

Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association
(MPSSAA)
Baltimore, MD

Minutes of the MPSSAA Executive Council Meeting
April 25, 2024

Refer Questions: R. Andrew Warner, Executive Director, 410-767-0376

Districts Represented: (District 1) Kevin Kendro, (District 2) Kathy Green, (District 3), George McClure for Shirley Diggs, (District 4) Michael Watson, (District 5) John Davis, (District 6) Jeff Markle, (District 7) Debbie Basler, (District 8) Bryan Ashby, (District 9) Tiffany Byrd

Also Present: Michael Sye, President, MPSSAA
Jeffrey Sullivan, President Elect, MPSSAA
Michael Duffy, Past President, MPSSAA
Patrick Saunderson, Principal Representative
R. Andrew Warner, Executive Director, MPSSAA
Jason Bursick, Assistant Director, MPSSAA
Melissa Jones, Specialist, MPSSAA
Lynette Mitzel, Secretary

1. President Sye called the meeting to order on April 25, 2024, at 12:45pm. Thirteen voting members were present to start the meeting. Mr. Warner thanked everyone for being present.
2. Mr. Sye requested a motion to approve the minutes from the January 2024 meeting. Mr. Duffy made a motion to accept, followed by a second from Mr. Davis. The minutes were approved 13-0.
3. Mr. Warner provided the council with updates on key MPSSAA items.
 - Mr. Kazmarek provided a report from the NFHS Section 2 meeting related to the recruitment and retention of officials. A few states have been able to get credit for high school students to learn how to become an official. Mr. Warner and Mr. Kazmarek are planning a call with the educational platform company to see how it could potentially work in Maryland. Mr. Sye inquired if there is an issue with high school students officiating middle school sports. Mr. Warner told him they are members of the officials group, therefore are vetted prior to working events. Mr. Kazmarek intends to find a point person in each official association group to direct the students if any school systems would like to try this.
 - Mr. Warner informed the council the spring sports meeting typically held at Oregon Ridge will be held at the BWI Marriott due to construction at Oregon Ridge.

4. The council shared important updates around the state.
 - District 1: Washington County will be working with the Ravens to start girls flag football. Frederick will enter year two of girls flag football in the fall.
 - District 2: They will be adding pickleball as a sport in the fall. NFHS CEO Karissa Neihoff spoke at their SLC in March.
 - District 3: The superintendent has added full time athletic trainers to the budget and it looks like it will be approved.
 - District 4: St. Mary's will not be getting full time athletic trainers this year; Calvert will be getting full time athletic trainers.
 - District 5: Anne Arundel will move to full time athletic training model after the last year on their current contract. Howard County is looking for a new superintendent.
 - District 6: Six additional full time athletic trainers will be added for the 24-25 academic year. GoFan will be their ticketing platform next year. Girls flag football is on hold because of the current state of the budget.
 - District 7: Three of five schools in Cecil County will be hiring new athletic directors for 24-25 academic year. The two counties are trying to revamp the UPBAC league.
 - District 8: The Bayside conference will be holding their annual scholar athlete award presentation on Monday. The conference has a major emphasis on sportsmanship this year.
 - District 9: Middle school sports were started this year with seven sports offered. Ten schools will play girls flag football in 24-25. Thirteen full time athletic trainer have been hired.
 - Principal Association: Addie Kaufman is retiring this year and Pat Saunderson is stepping back from his role on the Executive Council.
5. Mr. Warner began the discussion session with updates on spring championships. He informed the group there was a need to change dates of the track at PGSLC due to a concert, therefore track championships will be Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. The graduation schedule was reviewed and they will try to accommodate the best they can for senior student athletes competing. Mr. Kendro is concerned about graduations impacting competitions. Mr. Sye asked if it could be moved from Memorial Day weekend. Mr. Kendro would like to see that as well. Mr. Warner told the group during the supervisor summit, several people indicated they would like to see championships at the time they were held during the pandemic, which was the third week of June. After some discussion about pros and cons, spring championship dates will be reviewed during the upcoming COMAR review. Mr. Warner reminded the group about the upcoming seeding meeting as well. He also stated there is a strong push from the swimming and diving committee to move from two classifications to three, and some interest in preliminaries and finals for the state championship. Mr. Kendro indicated the norm in swimming is to run preliminaries and finals. He would like feedback from those jurisdictions who have swimming/diving.
6. Mr. Warner provided legislative updates for the council. He shared three bills which have passed but have not been signed by the governor yet. House Bill 204 states coaches must have mental health training. The MPSSAA office will review the NFHS course and determine if the Maryland Department of Health will sign off on that or if a course will need to be developed. Mr. Duffy stated the bill goes into effect July 1, 2024. House Bill 1219, which is the Bailey

Bullock Act, states middle and high school emergency action plans must incorporate cardiac response plans. Mr. Ashby inquired about outside entities using the school fields and what the requirements are. Mr. Davis stated they are going to put in their rental agreement with parks and recreation they must have an AED if renting their fields. Ms. Basler asked if they were responsible for training the outside groups. Everyone except Mr. Ashby stated that is not the case. Mr. Warner indicated this law is under educational articles and suggests talking to your school system legal department for further questions. The third bill he shared is House Bill 971, which concerns interscholastic athletics student eligibility waiver and school classifications. It is the regulation that was taken to Board of Control and did not pass there. Mr. Warner said after consulting with the Attorney General's office, COMAR would need to be changed if the association wants the regulation to be equitably applied across the state.

7. Mr. Warner alerted the group to a few changes in the forthcoming MPSSAA sponsorships. The Mid-Athletic Dairy Association will be stopping their sponsorship; Wendy's stopped sponsorship when the company was sold; All-State stopped sponsorship during the pandemic. All of these had major impacts on the MPSSAA budget. TPG, who is the official sponsor of the NFHS, presented a proposal to the MPSSAA related to becoming the official marketing company of the MPSSAA. The proposal would be initially for a five-year term. Dr. Sullivan and Mr. Duffy think it would be a great idea.
8. Mr. Warner provided the council with an update on the medical advisory committee's most recent meeting. They are working on finalizing the PPE and hope to have it completed at their May 8th meeting. They are updating the concussion forms and have had several conversations about an update to the care and prevention of athletic injuries course to include all things required by legislation. Ms. Basler asked if care and prevention would change from taking it once and being done, to which Mr. Warner reminded the group a few years ago it was approved to make it so coaches would need an updated version every five years.
9. Mr. Kendro requested the next agenda item, inquiring on COMAR weekly and seasonal limitations. Mr. Kendro said he called Mr. Duffy and Dr. Sullivan about how they manage a student athlete who "floats" between varsity and JV for lacrosse. Mr. Warner reminded the group students who play on JV and varsity may not play in the number of contests that exceeds the maximum number allowed for that sport in a week or season. They may not compete in both a JV and varsity game against the same school on the same day either.
10. Mr. Kendro provided sportsmanship updates to the council. He asked for feedback on the survey that was used this year for evaluating sportsmanship at athletic contests around the state. The sportsmanship committee wants to tweak and enhance the form to make it better. Several members of the group would like to see regular season ejections on the form instead of just playoff ejections. Officials could complete the survey and the MPSSAA office could then send to the LEAs. Discussion was had surrounding mercy rule in soccer and how officials manage the lopsided games in the waning moments of the contest. People are seeing a change in how they officiate, which they would like to have addressed with officials' organizations. Mr. Sye addressed how he has been alerted of officials making inappropriate comments to student athletes and coaches about the contest. He believes since the coaches are held to a certain standard, the officials should be as well. Mr. Kazmarek mentioned most officials do not work

in an educational environment and while it is no excuse, some of them don't know the best demeanor to take. Mr. Sye would like to see a standard ejection form. Dr. Sullivan informed the group they have student athletes record a sportsmanship announcement that is played before every game in Montgomery County. He feels it is more impactful coming from students versus an announcer. Mr. Kendro asked if COMAR language needed to be updated to include egregious ejections, but Mr. Warner said what is currently in there will suffice.

11. Mr. Warner asked Mr. Kendro and Ms. Mitzel to speak on emerging sports. Mr. Kendro said 51 schools will be playing girls flag football in fall 2024. A committee will be reviewing what a potential post season could entail. Ms. Byrd and Dr. Sullivan said their schools are excited about the opportunity. Dr. Sullivan also informed the council they are thinking of piloting dual sport enrollment. Ms. Mitzel reviewed the cheer presentation she and Mr. Duffy provided statewide. They both feel a pause and continued education is what is needed at this point. Mr. Warner asked if the survey responses warrant moving forward and for people to get the pulse of the coaches in each district.
12. Dr. Sullivan requested to inquire about the 2024-2025 calendar. Dr. Sullivan is concerned with the the way the calendar falls this year, having five Fridays in November. With Soccer and Volleyball Championships at their earlier points, the fall schedule is reduced by a week. While the schedule matches previous year calendars, there is greater impact on official shortages, school holidays, election year, ect. Concerns about volleyball and soccer should always take place on the weekend before Thanksgiving.
13. Mr. Warner shared with the council a Grant program called Coach Beyond. Dr. Jay Goldstein from the U. of Maryland met with five central jurisdictions to review coaching requirements, compliance, and potentially modify those requirements. The committee felt that having a sport medicine advisory committee and working along those lines for coach education would best serve the association. Dr. Sullivan said Montgomery County had interest in the streamlining of coach education. Mr. Warner will report back to Mr. Goldstein that the council is not in favor joining this grant initiative at this time.
14. The council reviewed significant bulletin changes.
 - Fall Bulletin – The council discussed the rule adoption of a mercy rule in a soccer game. A game will be considered complete in the second half after 20 minutes have been played and there is an 8+ goal differential.
 - Winter bulletin – The council discussed indoor track adopting the NFHS State adoption language of allowing six entries per individual instead of four. Ms. Byrd voiced concern over the indoor track change. Several members of the council have concern over it and wonder if people are chasing championships versus giving student athletes opportunities to participate. Dr. Sullivan would like to see a contingency plan for swimming/diving put into place in advance. Mr. Kendro said it's not done for other sports. Dr. Sullivan's concern was the difficult time he had trying to get the meet done due to other events taking place at the pool. Mr. Duffy wanted the input from the SMAC

on the six events for a one-day track meet, but Mr. Warner said if the NFHS approved it, they had backing from the NFHS medical advisory committee.

15. Mr. Warner reviewed the current budget as it stands today. Mr. Duffy made a motion to accept the budget with a second from Mr. Watson. The budget was accepted 13-0. Mr. Warner reviewed the FY25 budget, which was unanimously approved after a motion by Ms. Green and a second by Dr. Sullivan.
16. Mr. Warner posed a question to the council about the participation survey and what information is collected. At the January meeting it was discussed to potentially gather information such as FARMS. He asked if people wanted those types of information gathered. Ms. Byrd thinks it is important, but maybe push for 2024-2025. Mr. Warner showed the group where they could find that information to collect.
17. Mr. Warner notified the council it was probably time for a COMAR review since the last one took place approximately a decade ago. He would like a task force of Executive Council members and athletic directors. He said they will work on a survey to distribute to all stakeholders. Dr. Sullivan told the group after a discussion with Mr. Warner, it is imperative the communication and education of COMAR be strong. Mr. Warner advised the group his office would put together a committee.
18. Mr. Sye asked for anything else for the good of the order. Mr. Duffy reminded the group at the January meeting there was interest in having a meeting with all sport directors. Ms. Byrd asked how people were distributing region awards, as she felt it was extremely challenging to get them to each school by game time. Mr. Warner thanked Mr. Saunderson for his time served on the council. He also thanked Mr. Duffy for his tenure as president and acknowledged Mr. Sye moving from president to past president.
19. Mr. Sye asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Duffy made a motion, followed by a second from Mr. Saunderson. The motion passed 13-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 5:16pm.