



Kluge v. Brownsburg Community School (S.D. Ind.; 7th Cir.)

Topics Covered: LGBTQ Rights

Issue

The issue in this case is whether schools can create policies and procedures that require staff to refer to transgender students by the names and pronouns consistent with their gender identity.

AMA Interest

The AMA opposes policies that prevent transgender individuals from accessing basic human services in line with their gender identities. In addition, the AMA will partner with public and private organizations dedicated to public health and public policy to reduce LGBTQ youth suicide and improve health among LGBTQ youth.

Case Summary

Prior to the start of the 2017 school year, the Brownsburg school district created a policy instructing teachers to refer to students using the names recorded in the school's "Power School" database, which allows parents of transgender students, with the approval of a health care professional, to enter a name for their child that is consistent with their gender identity.

Teacher John Kluge refused to refer to several transgender students in his class by their names because he believed the names did not match their birth-assigned sex. After complaints from students, Kluge resigned as he was unwilling to follow school policy. Kluge sued the school district and is seeking reinstatement and an injunction prohibiting the district from enforcing the policy in question, among other things.

On July 13, 2021, the district court issued a favorable decision, upholding the school's policy and rejecting the plaintiff teacher's claims. The court's opinion recognized the impact that gender-affirming names and pronouns can have on the health and well-being of young people. The plaintiff has appealed the decision to the Seventh Circuit.

AMA Involvement

The AMA, along with several specialty societies and other public health organizations, filed *amicus* briefs in support of the school.

Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals Brief

United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana Brief