

MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Virtual, November 1, 2023

9:00 a.m.

Members Present:

Scott Grimes, Grand Haven
John Thompson, Brighton
Vic Michaels, Detroit
Kris Isom, Adrian
Chris Riker, Portage

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.

Buckley 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 boys basketball program. Buckley High School has 119 students in grades 9-12 for the 2023-24 school year. The request came to the Executive Committee with specific numbers, cause, and rationale about the positive impact of using 8th graders at Buckley in their boys basketball program.

Carney-Nadeau 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 their boys and girls basketball program to have JV teams. Carney-Nadeau High School has 63 students in grades 9-12 for the 2023-24 school year. The request came to the Executive Committee with causes and rationale about the positive impact of using 7th graders at Carney-Nadeau in basketball.

Cedarville 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 athletic programs. Cedarville High School has 65 students in grades 9-12 for the 2023-24 school year, while DeTour High School has 41 students for this school year. The two schools have a cooperative program in both boys and girls basketball. The request came to the Executive Committee with rationale about the positive impact of using 8th graders in boys and girls basketball for the 2023-24 school year for the cooperative program.

Ewen-Trout Creek 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 in their athletic programs to have JV teams. Ewen-Trout Creek High School has 65 students in grades 9-12 for the 2023-24 school year. The request comes to the Executive Committee with causes and rationale about the positive impact of using 7th graders at Ewen-Trout Creek in all sports starting in the Winter of 2023.

Muskegon Catholic Central and Fruitport-Calvary Christian High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program between these schools in girls soccer (varsity only). Muskegon Catholic Central will be the primary school. The combined enrollment of 175 students will place the team in Division 4. Support from the Alliance League was submitted.

Southfield Christian and Novi Christian Academy High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program between these schools in softball (varsity only). Southfield Christian will be the primary school. The combined enrollment of 252 students will place the team in Division 4. Support from the Michigan Independent Athletic Conference was submitted.

Suttons Bay and Northport High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program between these schools in boys and girls track & field (varsity only). Suttons Bay will be the primary school. The combined enrollment of 191 students will place the team in Division 4. Support from the Northwest Conference was submitted.

Westland-Lutheran Westland and Westland-Hope Christian High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program between these schools in softball (JV and varsity). Lutheran Westland will be the primary school. The combined enrollment of 249 students will place the team in Division 4, removing one team from the division. Support from the Michigan Independent Athletic Conference was submitted.

Wyoming-West Michigan Lutheran and Wyoming-Potters House Christian High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program between these schools in girls tennis (varsity only). West Michigan Lutheran will be the primary school. Neither school currently sponsor the sport and the combined enrollment of 286 students will place the team in Division 4. Support from the Alliance League was submitted.

Wyoming-Tri-Unity Christian and Wyoming-West Michigan Lutheran High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E-1]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program between these schools in boys golf (JV only). Wyoming-Tri-Unity Christian will be the primary school. The combined enrollment of 115 students will place the team in Division 4. Support from the Alliance League was submitted.

Grand Haven, Montague, Holland-Black River and Saugatuck High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[F-1]) – The Executive Committee approved the addition of Saugatuck to an already existing cooperative program between the other schools in boys and girls skiing (JV and varsity). Grand Haven would remain the primary school. The combined enrollment of 2,877 students would keep the team in Division 1. Support from the OK Conference was submitted.

Traverse City Central, Traverse City West and Elk Rapids High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[F-1]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program between these schools in girls lacrosse (varsity only). Traverse City Central will be the primary school. The combined enrollment of 3,201 students would add one team to Division 1. Support from multiple future opponents was submitted.

Jackson, Jackson-Northwest, Parma Western, Michigan Center and Jackson-Lumen Christi High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[F-3]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program between these schools, who have never sponsored the sport, in boys lacrosse (varsity only). Jackson will be the primary school. The combined enrollment of 3,551 students will place the team in Division 1. Support from the Southeastern Conference was submitted.

Bloomfield Hills-Brother Rice High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation and specifically Interpretation 62 (closest non-public school to the residence) was made on behalf of an 11th-grade student who attended University of Detroit Jesuit High School as a 9th and 10th-grade student. While at U of D Jesuit, the student participated in golf before making a full and complete residential move from Beverly Hills (Birmingham Public Schools) to the Royal Oak District. Brother Rice is the closest single-gender Catholic school. The request was for immediate eligibility in golf.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Brooklyn-Columbia Central High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of an 11th-grade student who transferred to Columbia Central High School from Addison High School to start the 2023-24 school year. The student played basketball and baseball at Addison and does not meet a transfer exception. There were multiple reasons for the transfer which included health issues after the death of other students at Addison, the safety and well-being of the student, the impact of multiple lockdowns and threats of violence and negative staff/faculty interactions with the student while he was at the former school. The father was the former JV boys basketball coach at Addison and the family desired a fresh start at Columbia Central for the student. The request was for immediate eligibility in basketball and baseball.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Cheboygan High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request was made to waive Regulation I, Section 9(C) for an incoming 11th-grade student who transferred from St Ignace-LaSalle High School to Cheboygan High School on October 27, 2023. During the 2022-23 school year, the student participated in hockey. LaSalle and Cheboygan have a cooperative agreement in hockey as 9(C) would apply by rule. St Ignace-LaSalle provided email documentation showing written support for this student's eligibility in hockey at Cheboygan during the 2023-24 school year.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Essexville-Garber High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 9th-grade student. The student attended Bay City-John Glenn High School to start the 2023-24 school year as a 9th grader, where he lived with his father and competed in football for one and a half games before suffering a season-ending injury. The student had attended Essexville-Hampton School District from kindergarten through 8th grade and the new change to a bigger district did not work for the student. The student reenrolled on September 21, 2023, at Garber. The request was for immediate eligibility in football at Garber for the fall of 2024 after two games. The former school offered support for the transfer.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver after two football games in 2024-25.

Farmington High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of an 11th-grade student who transferred to Farmington High School from North Farmington High School. The student's father passed away and the student moved from North Farmington to Farmington because his younger brother needed to attend Farmington and he was needed to help with the family's burden which included being a mentor and father figure for his younger brother. The student played basketball as a 9th and 10th grader at North Farmington and missed many games as a 10th grader when his father was in hospice care. The request was for immediate eligibility in boys basketball. The former school's varsity coach provided a strong letter of support for the waiver.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Galesburg-Augusta High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made for an 11th-grade student who recently moved to live with his grandmother. The student attended Battle Creek-Harper Creek High School, where he lived with his mother as a 10th grader and competed in cross country, track and basketball. The new residence with his grandmother is in the Galesburg-Augusta Public School District. The student left Harper Creek and lived with his mother because of anxiety and stress related to living with his mother. The mother is battling alcoholism. The new school requested immediate eligibility in all sports. Supporting documentation from a counselor was provided.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Grand Rapids-NorthPointe Christian High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of an 11th-grade student who transferred to NorthPointe Christian High School from Fruitport-Calvary Christian High School for the start of the 2023-24 school year. The student competed in cross country, basketball, and track at Calvary Christian as a 9th and 10th grader. The student's transfer was related to needing a new start due to a stark decline in enrollment and a reorganization of Calvary's school structure including the loss of the school's headmaster and several longstanding teachers. The new school requested immediate eligibility in basketball and track.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Harbor Springs High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of an 11th-grade student at Harbor Springs High School. The student changed residences from Parkland, FL, where the student attended St Thomas Aquinas High School and participated in girls soccer. The family also owns a home in Harbor which was used as a vacation home while the home in Parkland was their primary residence. The family now intends to use the Harbor Springs home as their primary residence, but the former residence is not being sold, vacated, or rented to a non-family member and the family still has belongings in the Florida home. The family stated that the transfer to Harbor Springs was in no way related to athletics. The request was for immediate eligibility in girls soccer.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Harrison Township-L'Anse Creuse High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of an 11th-grade student who competed in five regular season games in basketball for Voyageur Academy during the 2022-2023 season before the student enrolled at L'Anse Creuse High School where he was a student from 6th–9th grades. The school requested eligibility for the student after the first five games of the 2023-24 basketball season at L'Anse Creuse. The previous school has confirmed the student's participation in basketball at Voyageur Academy and supports athletic eligibility at L'Anse Creuse.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver after five basketball games in 2023-24.

Ishpeming High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation, specifically Interpretation 62 (closest public school district) was made on behalf of a 10th-grade student who transferred to Ishpeming High School to start the 2023-24 school year. The student transferred to Ishpeming from Kingsford High School where he participated in basketball and track. The student's mother transferred the student to Ishpeming which allowed for an easier commute as an NMU professor and would be beneficial for the child to be away from the negative environment at the former school. The family moved into the Westwood High School attendance area which would allow for immediate eligibility at Westwood but no eligibility at Ishpeming. Ishpeming requested eligibility in basketball and track. Documentation from a counselor and the former school was submitted.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver at Ishpeming as the student is currently eligible at Westwood based on the residential change.

Jackson 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 Jackson High School from Hanover-Horton High School for the start of the 2023-24 school year after attending Hanover-Horton as a 9th-grader. While at Hanover-Horton, the student was subjected to bullying and two racist issues that resulted in the student needing a fresh start away from the other student and school. The student participated in cross country, basketball, and track at Hanover-Horton and the request is for eligibility in basketball and track at Jackson for the 2023-24 school year. The student participated in volleyball at Jackson in the fall of 2023. Documentation and evidence from the former school was provided, which included confirmation of the racist incident occurring. In addition, social media messages were included that confirmed the incidents occurred.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Kalamazoo-Hackett Catholic Prep (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request was made to waive Regulation I, Section 9(C) for an incoming 10th-grade student who transferred from Mattawan High School to Hackett Catholic Prep High School on August 17th, 2023. During the 2022-23 school year, the student participated in boys swimming. Mattawan and Hackett Catholic Prep have a cooperative agreement in boys' swimming as 9(C) would apply by rule. Mattawan has provided email documentation showing written support for this student's eligibility in swimming at Hackett Catholic Prep during the 2023-24 school year.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Kalamazoo-Loy Norrix High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 12th-grade student who reenrolled at Loy Norrix High School after he moved back in with his mother. The student lived with his father in Vicksburg, where he participated in basketball during the 2022-23 school year. 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 struggled living with his dad and needed to come back to live with his mom and requested a second use of the ETF 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.

Painesdale-Jeffers High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of an 11th-grade student who competed in two regular-season and one MHSAA District game in basketball for Hancock High School during the 2022-2023 season before the student enrolled at Jeffers High School, where he was a student prior to his high school years. The student's father is now the AD at Jeffers, thus the change from Hancock to Jeffers. The school requested eligibility for the student after the first three games of the 2023-24 basketball season. The previous school has confirmed the participation of the student at Hancock and supports athletic eligibility at Jeffers.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver after three basketball games in 2023-24.

Pickford High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of an 11th-grade student who transferred to Pickford High School on October 16, 2023, after attending Rudyard High School during her 9th and 10th-grade years. The student participated in volleyball, basketball, and track & field while at Rudyard during the 2022-23 school year and also started volleyball in the fall of 2023 before transferring. The student experienced mental health issues which impacted her safety. This has led to the student to counseling. After these incidents, the family and former school stated their desire to have the student start afresh at Pickford. Strong documentation from the former school and a doctor was included. The school requested immediate eligibility in all sports for the remainder of the 2023-24 school year.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

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 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 also played a partial football season this fall at Edison PSA. Port Huron Northern asked for eligibility in basketball and baseball this school year, along with football eligibility in the fall of 2024. Letters of support were received from a therapist and a medical professional.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Portage 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 to Portage Northern High School from Portage Central High School at the start of the 2023-24 school year after attending Portage Central as a 9th grader. While at Portage Central, the student experienced a toxic relationship that resulted in negative behaviors to the point that the parents asked for a transfer to Portage Northern to remove her from the situation and the other student. The request was for immediate eligibility in softball at Portage Northern, the sport she played while a 9th grader at Portage Central. Supporting documentation from the former school was provided, along with police reports from the situation and a counselor's letter of support.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Portage 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 to Portage Northern High School from Mattawan High School on October 30, 2023, after attending Mattawan as a 9th-grader and the beginning of his 10th-grade year. While at Mattawan, the student was subjected to racist comments, innuendos, and issues that resulted in the student needing a fresh start. The request is for eligibility in football at Portage Northern for the 2024 season, the sport he played while a 9th and 10th grader at Mattawan. Supporting documentation from the former school was provided which included both their support of the transfer along with confirmation of the racist incidents occurring.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Ravenna High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation, specifically Interpretation 62 (public school of residence), was made on behalf of an incoming 10th-grade student who recently moved between parents to live with her father. The student attended North Muskegon High School, where she lived with her mother and competed in basketball and soccer. The move was necessitated by issues with the mother where both parents agreed to have the student live with the father through her high school years. The new residence with her father is in the Oakridge Public School District but the student previously attended Ravenna Public Schools. The new school requested immediate eligibility in basketball and soccer at Ravenna pending an otherwise completed and approved Educational Transfer Form.

The Executive Committee approved with an otherwise completed and approved Educational Transfer Form.

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 North Clayton High School in Georgia as a 9th-grade student. The student lived with his mother, but because of family issues including the death of his uncle, the student moved to an apartment in the Wyoming District. The student's mother stayed behind in Georgia and the student currently lives with his grandmother. The mother will join the student in Wyoming after Thanksgiving which would then meet the full and complete transfer exception for the student. The school asked for immediate subvarsity athletic eligibility until this move is complete.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver as the student will be eligible when the mother completes her move to the Wyoming residence.

Jackson High School (Regulation II, Section 11) – Pursuant to Interpretation 240, a request to waive the four-player rule was made on behalf of the head girls gymnastics coach who is also employed by the SASGC gymnastics facility as the lead instructor and owner for the last 20 years. It also provides all of the coach's total income. The gymnastics program and SASGC are open to the public and also is advertised to the general public through media outlets. The program includes students from many other school districts. This annual request has previously been approved by the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Bloomfield Hills-Brother Rice High School (Regulation II, Section 15) – A request to waive Regulation II, Section 15(G) for Brother Rice High School given the CHSL addition of three athletic programs from Toledo (two of which have lacrosse). The regulation is specific to boys lacrosse, and the addition of the Toledo schools to the Brother Rice lacrosse schedule would force Brother Rice to drop several traditional non-conference opponents to meet this rule.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver for the 2023-24 season only.

Catholic High School League – The Executive Committee approved a request to modify NFHS playing rules in many sports that would permit a cross to be displayed on athletic uniforms in all sports for faith-based schools in Michigan. NFHS playing rules are very specific on insignias and logos. The request asked to consider the “cross” as the universal “logo” of all faith-based schools. NFHS regulations permit, by state association adoption, to allow for patches or insignias that do not compromise the integrity of the uniform.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver and this policy change will be discussed by the Council in May for inclusion in the 2024-25 *MHSAA Handbook*.

Macomb Area Conference – A request for waiver of the 2-match maximum limitation, in wrestling, on December 20-21 was made for the Macomb County Invitational. The conference is holding both a boys and girls county-wide wrestling tournament at the Macomb County Community College Sports and Expo Center, which includes 31 schools. The conference has learned that 14 of the 31 have classes thru December 22, with those days of class on the 20th and 21st being half-days. The facility is not available on the weekend of December 22-24 and given the size of the tournament, no other options are available at this time. Staff supported this waiver request.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Martin-East Martin Christian Middle School – The Executive Committee approved a request to grant status as an MHSAA member to East Martin Christian Middle School, who has been a long-standing member of the MHSAA, but whose enrollment has dropped below the required 15 on-site students. The Constitution of the MHSAA under Article II, Section 2 allows for a member in good standing to request of the Executive Committee that their membership continue even if they drop below the required 15 on-site students. East Martin Christian Middle School believes this drop in enrollment will be temporary.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Detroit-Central High School – The Executive Committee approved the Educational Transfer Form for a student who moved between divorced parents from Dearborn-Advanced Tech Academy to Detroit Central High School. The form was completed by both schools by May of 2023, and was filed locally due to a change in athletic coordinators at Detroit Central. It has been confirmed that a legitimate residential change has occurred which met all conditions of Exception #8 back last May. The Executive Committee approved the transfer with immediate eligibility at the start of the 2023-24 school year based on the current completion and filing of the Educational Transfer Form.

Additional Item – A brief update was provided on the subcommittee work of MHSAA staff and member school personnel regarding multi-school district transfers that involve boundary and non-boundary schools. Draft language from the subcommittee was shared with the Executive Committee along with notice that a full report will be provided to the Representative Council at the December 1 meeting.

Next Meetings – Nov. 30 at 3 p.m. in East Lansing (Representative Council meets the next day); 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