

MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Virtual, April 9, 2025

9:00 a.m.

Committee Members:

Eric Albright, Midland
John Thompson, Brighton
Vic Michaels, Detroit
Fred Smith, Bangor
Sean Jacques, Calumet

Staff Members:

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 nor to change schools for athletics, discipline, or family finances. 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.

Pittsford High School (Regulation I, Section 1[D]) – The Executive Committee approved a request to allow the use of 8th-grade student-athletes in their athletic programs. Pittsford High School has 111 9-12 students for the 2025-26 school year. The request came to the Executive Committee with rationale about the positive impact of using 8th graders in the Pittsford athletic program for the 2025-26 school year. League support was also received.

Ann Arbor-Father Gabriel Richard, Ann Arbor-Greenhills and Ann Arbor Christian High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program in ice hockey (varsity only) between these schools. The combined enrollment of 950 students will place the team in Division 3. Father Gabriel Richard will be the primary school. Support from the Catholic High School League was submitted.

Canton, Canton-Plymouth and Canton-Salem High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[F-3]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program in field hockey (JV and varsity) between these schools. The combined enrollment of 5,868 students will place the team in Division 1. Canton will be the primary school. Support from Kensington Lakes Activities Conference was submitted.

Merrill and Ashley High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program in 8-player football (JV and varsity) between these schools. The combined enrollment of 198 students will place the team in Division 1. Merrill will be the primary school. Support from the Mid-State Activities Conference was submitted.

Otisville-Lakeville Memorial and Millington High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program in boys soccer (varsity only) between these schools. The combined enrollment of 666 students will place the team in Division 2. Lakeville Memorial will be the primary schools. Support from the Mid-Michigan Activities Conference was submitted.

Pentwater and Walkerville High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program in boys soccer (varsity only) between these schools. The combined enrollment of 128 students will place the team in Division 4. Pentwater will be the primary school. Support from the West Michigan D League was submitted.

Three Oaks-River Valley and New Buffalo High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program in girls volleyball (freshman, JV and varsity) between these schools. The combined enrollment of 328 students will place the team in Division 3. River Valley will be the primary schools. Support from potential future opponents was submitted.

Brighton High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A second request was submitted to waive the transfer regulation on behalf of an 11th-grade student who transferred from Novi-Detroit Catholic Central High School to start the second semester of the 2024-25 school year. While at Detroit Catholic Central, the student participated in boys basketball including 10 games this season. The student experienced a challenging environment at DCC in the basketball program, which resulted in the family determining a new start was needed. Information included emails from both schools and the parents about a potential meeting that has not occurred between the family and the former school. The new school continued to ask for eligibility in boys basketball based on the circumstances.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver after ten games.

DeTour High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made for a 9th-grade student who competed in volleyball at Pickford High School. The student transferred to DeTour High School to get a fresh start after experiencing challenges, including bullying and harassment. The poor environment while at Pickford required medical support and the family decided to go to DeTour for a fresh start immediately following the volleyball season of the 2024-25 school year. The request was for immediate eligibility in volleyball. The former school also submitted support for this transfer.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Grand Rapids-Catholic Central (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 9th-grade student who transferred from Hudsonville High School in January of 2025 to Grand Rapids-Catholic Central High School. The student transferred for faith-based reasons and was injured for much of the 2024 football season at Hudsonville, competing in only parts of three games. The request was for immediate subvarsity eligibility in football, and if that couldn't be granted, then eligibility after three games for the 2025 football season.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver after three games.

Ishpeming 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 Ishpeming High School to Ishpeming-Westwood High School to start the 2024-25 school year. While at Ishpeming in 2023-24, the student competed in cross country, basketball, tennis, and track & field. While at Westwood during 2024-25, the student competed in football. The student transferred back to Ishpeming in December of 2024, which he attended since 3rd grade, from Westwood because he made some poor decisions that impacted his mental health. Ishpeming requested immediate eligibility in track & field.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Lawrence High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 10th-grade student who attended Lawrence High School and competed in baseball at Lawrence and desired to compete in baseball again. The request was for immediate eligibility in baseball.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Millington High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive exception #12 (18-year-old moving by themselves from one public school district to another without being accompanied by their parents and with a signed Educational Transfer Form) for a student who transferred from Vassar High School to Millington High School. The 12th-grade student attended Vassar for his entire high school career until recently, moving by himself into the Millington district. He will turn 18 on May 4th and has requested the use of the ETF to gain athletic eligibility once he turns 18. Vassar determined that the transfer was motivated by athletics. The family provided evidence of health concerns and challenges that occurred at Vassar as reasons for the change of schools. The school asked for a waiver of the requirement that both schools sign the ETF given this evidence and requests immediate athletic eligibility in track & field.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

New Lothrop High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to interpret the transfer regulation was made on behalf of an 11th-grade student who competed in football, basketball, and track & field at Flint-Hamady High School. The student transferred to New Lothrop High School in December of 2024. For a time between March 2024 and September 2024, the student's parents were separated, and the student lived with an uncle in Flint as well as his mother and sister. In September of 2024, the parents reconciled, and the family moved into a home in New Lothrop with the mother, father, and sister. New Lothrop requests a determination of the student's immediate athletic eligibility given the unique change of address.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Rudyard High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made for a 10th-grade student who competed in volleyball, basketball, track & field, and golf at Brimley High School. The student transferred to Rudyard High School to get a fresh start after experiencing challenges at Brimley. The family decided to go to Rudyard for a fresh start to start the second semester of the 2024-25 school year. The request was for immediate eligibility in all sports.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Springport High School (Regulation I, Section 9[B-1]) – A request to waive the sport-specific transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 12th-grade student who attended Mullen High School in Colorado for the 2024-25 first semester before moving to Springport with her mother. The student transferred to Mullen in Colorado from Mercy High School in Michigan in the summer of 2024 because of her parent's work commitments. The family sold their home in Farmington Hills but also had a small fixer-upper home in Springport, and the mother wanted the student to become more acclimated to Michigan because the student will attend MSU in the fall of 2025. The student did not play softball in the 2023-24 season at Mercy, but did play softball at Mullen in the fall of 2024, as it is a fall sport in Colorado. The school asked for eligibility in softball for the spring of 2025.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Sterling Heights-Stevenson High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 10th-grade student who attended University of Detroit Jesuit High School until transferring at the start of the second semester of the 2024-25 school year. The student transferred to Stevenson High School because it was impossible for the family to continue to commute to U of D Jesuit. The request was for immediate eligibility in football at Stevenson for the 2025 fall season.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Swartz Creek High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request was made to waive the transfer regulation on behalf of a 9th-grade student who transferred from Flushing High School to Swartz Creek High School after the first semester of the 2024-25 school year. The student attended Swartz Creek for the first semester of the 2024-25 school year and participated in both sideline and competitive cheer for Flushing. While at Flushing the student competed in six competitive cheer meets. Swartz Creek asked for full eligibility in competitive cheer, and if that couldn't be granted, then eligibility after six competitions in competitive cheer for the 2025-26 school year.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver after six contests in competitive cheer.

Wayne Memorial 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 Wayne Memorial High School to Romulus-Summit Academy North on January 6th, 2025. The student then transferred back to Wayne Memorial on February 24th, 2025. The student played football at Wayne Memorial in the fall of 2024. The student determined that Summit Academy North was not the right fit and struggled with attendance at Summit, thus making a difficult transition to a new school. The family determined that staying at Wayne Memorial was best for the student.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Wayne Memorial 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 Wayne Memorial High School to Romulus-Summit Academy North on January 20th, 2025. The student then transferred back to Wayne Memorial on March 3rd, 2025. The student played football at Wayne Memorial in the fall of 2024. The student determined that Summit Academy North was not the right fit and struggled with attendance at Summit, thus making a difficult transition to a new school. The family determined that staying at Wayne Memorial was best for the student.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Whitehall High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made for a 10th-grade student who attended Hart High School for their 9th-grade year before transferring to Shelby High School to start the 2024-25 school year. At the start of the 4th marking period for the 2024-25 school year, the student left Shelby for Whitehall High School based upon not fitting in well at Shelby. The student previously struggled with anxiety based upon negative interactions at Hart. These challenges also impacted the student's mental health, and it was thought that getting a fresh start in a safe, supportive new school would help. Shelby twice requested a waiver for this student, but that was not approved for the cross country season in the fall. Whitehall now asks for immediate eligibility in track & field. Information provided included a doctor's letter, a summary of the negative issues and interactions at Hart, and supportive letters from the family and friends.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Whitehall High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 10th-grade student at Whitehall High School, who previously participated in cross country and track & field at Muskegon-Reeths-Puffer High School. The student now attends Whitehall because of experiencing anxiety and social-emotional trauma at Reeths-Puffer. The student's family is building a new home in the Whitehall School District that will not be completed until later in the 2025-26 school year. The request was for immediate eligibility in cross country and track & field. A letter from the former school was included.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Whitmore Lake High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of an 11th-grade student who competed for the previous school year in softball at Pinckney High School. The student transferred to Whitmore Lake High School to start the second semester of the 2024-25 school year. The student struggled with ongoing bullying which required outside counseling. The family made the decision, after the first semester of this school year, to go to Whitmore Lake to get a fresh start. The request was for immediate eligibility in softball.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Grand Rapids Christian High School (Regulation I, Section 12) – A request to waive interpretation #173a. of the Limited Team Membership regulation on behalf of a golfer at Grand Rapids Christian High School who would like to participate in three non-school golf events, including an AJGA event in Alabama, the US Open Qualifier on April 29, and the Michigan Open Qualifier on May 13th. At issue was that if the student qualifies out of the local US Open Qualifier event on April 29th, the student would then need to then go to the next stage of the US Open Qualification round on Monday, June 2nd before the MHSAA Boys Golf Finals. The student and family needed to decide by April 9th whether he can register for the US Open Qualifier event.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Novi-Detroit Catholic Central High School (Regulation II, Section 6)– A request to waive Regulation II, Section 6, Contests with Out-of-State Schools to allow Detroit Catholic Central to schedule Clarkson North High School from Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, in week three of the 2025 football season. Detroit Catholic Central has exhausted all options for opponents in Michigan and eight other states with no luck. Clarkson North competes against multiple Ohio Catholic schools and no other Canadian high schools in football. They are not a member of the Ontario Provincial High School Athletic Association in any sport.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Orchard Lake-St. Mary's Preparatory High School (Football Classification) – The Executive Committee approved a request to opt-up in football from Division 3 to Division 2 due to challenges with scheduling competitive teams. Under the opt-up policy for football, this request came to the Executive Committee for approval after previously being granted for two school years.

Next Meetings – Friday, May 2 at 9 a.m. – Virtual; Thursday, June 12 at 9 a.m. – Virtual; Monday, August 4 at 9 a.m. – Virtual; Wednesday, August 20 at 9 a.m. – Virtual; Thursday, September 4 at 9 a.m. – Virtual; Thursday, October 2 at 9 a.m. – Virtual.