

LHSAA schools approve definition of select at special meeting



BATON ROUGE – Louisiana High School Athletic Association member schools overwhelmingly voted Tuesday to uphold the definition of a select school that was challenged earlier this year in court.

At a special meeting at the Baton Rouge Marriott, principals and/or their designees unofficially voted 259-126 to maintain the select definition that was amended last fall by the LHSAA's executive committee. It's the first vote to go in favor of the wishes of private schools since the membership voted to split its football championships in January 2013.

With the new definition, which also put charter, magnet and other open

enrollment schools in the select division, the numbers of select and non-select schools became nearly equal. Previously, there had been approximately three times as many non-select schools.

A group of nine member schools in the Monroe and Alexandria areas sued the LHSAA earlier this year regarding the procedure, and Judge Will Jordan issued a preliminary injunction on Aug. 21 that forbid the use of the revised definition, which led to Tuesday's special meeting, which had only one item on the agenda – a yes or no vote to the motion on the definition.

While LHSAA executive director Eddie Bonine said the injunction remains in place, Tuesday's vote should allow attorneys from both sides of the issue to work together on an amicable resolution.

Part of the pre-vote discussion, largely led by schools in the northern portion of the state, was to whether the motion required a simple majority or a two-thirds vote to pass. Because the definition appears in the glossary of the LHSAA handbook and not in the association's by-laws, it required a majority, according to legal counsel and the LHSAA parliamentarian. Ironically, the measure passed by just over a two-thirds majority.

Private schools largely voted yes to the motion, as did area public schools which remained non-select with the new definition. Jefferson Parish public schools, which were moved to select with the new definition, were split in their vote, while Orleans Parish schools, which also became select last year, voted no.

With Tuesday's vote, the format for playoffs in football, boys and girls basketball, baseball and softball will remain the same in 2023-24. In

football, 24 teams are in the playoff brackets for four select divisions and 28 teams make the playoff in four non-select divisions.

Still, the playoffs could have a drastically different look next fall. Items expected on the agenda for the LHSAA's annual meeting in January would attempt to bring select and non-select together by sport; that too would only require a majority vote.

REACTION VIDEOS:

