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On a sunny Tuesday afternoon, the Azusa High girls softball team took the field for its first preseason game. It wasn't perfect, with all the excitement and errors that come from first-game jitters. But a lopsided score of 22-2 gave the Aztecs and their friends and family members plenty to cheer about.

But more importantly Principal Ramiro Rubalcaba was reassured that for what was a history-making first game girls were allowed to be girls.

Azusa High School senior Pat Cordova-Goff joined her teammates on the softball field as one of the state's first openly transgender student-athletes to compete on the high school level.

The 17-year-old, who was born male but identifies as a female, is one of the first to take advantage of recent changes by the California Interscholastic Federation and the state education code that establish nondiscriminatory policies based on students' gender identity.

Cordova-Goff, who has identified as transgender since her sophomore year of high school, said Assembly Bill 1266's passing allowed her to return to a sport she loves, surrounded by teammates with which she feels comfortable. The Associated Student Body president and 4.0 grade-point average student said she also has felt supported by her principal and the Azusa Unified School District, such as when she established the school's first Gay-Straight Alliance club and when she ran for homecoming queen in September.

"We have policies about nondiscrimination based on race, religion, gender, gender identity and gender expression," Azusa Unified Superintendent Linda Kaminski said. "We take those seriously and try to implement them faithfully, and the story here is that we did that and we have had a consistent approach of trying to be fair to all students."

Support like this is important for transgender students, LGBT advocates say.

"Transgender youth, like so many other young people, want those same kinds of experiences?"

that the CIF policy and A.B. 1266 allow, said Carolyn Laub, executive director of the Gay-Straight Alliance Network. (The experience) of doing the sport you love, that sense of belonging to a team.?

Read the full story at the San Gabriel Valley Tribune:<http://www.sgvtribune.com/social-affairs/20140311/experts-officials-addr...>^[1]

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News Article

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