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## **NJSIAA Tackles Hotbed Issues – Gender Identity, Drone Technology**

**ROBBINSVILLE, NJ (November 15, 2017)** – The NJSIAA executive committee today enacted policies that address two hotbed issues – gender identity and drone technology. Both take effect immediately.

The Committee voted to accept a new Transgender Policy, updating a first-of-its-kind policy established in 2009. Under the new regulations, a transgender student is defined simply as a student whose gender identity differs from that student's birth sex. Transgender students will be eligible to participate in accordance with either their birth sex or in accordance with their gender identity, but not both. Medical consultation is no longer required.

Under the policy, member schools may appeal the eligibility of a transgender student on the grounds that the student's participation in interscholastic athletics would adversely affect competition, safety, or both. Any appeal under this paragraph will be heard by the Eligibility Appeals Committee and will be confidential. The Eligibility Appeals Committee will not consider whether the school has properly determined the student's sex-assignment.

The new policy helps to enact the recent state law permitting a transgender student to participate in gender-segregated school activities in accordance with the student's gender identity.

"NJSIAA has a duty to address major issues impacting the student-athletes we represent," said Steven Timko, NJSIAA executive director. "This policy simply states that we will allow the student-athlete to participate in accordance with their identified gender."

The NJSIAA Executive Committee also tackled the use of drones by member schools, updating its original policy established in 2014. Under the new policy, member schools are permitted to use unmanned aerial systems (UAS), commonly referred to as "drones," during practice and at home events in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations. Member schools are permitted to use drones at away events with advance, written permission from the host school, or – in the event there is no home school – the site manager. If only one school operates a drone at an event, the video shall be provided to all other participating schools as soon as practical after the event concludes.

The use of drones at NJSIAA tournament events is prohibited.

Timko noted: "Technology is having a major impact on athletics at all level. This policy allows schools to utilize technology, as long as they do so with transparency and communicate properly to all involved parties."

### **About the NJSIAA**

Established in 1918, the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) is a voluntary, non-profit organization comprised of 437 accredited public, private, and parochial high schools. A member of the National Federation of State High School Associations, the NJSIAA conducts tournaments and crowns champions in 32 sports. Championship competition for girls is sponsored in basketball, bowling, cross country, fencing, field hockey, golf, gymnastics, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, outdoor track, winter track, and volleyball. Boys' championships are determined in baseball, basketball, bowling, cross country, fencing, football, golf, ice hockey, lacrosse, soccer, swimming, tennis, outdoor track, winter track, volleyball, and wrestling.

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