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Jasper, Georgia –

Pickens County Board of Education will hold a workshop Monday, October 14, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. at Pickens High School to address questions and concerns about transgender students. The board has not developed policies on transgender students. There are decisions by at least eight Federal District Courts in this country together with a recent decision from a Federal District Court in the 11th Circuit that establish the right of a transgender student to use the restroom which the student identifies with. We currently have a transgender student that has requested to use the restroom which that student identifies with, and the administration has permitted that use.

Several parents have expressed concerns that this administrative permission will jeopardize the safety of the High School students. Safety of all students has been and will continue to be the District’s number one concern. The High School staff monitors all restrooms during class changes; we are asking the staff to be even more diligent in their duties to ensure that these safety concerns do not materialize. We have state law and board policies that prohibit bullying and harassment of all students; these apply and are enforced regardless of whether or not a student is transgender. This was our practice before the community became aware of the transgender issue, and this will continue to be our practice now that this issue has come to the forefront.

Although I have met with our architect to develop a redesign of our restroom facilities, and we anticipate these changes to be implemented expeditiously, we still maintain single-stall restrooms in the High School that are available to any student who wants to use gender neutral restrooms, regardless of the reason.

There are several United States Supreme Court cases that may be heard this term, and the District will monitor these cases and modify our practices accordingly. We have taken an oath to uphold the law, and we will.

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