

MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

East Lansing, December 5, 2025

Members Present:

Chris Adams, Camden
Jay Alexander, Detroit
Mike Bakker, Fenton
Fred Bryant, Cadillac
Ross Fort, Lansing
Karyn Furlong, Richland
Aaron Gaffney, Ellsworth
Chris Hartman, Kingsford
Sean Jacques, Calumet
Jeff Kline, Mt. Morris
Jason Malloy, Westland
Dr. Monica Merritt, Plymouth
Vic Michaels, Detroit
Chris Miller, Gobles
Fred Smith, Bangor
Adam Stefanski, Boyne City
Dr. Arnetta Thompson, Wyoming
John Thompson, Brighton
Jennifer Thunberg, Freeland

Also Present:

Scott Eldridge, Lansing
Ashley Higginson, Lansing
Elizabeth Munoz-Smith, Lansing
Bill Zaagman, Lansing

Staff Members Present:

Tony Bihn
Brad Bush
Jordan Cobb
Sam Davis
Andy Frushour
Dan Hutcheson
Cody Inglis
Geoff Kimmerly
Will McKoy
Andi Osters
Jon Ross
Lesli Schrauben
Mark Uyl (Recorder)
Kathy Westdorp
Paige Winne

Accounts of Meetings – Motion by Chris Miller, supported by Jennifer Thunberg, to approve the minutes of the Representative Council meeting of May 4-5, the Executive Committee meetings of May 2, June 12, Aug. 4, Aug. 20, Sept. 4, Oct. 2 and Nov. 5 and the Upper Peninsula Athletic Committee meeting of Sept. 25. Adopted.

REPORTS

Legislation – Bill Zaagman provided an update on a variety of legislative issues. Governmental Consultant Services, Inc. will continue to monitor all bills in the upcoming 2025-26 session and will keep MHSAA staff and the Representative Council updated.

Litigation – Attorneys Scott Eldridge and Ashley Higginson reported to the Council on the status of legal matters involving or of interest to the MHSAA.

Administration – Reports from MHSAA staff included highlights from the just-completed fall season along with the annual update on membership demographics and MHSAA championships. The fall AD In-Service meeting report was provided by Dan Hutcheson, followed by an update on the AD Connection program by Brad Bush which continues to be a national model in supporting and assisting new athletic administrators. Andy Frushour reported a successful fall program of Sportsmanship Summits, and the MHSAA is celebrating the 20th year of the Student Advisory Council. The Update Meeting survey results were presented, and this data will drive discussion with appropriate sport committees during the 2025-26 meeting cycle.

ONGOING BUSINESS

Financial Update and Audit Review – The Council reviewed the audit report produced by Maner Costerisan for the 2024-25 fiscal year. The association saw a deficit of \$173,015, which fell below the projected budget surplus goal of \$898. While the MHSAA attempts to break even each year, this was the first negative fiscal year after four positive years following the pandemic. The Audit & Finance Committee will use this information and data in beginning the budget planning process for 2026-26. Business Manager Lesli Schrauben was recognized for her exceptional work in her fourth year with the association.

Motion by Jay Alexander, supported by Jason Malloy, to approve the 2024-25 audit. Adopted.

Staff also cited concerns with the opening Friday night of the Football Playoffs falling on Oct. 31 this year, which saw a significant decrease in attendance. This issue is one that needs further study and discussion before this occurs again in 2031.

NFHS Baseball Issues – Brad Bush provided background on MHSAA's staff growing frustration with the NFHS Baseball process in terms of current rules (pitch count requirements) and a proposed rule change for the spring of 2027 (double first base), which will be a significant expense to schools for every baseball field in our state. In both cases, NFHS staff has not been responsive to concerns that were shared, and it appears that the rule changes in past years have been exclusively driven by vendors which results in significant, and unnecessary, costs for member schools. MHSAA staff will continue to be vocal in our ongoing baseball concerns with the NFHS.

NFHS Network Report – Jon Ross provided positive results from the first fall with the MHSAA Football Selection Show and the Football Finals exclusively on the NFHS Network. He shared several metrics on NFHS Network viewership with an overall increase in total views, percentage of MHSAA tournament games that were streamed and big jump in average minutes of events viewed. Credit goes to the leadership of the NFHS Network and MHSAA staff for a very successful fall season in the transition exclusively to the Network. Mr. Ross showed video cuts from the various new features by the NFHS Network from the fall.

Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) – Kathy Westdorp provided an update from the latest meeting of the MHSAA SMAC earlier this fall. Discussion focused on the ongoing challenges related to limited funding and the statewide shortage of athletic trainers in schools. Also highlighted was the valuable support being offered by several SMAC physicians, who are assisting with sideline coverage and helping athletic trainers secure timely appointments with doctors. Additional updates included a review of the 2024-25 Head Injury Reporting Summary.

Transfer Tracker Update – Much work has taken place with FinalForms on the development of the online "transfer tracker" which would guide schools with eligibility determinations whenever a student transfers schools after first starting the 9th grade. Staff provided a status report on the positive progress, along with key questions and concerns, that have developed during this process. The goal for December was to set the stage for possible, final action in either March or May of 2026.

New and Emerging Sports – Staff provided an update on the two new tournament sports in 2025-26. Paige Winne gave a positive report on a successful first fall of girls field hockey, with the first ever MHSAA champion being crowned. Andi Osters gave a preview of plans that are in place for the inaugural season for boys volleyball in the spring of 2026.

NEW BUSINESS

MHSAA Handbook Topics – Staff led a discussion on topics that will be discussed at length by staff during the December and January *Handbook* meetings, which will include the transfer rule and the 5th quarter allowance. Staff received input and direction from the Council to help shape those discussions and possible policy for the March and/or May board meetings.

Currently, students who did not play high school sports the previous year become “free transfer agents” at all schools the following year (e.g. PAL football, AA/AAA hockey, home-school teams). Discussion took place on if these students should continue to be eligible anywhere or only at their public school of residence, or closest public charter or non-public school. Differing opinions were offered, which confirmed that this issue needs further discussion and membership input.

Since the MHSAA has provided allowances for 5th quarter participation in basketball, football, soccer, boys and girls lacrosse, and most recently baseball and field hockey, limited evaluation from sport committees or member schools has occurred regarding the intended outcomes of the rule in light of what is actually happening within the membership. Council members provided valuable feedback to staff on this topic, as well, and sport committees will review this topic during the 25-26 meeting cycle.

MHSAA Awards – Final candidates for the Forsythe, Bush, Norris, Hampton and WISL awards were presented to the Council for voting. Votes will be tabulated, and winners announced during the 2026 calendar year. It was noted that staff member Kathy Westdorp has once again done an exceptional job of reorganizing the awards program with more candidates available this year for consideration than ever before.

Meeting Expenses – Expenses for this meeting were approved at the specified hotel rate for accommodations, the IRS-specified meal allowance and a 55¢ per mile mileage allowance round-trip.

Future Meetings – Regularly scheduled meetings of the Council are March 20, 2026 (MHSAA headquarters), May 3-4, 2026 (Gaylord) and December 4, 2026 (MHSAA headquarters).

The meeting was adjourned.