

# MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Virtual, May 2, 2025

9:00 a.m.

### Committee Members:

Eric Albright, Midland  
John Thompson, Brighton  
Vic Michaels, Detroit  
Anna Rigby, Harbor Springs  
Dr. Arnetta Thompson, Wyoming

### 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.

Ann Arbor-Rudolf Steiner School (Regulation I, Section 1) – A request to waive the enrollment regulation for a student who is currently an 8<sup>th</sup>-grader at Rudolf Steiner School. The school requested athletic eligibility at Northville High School for his 9<sup>th</sup>-grade year, despite being enrolled as a 9<sup>th</sup>-grader at Rudolf Steiner. The student desired to participate at the Division 1 level, and Rudolf Steiner does not sponsor football or wrestling, while the student also desired to benefit from the academic curriculum that Rudolf Steiner offers.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

St. Clair Shores-Lake Shore High School (Regulation I, Section 1) – A request was made to waive Interpretation #11 for a student at Lake Shore High School who is an 8<sup>th</sup>-grade adaptive wheelchair athlete in track & field at Lake Shore Middle School. The request was to allow the student to compete in high school adaptive track and field meets with Lake Shore against other adaptive and wheelchair athletes. The student-athlete does not have anyone to compete with, as there are no middle school adaptive athletes in any meet that he has been a part of in two years, but the approval to compete in the relatively new adaptive category of high school track & field would give him opportunities to compete with and against other similar student-athletes in adaptive track and field.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver for two events in the 2025 track season only under the Limited Team Membership rule.

Hillsdale Academy (Regulation I, Section 1[D]) – The Executive Committee approved a request to allow the use of 8<sup>th</sup>-grade student-athletes in their athletic programs. Hillsdale Academy has 109 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>-grade students for the 2025-26 school year. The request came to the Executive Committee with a rationale about the positive impact of using 8<sup>th</sup> graders in the Hillsdale Academy athletic program for the 2025-26 school year. League support was also received. This waiver was previously granted for the last two school years for Hillsdale Academy.

Wyoming-Tri-Unity Christian High School (Regulation I, Section 1[D]) – The Executive Committee approved a late request to allow the use of an 8<sup>th</sup>-grade student-athlete in their baseball program for the spring of 2025. Tri-Unity Christian High School has 119 students in grades 9-12 for the 2024-25 school year. The request came to the Executive Committee with specific numbers and rationale about the positive impact of using an 8<sup>th</sup>-grader at Tri-Unity Christian for the baseball team. The Executive Committee previously granted 8<sup>th</sup>-grade eligibility to Tri-Unity Christian for their basketball, girls soccer, and track & field teams and it league support was submitted.

Birmingham-Seaholm and Beverly Hills-Birmingham Groves High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E-2]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program in field hockey (JV and varsity) between these schools. The combined enrollment is 2, 277. Seaholm will be the primary school. Support from the Oakland Activities Association was submitted.

Bloomfield Hills-Academy of the Sacred Heart and Madison Heights-Bishop Foley Catholic High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program in field hockey (varsity only) between these schools. The combined enrollment is 904 students. Academy of the Sacred Heart will be the primary school. Support from the Catholic High School League was submitted.

Caro and Cass City High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program in boys and girls tennis (varsity only) between these schools. The combined enrollment of 680 students will place the team in Division 3, making no change to boys tennis assignments, but would remove one team from Division 4 in girls tennis. Caro will be the primary school. Support from the Big Thumb Conference was submitted.

Farmington Hills-North Farmington and Farmington High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E-2]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program in field hockey (varsity only) between these schools. The combined enrollment is 1,777. North Farmington will be the primary school. Support from the Oakland Activities Association was submitted.

Flint-Powers Catholic and Flint Cultural Center Academy High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program in 11-player football (varsity only) between these schools. The combined enrollment of 643 students will place the team in Division 4, removing one team from Division 5. Powers Catholic will be the primary school. Support from the Tri-Valley Conference was submitted.

Grand Rapids-Forest Hills Central, Ada-Forest Hills Eastern and Grand Rapids-Forest Hills Northern High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E-2]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program in field hockey (JV and varsity) between these schools. The combined enrollment is 2,835 students. Forest Hills Central will be the primary school. Support from the OK Conference was submitted.

Hartland, Highland-Milford and White Lake-Lakeland High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[F-3]) – A request was made for a waiver of the 3,500-student limit for a new field hockey (JV and varsity) cooperative program. Hartland High School will be the primary school, where the combined enrollment is 4,174. This request is for the 2025-26 school year, when it would be reevaluated given the new addition of field hockey to MHSAA tournaments. An otherwise completed cooperative application was also submitted with this request. Support from the Kensington Lakes Athletic Association was submitted.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver for 2025-26, only.

Hudsonville, Grandville and Hudsonville-Unity Christian High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[F-3]) – A request was made for a waiver of the 3,500-student limit for a new field hockey (JV and varsity) cooperative program. Hudsonville High School will be the primary school, where the combined enrollment is 4,466. This request is for the 2025-26 school year, when it would be reevaluated given the new addition of field hockey to MHSAA tournaments. An otherwise completed cooperative application was also submitted with this request. Support from the OK Conference was submitted.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver for 2025-26, only.

Ontonagon, Ewen-Trout Creek and Watersmeet High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E]) – The Executive Committee approved the addition of Watersmeet to an existing cooperative program in 8-player football (JV and varsity) between these schools. The combined enrollment of 178 students will place the team in Division 1, removing one team from Division 2. Ontonagon will be the primary school. Support from the Great Lake 8-Man Football Conference was submitted.

Rochester Hills-Lutheran Northwest and Auburn Hills-Oakland Christian (Regulation I, Section 1[E]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program in girls golf (JV and varsity) between these schools. The combined enrollment will place the team in Division 3, removing one team from Division 4. Lutheran Northwest will be the primary school. Support from future potential opponents was received.

Leland High School (Regulation I, Section 2[B]) – A request to waive the age rule was made on behalf of a 12<sup>th</sup>-grade student (D.O.B. February 1, 2006). The student has Down Syndrome. The school requests eligibility for the student in track & field and basketball at Leland High School in the 2025-26 school year. The student's situation met all published waiver criteria. The school provided documentation for an age waiver, including academic transcripts, multiple years of IEP's, and athletic participation history.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

St. Clair Shores-South Lake High School (Regulation I, Section 2[B]) – A request to waive the age rule was made on behalf of a 12<sup>th</sup>-grade student (D.O.B. August 22, 2005). The student has been diagnosed with Albinism, which impacts her eyesight. The school requested eligibility for the student in track & field at South Lake High School in the 2025-26 school year. The student's situation does not meet the published waiver criteria. The school provided documentation for an age waiver, including academic transcripts, an IEP, and athletic participation history.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Swartz Creek High School (Regulation I, Section 2[B]) – A request to waive the age rule was made on behalf of a 12<sup>th</sup>-grade student (D.O.B. August 16, 2006). The student has been diagnosed with ADHD. The school requests eligibility for the student in track & field and football at Swartz Creek High School in the 2025-26 school year. The student's situation does not meet the published waiver criteria. The school also provided academic transcripts, IEP's, athletic participation history, and evidence how ADHD has impacted the student development over the course of his education.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Ann Arbor-Father Gabriel Richard High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of an incoming 10<sup>th</sup>-grade student who transferred to Father Gabriel Richard High School for the start of the 2024-25 school year after attending Farmington Hills-Mercy High School as a 9<sup>th</sup>-grader where she competed in two games of girls lacrosse. The student's family moved to a new residence in Pinckney, where they desired to have the student continue with her Catholic education. Father Gabriel Richard is the closest Catholic high school to the new residence, but not the closest non-public school. Because of an athletic eligibility error, the student competed in five girls lacrosse games at Father Gabriel Richard while ineligible and the school has self-reported the violation and forfeiture by rule. Father Gabriel Richard asked for immediate eligibility in girls lacrosse after the student has sat out seven games total.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Centreville High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made for a 10<sup>th</sup>-grade student who attended Howardsville Christian High School and then transferred to Centreville High School to start the second semester of the 2024-25 school year because of the lack of academic offerings at Howardsville Christian. The student played volleyball at Howardsville Christian in the fall. The request was for eligibility in volleyball at Centreville for the fall of 2025. The former school supports the student's athletic eligibility at Centreville and has written a letter of support.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Colon High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A second request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 9<sup>th</sup>-grade student who transferred to Colon High School from Climax-Scotts High School for the start of the second semester of the 2024-25 school year. This student participated in volleyball at Climax-Scotts in the fall of 2024. She experienced bullying from peers after a relationship ended with her boyfriend, and the family determined that a new start was needed. The school is requested immediate athletic eligibility for the student in volleyball for the 2025-26 school year. The former school supplied documentation of efforts to alleviate the challenging situations that occurred. New information supplied included a letter from a social worker who has worked with the student.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Hudsonville High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation for an 11<sup>th</sup>-grade student who transferred from Hudsonville-Unity Christian High School to Hudsonville High School for the start of the 2024-25 school year. The student participated in girls lacrosse during the 2023-24 school year. Unity Christian and Hudsonville had a cooperative agreement in girls lacrosse until June 5, 2024, when the cooperative program was dissolved. The student transferred to Hudsonville on June 12, 2024. Due to the timing of the student's enrollment at Hudsonville, which occurred after the official dissolution of the cooperative program, the student is not eligible under *MHSAA Handbook* Regulation I, 9(C). The student has struggled at Unity Christian and desired a new start at Hudsonville. Hudsonville asked for eligibility in girls lacrosse for the student in the 2025 spring season. The student will have missed 14 games at Hudsonville this season. Unity Christian supplied a letter supporting the transfer for the student.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Ishpeming High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A second request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 10<sup>th</sup>-grade student who transferred from Ishpeming High School to Ishpeming-Westwood High School to start the 2024-25 school year. The student transferred because his father took a job at Westwood. 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 2024, which he has attended since 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, from Westwood because he made some poor decisions. Ishpeming requested immediate eligibility in track & field. New and additional information included a letter of support from Westwood, indicating that they fully support the transfer back to Ishpeming.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Mayville High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of an 11<sup>th</sup>-grade student who transferred to Mayville High School from Gaylord High School for the start of the second semester of the 2024-25 school year. This student participated in softball at Mayville in the spring of 2024. She determined that she would like to live with her father in Gaylord and used an Educational Transfer Form to gain eligibility in Gaylord. The student experienced negative events with her new family and her living situation. The student never participated in softball at Gaylord. The student's mother brought the daughter back to Mayville because of the negative home life in Gaylord. Mayville requested immediate athletic eligibility for the student in softball for the 2024-25 school year.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver. No further use of the ETF form may be used by this student.

New Haven High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 9<sup>th</sup>-grade student who transferred to New Haven High School from New Haven-Merritt Academy to start the second semester of the 2024-25 school year. The student attended Merritt Academy to start 9<sup>th</sup> grade and played football. The student was falsely accused of assault by a classmate. This experience caused challenges for the student and family. The family desired a new start for the student, and they enrolled in New Haven to start the second semester. The new school requested immediate eligibility in football.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

New Lothrop High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A second request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of an 11<sup>th</sup>-grade student who competed in football, basketball, and track & field at Flint-Hamady High School. The student transferred to New Lothrop 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 with 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 requested immediate eligibility in track & field. New documentation included information about why the parents transferred their son from Hamady to New Lothrop upon reconciling, including safety and staff issues at Hamady.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Walled Lake Central High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 10<sup>th</sup>-grade student who transferred to Walled Lake Central High School from Wixom-St. Catherine of Siena High School in September 2024 to start the school year. The student experienced a stressful environment at St. Catherine of Siena. The new school requested eligibility in girls tennis at Walled Lake Central after six matches, the same number of matches she played at St. Catherine of Siena during the 2024 girls tennis season. If full eligibility could not be granted, then subvarsity eligibility was requested.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver after six tennis dates of competition.

Boyne City High School (Regulation II, Section 10[A-12]) – A request to waive the maximum participation regulation, specifically in girls soccer. Because of a state of emergency in Northern Michigan and ice storms that caused scheduling challenges and cancellations, the Northern Shores Conference has been challenged to fit its league schedule into the spring season. Boyne City has already used its two allowed multi-team tournaments and is requesting to play a third multi-team tournament with Cheboygan and Charlevoix so that all three teams can play each other at a later date in the spring of 2025. This request came with a cause and rationale about the unique reasons for this ask and the weather emergency that caused this challenge.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver in girls soccer during the spring of 2025.

Grandville High School (Regulation II, Section 10[A-10]) – A request to modify the MHSAA playing rules of boys lacrosse so that Grandville High School can host an 8-team JV boys lacrosse tournament. The tournament will need an allowance for sudden victory overtime to determine a winner in this bracketed tournament. No team will go over the 150 combined minutes in their three games. This modification will be for the 2025 season only, and if the tournament is conducted beyond the spring of 2025, a new request will need to be received. The Executive Committee did previously approve this request for the 2024 lacrosse season.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver for 2025.

Midland-Jefferson Middle School (Regulation II, Section 11[H]) – Pursuant to Interpretation 240, a request to waive the four-player rule for the 2024-25 school year was made on behalf of the boys and girls swimming coach, who is a teacher in the district and also employed by the Midland Dolphins Swim Club. While non-school swimming is not the coach's primary source of income, it is a needed source of additional income. The club is open to the public, and for 2024-25, it is anticipated to include approximately 150-200 participants, ages 5-18. There are 50-75 7-12<sup>th</sup>-grade students involved from Midland, Bay City, Bullock Creek, Saginaw, Caro, and Freeland Public Schools. A similar request has been approved for this coach for the past eight school years.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Pickford and Kinross-Maplewood Baptist Academy Middle Schols (Regulation III, Section 1[D]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program in boys and girls track & field, baseball and softball (6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades combined) between these schools. Pickford will be the primary school.

Linden High School (Football Classification) – The Executive Committee approved, for 2025-26 and 2026-27, a request to opt-up in football from Division 4 to Division 3 due to Linden's league schedule and playing predominantly Division 3 teams. Under the opt-up policy for football, this request went to the Executive Committee for approval.

L'Anse-Sacred Heart School (Membership and Classification) – A request to waive the 15-student requirement for MHSAA membership. Sacred Heart School is a non-public school that has been in existence since 1954. The current enrollment is 59 students in grades K-8 in addition to 3 students in grade 9. The school is working to add high school to its school offerings. The school competes with L'Anse Public Schools in a cooperative agreement in several JH/MS sports and wished to continue this at the high school level. Sacred Heart School can't join L'Anse High School in cooperative programs because they are not an MHSAA member, and this hinders their ability to grow and add grades and students. The request was for a waiver of the 15-student MHSAA minimum, given the unique circumstances.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Next Meetings – 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.