

MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

East Lansing, November 30, 2023

3:00 p.m.

Members Present:

Scott Grimes, Grand Haven
John Thompson, Brighton
Vic Michaels, Detroit
Kris Isom, Adrian
Alex Tiseo, Marquette

Staff Members Present:

Cody Inglis
Mark Uyl (Recorder)

Executive Committee Authority and Responsibility – The Executive Committee reviewed its authority under Article VII of the MHSAA Constitution and specifically its responsibility to consider each application for waiver of an eligibility requirement on its individual merits, determining if the regulation serves the purpose for which it was intended in each case or if the regulation works an undue hardship on any student who is the subject of a request for waiver. (These underlying criteria may not be restated for every subject of these minutes.)

The MHSAA is a private, nonprofit corporation, made up of voluntary membership; it is neither a state agency nor a court of law, and is not bound by any particular legal standard of review or burden of proof when applying its Regulations or while administering an internal appeal. The *MHSAA Handbook* may identify which party bears the burden of proof, depending on the particular situation or if a particular Regulation is at issue. The MHSAA staff, its Executive Committee, or its Representative Council, where appropriate, shall determine whether the circumstances in each situation, as presented to the MHSAA, warrant application or waiver of a particular Regulation or Interpretation. To make that determination, the MHSAA considers what a reasonable person given the same information would decide.

The Executive Committee was reminded that it was the responsibility of each member school involved to provide sufficient information about the specific request for the Executive Committee to reach a decision without further investigation. If information is incomplete, contradictory or otherwise unclear or has been received too late to be studied completely, the Executive Committee may deny the request for waiver or delay action. Such requests may be resubmitted to the Executive Committee with additional information at a subsequent meeting or appealed to the full Representative Council.

It is possible that some of the information presented as facts to the Executive Committee by school personnel and others may be inaccurate. However, to avoid constant repetition in this report of phrases such as “it was alleged” or “it was reported,” no attempt was made in the introduction of each waiver request to distinguish between truth, allegation, hearsay, opinion, summary or conclusion. If any information provided to the Executive Committee is inaccurate, any decision of the Executive Committee to grant waiver of a regulation shall be vacated.

The Executive Committee is not authorized to approve waiver based on alleged or actual differences between schools based on “environment,” demographics, curriculum or extracurricular offerings. A determination of undue hardship is a matter addressed to the discretion of the Executive Committee within the educational philosophy and secondary role of voluntary extracurricular competitive athletics in the academic environment. The Executive Committee will avoid making exceptions that would create precedent that effectively changes a rule without Representative Council action or local board of education adoption, which would exceed Executive Committee authority. The agreement the MHSAA has with member schools obligates the MHSAA to not change rules during the school year.

Students for whom waiver of a particular regulation is approved must be eligible in all other respects under all sections and interpretations of the regulations prior to their participation.

Adoption of these regulations, as well as policies, procedures and schedules of MHSAA tournaments, is a choice schools make locally when they consider their option of MHSAA membership. Consistent with rulings of the Attorney General and Michigan Supreme Court, schools are not bound by the decisions of the Executive Committee, but the association may limit participation in the postseason tournaments it sponsors to those schools which choose to apply rules and penalties as promulgated by the MHSAA and adopted by each member school's board of education. The MHSAA exercises no independent authority over schools or students.

Peck High School (Regulation I, Section 1[D]) – The Executive Committee approved a request to waive Regulation I, Section 1(D), to allow the use of 8th-grade student-athletes in their girls basketball program. Peck High School has 114 students in grades 9-12 for the 2023-24 school year. The request comes to the Executive Committee with rationale about the positive impact of using 8th graders in Peck's JV girls basketball program for the 2023-24 school year.

Watersmeet High School (Regulation I, Section 1[D]) – The Executive Committee approved a request to waive Regulation I, Section 1(D), to allow the use of 7th-grade student-athletes on both the boys and girls basketball teams for the 2023-24 basketball seasons. Watersmeet High School has 51 students in grades 9-12 for the 2023-24 school year.

Ann Arbor-Father Gabriel Richard and Ann Arbor Christian High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program between these schools in baseball (varsity and JV) and softball (varsity only). Father Gabriel Richard will be the primary school. The combined enrollment of 496 students will keep one team in Division 2. Support from the Catholic High School League was submitted.

Bloomfield Hills-Academy of the Sacred Heart and Hamtramck-Oakland International Academy High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program between these schools in girls soccer (varsity only). Academy of the Sacred Heart will be the primary school. The combined enrollment of 484 students will add one team in Division 3. Support from the Catholic High school League was submitted.

Clarkston-Everest Collegiate and Waterford-Our Lady of the Lakes High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program between these schools in girls soccer (varsity only). Everest Collegiate will be the primary school. The combined enrollment of 223 will place the team in Division 4. Support from the Catholic High School League was submitted.

Hancock, Dollar Bay, Painesdale-Jeffers, Lake Linden-Hubbell and Chassell High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E-1]) – The Executive Committee approved the addition of Chassell to an existing cooperative program in ice hockey (JV only) between the other schools. The combined enrollment is 678 students. Hancock will remain the primary school.

Waterford-Our Lady of the Lakes and Bloomfield Hills-Academy of the Sacred Heart High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program between these schools in girls track & field (varsity only). Our Lady of the Lakes will be the primary school. The combined enrollment of 243 students will keep one team in Division 4. Support from the Catholic High School League was submitted.

Lansing Catholic High School (Regulation I, Section 4) – The school requested an interpretation by the Executive Committee regarding a currently enrolled 12th-grade student. The school and family desired to correct the student’s transcript at Lansing Catholic High School to have the 2024-25 school year be the student’s 12th-grade year. The student transferred to Lansing Catholic from the homeschool environment and was categorized as an 11th-grade student based on academics. The student was the first of nine children to attend a “traditional” school setting and the family was unaware of the athletic eligibility “clock” that limits participation to eight semesters of enrollment upon the initial enrollment as a 9th-grade student in any school. The student has been limited to participation in two years despite being 16 years old, and though he is excelling academically, the student desires to fit in with his age group peers socially. The school requested to correct the student’s transcript and indicate that the student’s grade level status at the time of enrollment at Lansing Catholic should have been as a 10th grader and not as an 11th grader.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver. The Executive Committee noted that the issue of the student’s current grade, credits and transcript status are all determinations made by the member school. The Executive Committee lacks the authority to make changes to the school’s determination of the student’s current grade or academic standing.

Birmingham-Seaholm High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of an 11th-grade student who recently enrolled at Seaholm High School. The student transferred from Brother Rice High School to start the 2023-24 school year. The student participated in four JV basketball games at Brother Rice during the 2022-23 school year. The request was for subvarsity eligibility in basketball at Seaholm after sitting out four games this season.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver after four basketball games.

Brooklyn-Columbia Central High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made for a 10th-grade student who transferred to Columbia Central High School from the International Academy of Macomb (IAM), where he competed in track and basketball at Eastpointe High School as IAM does not have an athletic program. The student and his mother moved to the Addison School District to get a fresh start in a newly purchased home. The mother is a combat-wounded veteran of the US military, and she desired to escape the city environment to get to a more rural setting for her recovery from PTSD and the impact of her deployment in Iraq. The family chose Columbia Central as the best fit for her son, not realizing there were athletic transfer rules. The student has adjusted well to Columbia Central, even competing in cross country this fall, and desires to continue that experience at the subvarsity level. Columbia Central's request was for immediate subvarsity eligibility in basketball. Documentation and support letters were provided.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver at the subvarsity level.

Dearborn-Divine Child High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 10th-grade student who competed for the previous school year in competitive cheer at Walled Lake Western High School. The student transferred from Walled Lake Western at the start of the school year, needing a new start.. This toxic environment was a result of many issues of bullying, and ultimately a police report being filed for assault. The student faced threats of physical and verbal violence which caused her grades to plummet and for her to fear for her safety. The family made the decision to go to Divine Child High School for a fresh start, where the student was welcomed. The former school’s athletic director provided documentation of the incident. The request was for immediate eligibility in competitive cheer at Divine Child.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Detroit-Renaissance High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation and specifically interpretation 61 c was made on behalf of an 11th-grade student who transferred to Detroit from Bloomfield Hills High School at the start of the 2023-24 school year. The student attended Bloomfield Hills and participated on the JV basketball team during his 9th and 10th-grade years. The family moved from their Bloomfield Hills address. The student then applied for, and was accepted into, Renaissance High School, a testing school of Detroit Public Schools and the alma mater of his mother. The family's residence is four miles from Renaissance. Since Renaissance is a “test” school, the student is not immediately eligible. Renaissance is asking for a waiver of this rule and immediate eligibility in basketball. Supporting documentation included a copy of the lease of their former house, driver’s licenses, and a transition timeline of the move.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Detroit-University Prep Academy High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 10th-grade student who transferred from Southfield-Bradford Academy for the 2023-24 school year from Warren-Lincoln High School. The student lived in Southfield to help care for his grandmother, who could not care for herself. Bradford Academy was the closest charter school to his grandmother’s home. His grandmother recovered after surgery, and the student returned to live with his parents. University Prep is not the closest charter school (Cornerstone-Lincoln King High School) to the students' residence. The family desired a new start away from Bradford Academy and Warren-Lincoln and academically preferred University Prep Academy. Since being at University Prep, the student has thrived with better grades and better social fit. Documentation included letters from University Prep Academy administration and family.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Essexville-Garber High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of an 11th-grade student. The student attended Bay City-John Glenn High School as a 9th and 10th-grader, where she competed in bowling. The student had significant health challenges that resulted in multiple in-patient care stays, therapist and counseling visits, and a change of homes to live with her grandparents. It was determined that a new start at a new school was needed for her continued recovery. The student started attending Garber High School in the fall of 2023 and Garber requested immediate eligibility in bowling. The former school offered support for the transfer.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Grand Rapids-West Michigan Aviation Academy High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of an 11th-grade student who has transferred to West Michigan Aviation Academy from Big Rapids High School. The student competed as a 9th and 10th grader at Big Rapids in football, basketball, and baseball. While the student attended Big Rapids, the student desired to attend WMAA, and admission at WMAA is by random lottery. The student was not selected before his 10th-grade year, but just before the start of his 11th-grade year he was notified and admitted to WMAA from a waitlist. He chose to attend WMAA immediately beginning in September of 2023. The school asks for immediate eligibility in basketball and baseball for the student, given that WMAA was his original school of choice.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Highland-Milford High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of an incoming 11th-grade student who participated in subvarsity softball for the past two seasons while a student at White Lake-Lakeland High School. The student started to use homebound services through Lakeland in the fall of 2022 and then transferred to an online school during the second semester of 2022-23 to help with anxiety and stress. She now is attending in person at Milford and has adapted well and would like to continue to participate in softball.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Jackson High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 12th-grade student who transferred to Jackson High School from Jackson Prep & Early College for the start of the 2023-24 school year. The student attended JPEC during the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years after starting his academic career at Jackson. While at JPEC, the student was not on track to graduate for JPEC after his 12th-grade year, so the family chose to go back to Jackson in order to graduate at the end of this school year. The student participated in basketball and track at JPEC and the request was for eligibility in basketball and track at Jackson for the 2023-24 school year. Documentation included emails and transcripts for the student from JPEC and a letter from the family.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Kalamazoo-Loy Norrix High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A second and new request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 12th-grade student who reenrolled at Loy Norrix High School who moved back in with his mother after living with his father in Vicksburg. The student participated in basketball during the 2022-23 school year after Vicksburg High School applied for an Educational Transfer Form when he initially moved between divorced parents to live with the father, who had just relocated to Vicksburg for his residence. The student has no control over which parent he lives with or what school he attends. The school states that it has caused stress on the student and only want him to be able to participate in basketball. The second request is now asking for a waiver of Section 9, B-3 in order to participate in basketball at Loy Norrix for the winter season of the 2023-24 school year.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Lansing-Sexton High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 12th-grade student who transferred from Lansing-Eastern High School for the 2023-24 school year. The student was living with his grandfather in the Eastern attendance area, but because of economic issues, including the roof caving in and no reliable transportation, the student left to live with his aunt in the Sexton High School attendance area. The move was also made because the student needed a positive home force to turn things around. The student has rebounded academically since the move to his aunt's and since attending Sexton. The student played basketball at Eastern during his 9th through 11th-grade years and the school request was for immediate eligibility in basketball at Sexton.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Manton High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of an 11th-grade student who is transferring to Manton High School. The student attended Ludington High School as a 10th grader, where he wrestled in one match before breaking his hand and did not wrestle again that season. The student then transferred to Mason County Central High School, when he was living with his father, and finished out the 2022-23 school year. The student then started the 2023-24 school year by moving between divorced parents to his mother's, who lives in the Cadillac district. The student desired to continue the smaller school environment at Manton. The school requested eligibility in wrestling after the first match of the season at Manton.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver after one wrestling match.

Monroe High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made for an incoming 11th-grade student who attended Ida High School in the 2023-24 school year and competed in wrestling and baseball. The student transferred to Monroe High School during the 2023-24 school year after experiencing social, racial, and mental health issues. Ida supports the change of school for the student, indicating that they do not believe it to be athletically motivated but a chance for a fresh start in a school where the student will feel supported and comfortable in a more diverse setting. The request was for immediate eligibility in wrestling and baseball at Monroe.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Morenci High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request was made to waive Regulation I, Section 9(c) for a 12th-grade student who transferred from Waldron High School to Morenci High School in early November of the 2023-24 school year. During the 2022-23 school year, the student participated in wrestling. Waldron and Morenci have a cooperative agreement in wrestling, so 9(c) would apply by rule as a request. Waldron has provided email documentation showing written support for this student's eligibility in wrestling at Morenci during the 2023-24 school year.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver in wrestling only

New Boston-Huron High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made for an 11th-grade student who competed in softball for the previous school year at Livonia-Franklin High School. The student transferred from Franklin to get a fresh start after experiencing a list of challenges. This poor environment for the student resulted from many issues, including bullying from teammates, and the school district denying an in-district transfer. The family made the decision to go to New Boston-Huron High School for a fresh start, where the student's mother is a teacher and has been welcomed and has thrived. The request was for immediate eligibility in softball at Huron.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Port Huron Northern High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A second request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 10th-grade student who transferred from Detroit Edison Public School Academy on September 26, 2023. The student has been dealing with the death of his older brother due to COVID-19 and a transfer to a new school. The student had attended Port Huron High School as a school of choice 9th grader, where he played football, basketball, and baseball. The family ended their lease in Detroit and made a full and complete move back to Port Huron and their former home in the Port Huron Northern High School attendance area. The student played four games this fall at Edison PSA. This second request asked for eligibility in football only in the fall of 2024 after four games at Port Huron Northern.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver in football only, after four football games.

Port Huron Northern High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 10th-grade student who transferred from Port Huron High School. The student has been dealing with an ongoing police investigation, and the family feels like the student will not be safe at Port Huron because of local dynamics. The St. Clair Country Prosecutors also submitted a letter of support. The school asks for subvarsity-only eligibility, and the former school supported this request for immediate subvarsity eligibility in basketball at Port Huron Northern.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Saginaw High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made for an 11th-grade student who transferred to Saginaw High School from Bridgeport High School at the start of the 2023-24 school year. The student's mother lost her job and had to leave the state to find equivalent employment. The student did not want to be uprooted, so he moved to live with his grandmother, who now has guardianship, in the Saginaw attendance area. The grandmother has no way to get the student to Bridgeport each day, so the student is now attending Saginaw. While at Bridgeport, the student competed in basketball and baseball. Saginaw is asking for eligibility in both sports for the 2023-24 school year.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Saginaw-Heritage High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of an 11th-grade student who attended and played basketball at Carrollton High School as a 9th and 10th-grade student. The student transferred to Heritage High School to start the 2023-24 school year. The student's father stated that the volunteer assistant coach for the JV basketball team at Carrollton threatened him in 2019. The school indicated the coach passed all background checks and indicated that the coach had no issues coaching or with players. The issue continued between the adults and the assistant coach filed charges against the father of the student. The father felt that Carrollton was not the right place for his son based on these interactions and the coach being allowed to coach despite the charges against him. Carrollton believes the move is athletically motivated but does not object to the transfer of the student to Heritage. Heritage is asking for immediate eligibility in basketball for the student.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Saline High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to appeal the eligibility status under Regulation I, Section 9 was made on behalf of an 11th-grade student who came to Saline on an F-1 Visa to start the 2023-24 school year at Saline High School from Mongolia under the Educatius International Student program. The student is living with an AAU basketball teammate's family who has legal guardianship in the Saline attendance area. The student's journey from his native Mongolia has been marked with hardships, homelessness, and bouncing from city to city in order to gain a better life for himself through basketball. Until the family in Saline stepped in to help, the student had no clear path to stay in the USA. The student was directly placed to the family through Educatius, a clear violation of MHSAA international student rules and regulations, and also violated the athletic link rule, having played with the family's son in AAU. The family is pursuing legal adoption of the student which will take up to 6 months, and Saline requests immediate athletic eligibility in basketball for the student during this time. Documentation included adoption and guardianship paperwork, and a timeline of the student's journey to Saline.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Sterling Heights-Utica Ford II High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made for a 10th-grade student who transferred to Utica Ford II High School from Grosse Pointe South High School to start the 2023-24 school year. The student attended Grosse Pointe South after living with her maternal grandmother who passed away in October. The student then moved in with her paternal grandparents and step-sibling in the Utica Ford attendance area, where they were granted guardianship. The student's parents have been divorced, the mother is incarcerated, and the father is not able to care for her at this time. The student participated in competitive cheer, golf, and girls lacrosse at Grosse Pointe South but desires to only cheer at Utica Ford. The new school requested immediate eligibility in all sports.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Sturgis High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made for an 11th-grader who attended Factoryville Christian High School, a non-MHSAA member school, during the 2022-23 school year. The student played basketball while at Factoryville Christian. The student left Factoryville Christian because the family felt dissatisfied with school/church changes at Factoryville Christian and felt returning to Sturgis Public Schools, where he attended for seven years, was the best fit. The student did compete in football this fall for Sturgis as he had not played the sport previously. The request was for eligibility in all basketball at Sturgis.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Taylor High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 10th-grade student who recently enrolled at Taylor High School. The student transferred from Woodhaven High School after the 2022-23 school year. The student participated in two JV softball games at Woodhaven during the 2022-23 school year. The student transferred to Taylor as it is her home district. The request was for subvarsity eligibility in softball at Taylor after sitting out two games this season.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver after two softball games.

Wixom-St Catherine of Siena Academy High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a St Catherine of Siena Academy High School student who has transferred from Northville High School for the 2023-24 school year. The student experienced harassment, threats, developed severe anxiety issues and exhibited signs of depression. These issues were successfully resolved by Northville administration but resulted in the student continued signs of depression. She started at St Catherine of Siena Academy to get a fresh start for her mental health. Documentation included letters from Northville administration and the negative social media interactions.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Wyoming High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 10th-grade student who participated in basketball while a student at Haltom City High School in Texas as a 9th-grade student, where she lived with her mother and father. Because of family issues, including her grandmother battling breast cancer, the family moved to Muskegon to be closer. The parents then separated and the student and her mother moved into the Wyoming Public School District be closer to her mother's family. The school is seeking immediate athletic eligibility in girls basketball for the student given the extenuating circumstances.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Wyoming-Godwin Heights High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 10th-grade student who transferred to Godwin Heights High School in early November of 2023-24. The student competed in football, basketball, and track at Wyoming High School during his 9th-grade year and the fall of his 10th-grade year prior to the transfer. The student faced persistent incidents of in-person and social media bullying and harassment. The incident resulted in media attention and social media attacks towards the student. The family and student desire a new start away from the negative interactions. The school requested immediate eligibility in all sports at Godwin Heights. Documentation included a letter of support from the Wyoming Superintendent and social media posts.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Howell-Parker and Howell-Highlander Way Middle Schools (Regulation III, Section 1[D]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program in boys and girls swim & dive (6th, 7th and 8th grades combined), competitive cheer (7th and 8th grades combined) and wrestling (6th, 7th and 8th grades combined). Parker would be the primary school.

Pinconning and Pinconning-St Michael Middle Schools (Regulation III, Section 1[D]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program in football (6th, 7th and 8th grades combined), boys and girls cross country (6th, 7th and 8th grades combined), boys and girls basketball (6th, 7th and 8th grades) and volleyball (6th, 7th and 8th grades combined). Pinconning would be the primary school.

MHSAA Committees – The Executive Committee approved appointments to MHSAA committees that meet after Jan. 1, 2024.

Next Meetings – Wednesday, January 10 at 1 p.m. – Virtual; Wednesday, Feb. 14 at 9 a.m. – Virtual (Audit & Finance Committee follows); Thursday, March 21 at 9 a.m. – Virtual (Representative Council meets the next day); Wednesday, April 17 at 9 a.m. – Virtual; Friday, May 3 at 9 a.m. – Virtual; Thursday, June 13 at 9 a.m. – Virtual.