



TRINITY  
CHRISTIAN  
SCHOOL

August 30, 2018

Dr. Thomas Burkett  
Executive Chairman, VISAA  
Banner Christian School  
1501 S Providence Road  
Richmond, VA 23236

Dr. Burkett,

I am writing in support of the suggestion submitted by Mrs. Anne Carroll, Director of Seton School, that the recent decision by the VISAA executive committee to prohibit the consideration of Liberty University as a venue for the VISAA State Swimming Championships be revisited. This letter is not intended as an endorsement of the leadership of Liberty University or its policies. However, the VISAA executive committee's decision appears to have been governed by considerations unrelated to cost (Liberty has never been asked to submit a proposal), or geography (Lynchburg is certainly preferable to Christiansburg for many if not most VISAA members). Executive Director Dick Kemper's explanation to the swimming committee specifically referenced Liberty University's policy with respect to homosexuals as potentially divisive and exclusionary. If this is indeed the rationale for the executive committee's decision, then it may well prove to be a fatally fractural decision. It has already ignited discussions regarding the continuing viability of the VISAA organization for faith-based institutions that are committed to biblically based traditional Christian values.

I sincerely do not wish to be an alarmist, nor do I have any interest in forming an alternative state-wide athletic organization. However, as the fissures in our nation's social fabric grow deeper and wider, we need to keep some common ground. The athletic arena has historically provided such a space. We have always been able to gather together in athletic competition despite deeply antithetical convictions on a host of issues. When such antithetical convictions begin to drive the facilitation of athletic competition, we forfeit another patch of sorely needed common ground.

To my knowledge, Liberty University has never denied a request from a VISAA school based on an applicant's disagreement with Liberty's understanding of human sexuality. If the executive committee's decision was based on a disagreement with Liberty's stated position on human sexuality, VISAA has placed itself in the unenviable position of appearing less accepting than Liberty University. How widely will the executive committee's line of reasoning be applied? Will faith-based institutions that hold to a biblical view of human sexuality, in broadly consonant agreement with the position of Liberty University, eventually be excluded from hosting post-season play? Will they at some point be barred from hosting home games for conferences whose schools are VISAA members? What is VISAA's response to school board members who ask if VISAA is actively seeking to undermine the purpose and vision statements of a significant number of its member schools by promoting a litmus test regarding human sexuality?

Liberty should not be dismissed as a potential venue based on a rationale that would surely exclude a significant number of VISAA schools. VISAA needs to send a clear message on whether it respects its members who hold to biblically based Christian values or wishes them to go elsewhere.

Respectfully,

David Vanderpoel, Ph.D.  
Headmaster, CEO