

AUSTIN — A local student-athlete, who had spent three years of his high school career at Arkansas High before transferring to Pleasant Grove this summer, was denied athletic eligibility by the UIL State Executive Committee by a vote of 4-0 Wednesday.

"I brought up in our DEC meeting, Arkansas High has gone from 1,350 students to 750 students; there are people who are moving out. I never spoke to Jalen before he enrolled in our school; I think that's very important information."

Josh Gibson, Pleasant Grove athletic director and head football coach

Jalen Pastchol had stated that he did not transfer for athletic purposes, but after the District 8-4A, Division II Executive Committee had voted against his eligibility, 5-0, in late August, Pastchol and his mother appealed to the State Executive Committee.

Appearing before the committee, via a Zoom meeting, were Pastchol, his mother, Pleasant Grove athletic director Josh Gibson, Arkansas High assistant coach and defensive coordinator Joseph Morton, and Liberty-Eylau superintendent Ronnie Thompson, as chairman of the 8-4A, Division II District Executive Committee.

"We heard it through the grapevine that Jalen was going to move," Morton said during the hearing. "He's a good young man and was one of the leaders on our team, so we were trying to find out what was going on, what's he moving for and why. The first we talked, me and him talked through texts, that there was turmoil in his household."

It was added that the young man's father, who was not present during the UIL SEC hearing, had stated Jalen's moving was so he could get a Division I scholarship.