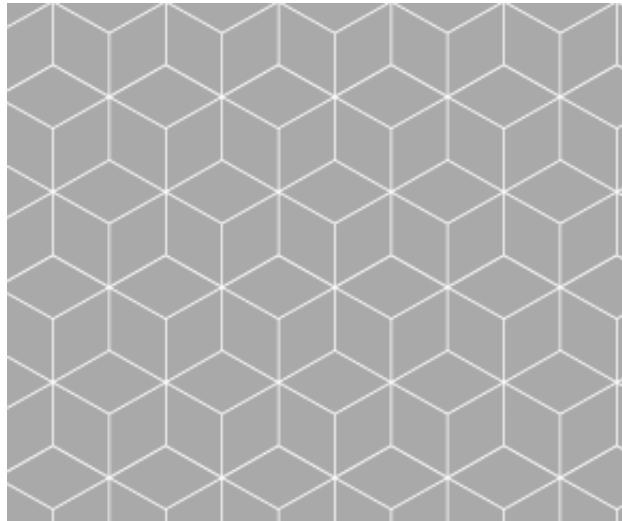
Then, the committee placed an item on its January convention agenda designed to end the select/nonselect split that began in 2013 based on classification and sport.



Unlike previous votes that required a two-thirds vote, both items will require a simple majority to pass, said LHSAA executive director Eddie Bonine and the LHSAA's legal counsel.

“First, schools will receive a communication drafted by our board president and legal counsel informing them there will be a special called meeting,” Bonine said of voting on the definition of select schools. “Then, within the next 14 calendar (days we'll) try to

find a location — perhaps the Crowne Plaza (in Baton Rouge) — and do it the old-fashioned way.



“There will be one item on the agenda and there will be a show of hands — yes or no. If the definition is ratified by schools that would be the ideal way, we would present that information to the judge. If it’s not, we’ll have direction and will see how the judge rules on the injunction.”

Bonine said principals and proxy voters can represent schools for the vote on the select definition which judge Will Jordan ruled should have been voted by membership, prompting Jordan grant a temporary injunction on Aug. 21.

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Nine member schools from north/central Louisiana sued the LHSAA disputing their placement on the select side of an alignment the executive committee approved a year ago. That definition and alignment balanced the number of schools on the LHSAA's select/nonselect sides.

Parliamentary attorney Amy Lowe confirmed that as long as quorum of the LHSAA's 404 member schools – a total of 203 schools – attend the special-called meeting, a vote can be taken and a simple majority would validate the vote.

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The executive committee proposal to bring select/nonselect schools back together breaks down each class separately and states that the current split sports – football, boys/girls basketball, baseball and softball – “shall compete together in the postseason by each class.”

Making the change based on each class makes this vote also a simple majority case. Past attempts to bring schools back together, including one in 2020, were approved by a majority of schools but failed to garner the two-thirds vote required to make a constitutional change.

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All discussions on these topics were held in open session witnessed by a handful of schools.

“I get tired of people saying we do things in secret,” Bonine said. “The process we have is in place. We are on point and we have not done anything illegal. (Attorney Mark Boyer) would not let us do that.”

“I expect we’ll have a lot more clarity about where we are in the next 14 days.”

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## One decision coming

Bonine said schools will be emailed an executive committee decision on a public appeal by magnet schools, parochial schools and a few other private schools on Tuesday.

The schools expressed opposition to a bylaw approved in January that limits out-of-attendance zone ninth grade students to junior varsity competition even if they attended the same system feeder school.

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Schools argued that the rule hurts girls sports and smaller team sports like cross country, swimming, tennis and golf.

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