



March 10, 2021

To: OSAA Executive Director and Board,

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The OSBMCC, is a group of elected or appointed school board members across Oregon who identify as a persons of color. We provide guidance to the Oregon School Boards Association on matters concerning students of color.

We are writing to you with grave concerns about actions that took place at a sporting event at De LaSalle HS on Thursday March 4th 2021. Based on the information available to us, a Parkrose High school athlete warming up to play in a volleyball game was asked by an OSAA official to remove her beads out of her hair in order to be able to participate as a player in the game. As has been reported by the student, they complied with the request and went to a bathroom and removed the beads. In fact, the student did not only remove the beads but literally had "cut " her hair to remove the beads. In addition, to add insult to injury, once the student cut out the beads and returned they had missed a full game and were only able to join her team in the second game.

We are fully aware that there may be an OSAA rule (**Volleyball Rule Book, 4.1.6**) in regards to the safety of student athletes that requires the removal of hair decorations, pins etc. and that this rule is based on the nation standards from the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). We also want to address some inconsistencies in the enforcement of this ruling by OSAA officials as the same student athlete participated in a volleyball game two days prior with the same hair beads in place with her hair up in a bun.

Our first concern is to address the traumatizing impact that this incident had on this student athlete of color. We respectfully disagree with the implementation of a rule that we find is culturally insensitive and exclusionary. OSBMCC respectfully requests that rule be immediately reviewed and updated to be aware for all head and hair restrictions that affect a student's culture and religion. Although athlete safety is the primary concern for making these rules, this rule goes beyond the intent. In addition, we would like the immediate implementation of the "hijab rule" being updated next year by NFHS. Oregon should be a model for the national organization on cultural awareness in sports.

We are aware that you will most likely have conversations with the Parkrose Superintendent and athletic staff regarding this incident. Our request is that in light of community concern and outrage regarding the events of March 4th that there will be transparent, ongoing discussions that will include BIPOC educational leaders and students (Black- African American specifically) who can be a resource as you determine how to move forward and address how all students can participate in athletics safely, celebrate their cultural identity without fear of exclusion.

Thank You,

OSBMCC Executive Officers