

JUNIOR HIGH/MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMITTEE #1 MINUTES

MHSAA, October 16, 2019, 9:30 a.m.

Members

Chris Adams, Napoleon
Don Gustafson, St. Ignace
James Hogan, Allendale
Jason Kemler, Brethren
Jolinda Lucas, Grand Rapids

Jay Mulder, Montague
Steve Newkirk, Clare
Jim Okler, Grosse Ile
Adam Schihl, Clawson
Brian Southworth, Decatur
Steve Uyl, Caledonia

MHSAA Staff

Cody Inglis

The MHSAA Junior High/Middle School Committee met for the first of two 2019-20 meetings to review topics identified for discussion by the MHSAA staff, Representative Council and member schools.

The committee began by reviewing responsibilities and purpose including a thorough review of the JH/MS committee meeting minutes from March of 2019. Though the JH/MS committee did not recommend any new proposals to the Representative Council last school year, there were several staff recommendations.

Staff updated the committee on the status of the recommendations and reviewed progress on these items. In addition, the committee discussed the importance of garnering input from MHSAA member JH/MS. This included discussion on a forthcoming JH/MS survey that will be sent to JH/MS principals and athletic directors. Some of the topics the committee desired to gain information on include:

- 4 season sport model vs. 3 season sport model
- Size of member schools
- Use of 6th graders in the JH/MS athletic program
- What sports do schools offer?
- Has the limited team membership impacted the JH/MS athletic program?
- Are there any emerging sports at your school?
- What other roles does the JH/MS AD hold?
- Should Flag Football be offered as a sport by the MHSAA at the JH/MS level?

The survey will be shared with the committee along with the MIAAA in order to get data to the appropriate groups making decisions and serving MHSAA JH/MS membership.

MHSAA JH/MS Regional and Statewide tournaments

The JH/MS committee continued its discussion on possible planning for Regional and statewide JH/MS tournaments. The committee discussed the impact that Regional MHSAA JH/MS events would have on school-based sports and the challenges to grow this area in a responsible way so it did not get out of control within schools and so the scope and perspective of JH/MS sports would not be lost. MHSAA signage and branding was again identified as a key part of the Regional emphasis, including MHSAA JH/MS specific signs and banners.

The MHSAA continues some "pilot" programs in the sports of cross country and track. This fall, St. Ignace, Vicksburg and Grand Rapids Public Schools all held MHSAA "area" meets for JH/MS athletes in Cross Country. Last spring, Allendale and Comstock held MHSAA area meets in Track & Field. The meets were a success in many ways and showed that this concept is popular with MHSAA JH/MS schools, athletic departments and teams. Feedback received from these meets will help the committee and the MHSAA determine best practices moving forward. The committee felt that these pilot programs will give the committee data about determining the next steps in MHSAA sponsorship of these meets. This includes who should be invited, establishing a protocol for administering these meets, setting up the financial policies for host schools and determining if MHSAA rules would need to be adjusted based upon a potential decision. Staff will prepare information for the JH/MS committee members to discuss at the next meeting.

MHSAA Presenting Sponsorship

An update of the current pilot program on “Presenting Sponsorship of JH/MS events” was completed for the committee in which, “money and messaging” were provided for these existing events. The events have continued to be well-received by leagues, conferences, administrators, coaches and the student-athletes themselves. The JH/MS committee reviewed the Presenting Sponsorship list and saw the increase in competitions being sponsored by the MHSAA in the spring. The presenting sponsorship concept has been successful and now the JH/MS committee will transition this program into MHSAA regional or area meets for JH/MS student-athletes over the next year.

The committee had a strong desire to gather more information regarding other states activities for JH/MS sports at the statewide level. The committee recommended to MHSAA staff that invitations be sent out to other states like Illinois and Ohio to be a part of the fall MHSAA JH/MS committee either in person or via video conference so that the committee could continue work on a plan for the MHSAA and Michigan as it relates to JH/MS Regional meets. MHSAA staff will reach out to Ohio and Illinois to ask for their participation in the next JH/MS committee meeting via video conference.

General JH/MS Discussion Topics

A MHSAA JH/MS Athletic Director in-service discussion occurred on whether something could be planned for in the future. The idea is to provide more education to the ever changing role and responsibility of being a JH/MS AD at an MHSAA member school. New concepts like a webinar or on-line education piece for JH/MS AD's were discussed as a delivery system for this content. Staff will discuss options and opportunities and provide an update in the next JH/MS committee meeting.

The committee also discussed the future of the MHSAA JH/MS and whether or not a JH/MS specific association would be a road to explore much like Ohio and Tennessee have done. The development of more resources, programming and tournaments would require additional support and help for JH/MS staff and the MHSAA. More discussion on this important topic will continue to occur at future JH/MS committee meetings.

The committee has a strong desire to emphasize school-based sports at the JH/MS level and one of the ways to do this is to provide schools the opportunity to purchase MHSAA JH/MS banners and signage that identifies a school as a MHSAA member. MHSAA staff will discuss this option internally and with sponsorship partners.

Finally, the committee discussed where the MHSAA stands on Esports and if the association will have a space in this place moving forward. MHSAA Update meeting survey questions will provide staff some feedback on this topic and the Representative Council will be updated regarding this at the next meeting. The JH/MS committee will then know the direction to go of this activity and whether or not the MHSAA should or should not be involved.

The committee adjourned at 12:34 p.m.