

A transgender senior was a prom king candidate. The school said he could run — as queen.

By Deanna Paul
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The thought of being nominated to prom court had not crossed high school senior Dex Frier's mind.

The 17-year-old from Gainesville, Ga., came out identifying as male during his sophomore year, he told [the Gainesville Times](#). As his school has a student body of 1,400, Dex was simply excited to spend the Saturday-night dance with friends.

Then, two weeks ago, Dex learned he was one of six students nominated to be Johnson High School's prom king.

"I've never been shown so much support before," Dex told the Times. When he returned home from school that afternoon, he cried.

But that feeling of acceptance was quickly quashed.

In an unprecedented move, Hall County Schools Superintendent Will Schofield directed Johnson High to remove Dex's name from the prom king ballot. Instead, the transgender student was brought into the office where the administration proposed two options: He could be run as prom queen or not run at all.

"Just because I'm not legally male I was going to get excluded from something that every guy has the opportunity to be in high school. It was really upsetting," Dex said in an interview with [BuzzFeed News](#) of the meeting with school officials. "That was the way it was in Hall County."

Neither Schofield nor Johnson High's principal, Stan Lewis, returned The Washington Post's request for comment.

To [the Times](#), Schofield said: "I am not interested in being responsible for placing our school district in the middle of a national social, societal and legal issue, which would have the potential to substantially disrupt us from our core mission of providing an education for the boys and girls in our community. Prom should be a time for students to fellowship together and celebrate their local school."

Georgia is one of several states that requires a court order granting a legal name change before a school can adjust its records.

Many students have rallied behind Dex, though some have voiced opposition.

Friends emailed Schofield, suggesting his decision sent "a message of intolerance that could act as a precedent for future issues."

One [online petition](#) backing Dex called Schofield's interference "an exposition of a transphobic attitude that endangers many." The request, it said, was simple: "Allow Dex Frier to remain as a male member of Johnson High School's Prom Court."

At the time of publication Friday, more than 14,000 supporters had [signed on](#).

Thirty-eight individuals have signed a [counterpetition](#), which argues that permitting Dex to be crowned prom king was "unfair for the boys" and "wack."

Dex told BuzzFeed he believes he has “[the right to be put on the ballot](#)” and he plans to attend the dance on Saturday, even if he doesn’t end up on prom court.