

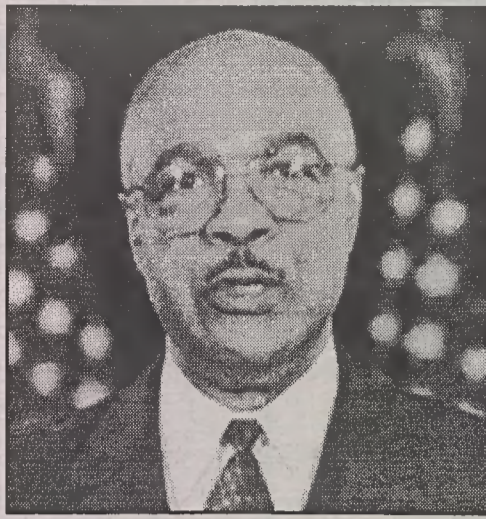
GLSEN calls on Bush nominee Paige to combat harassment

WASHINGTON, DC — With President George Bush's nomination of Houston Independent School District (HISD) chief Rod Paige to head the US Department of Education, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) restated its call for the incoming Secretary to utilize every available resource to combat the pervasive harassment leveled against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) youth in America's schools.

"We look forward to working with the new Secretary to make sure that no children, including those who happen to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, are left behind," stated GLSEN Executive Director Kevin Jennings, who noted a recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study indicating that lesbian, gay and bisexual students are more than three times as likely as non-gay students to be threatened with a weapon

while at school. "Mr. Paige has earned a reputation as a results-oriented administrator interested in holding schools accountable. We, too, want to hold schools accountable — accountable to the notion that all students deserve environments of safety and basic respect."

According to GLSEN, the Secretary of Education is responsible for the overall direction, supervision, and coordination of all activities of the Department and is the principal adviser



Rod Paige

to the President on Federal education priorities, policies, programs, and activities related to education in the United States. GLSEN will call on the nominee to:

- Support and fully enforce existing Title IX standards regarding student-on-student harassment, including that which is leveled against GLBT students;

- Commit to the full enforcement of federal nondiscrimination laws through the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil

Rights;

- Make fair-minded appointments as he nominates deputy secretaries and assistant secretaries; and

- Ensure that all DOE-issued safe schools resources address harassment and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

The incoming President "stated time and time again that our schools must be held accountable - and we hope that he will help to hold them accountable to protecting some of our most at-risk students," said GLSEN Public Policy Director Mary Kate (MK) Cullen, who heads the organization's Office for Public Policy in Washington, DC.

"We look forward to the new Secretary of Education setting a positive tone and adding his voice to the growing chorus of voices working to end anti-gay harassment in K-12 schools." ▼

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