

**MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.**

**REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING**

East Lansing, March 20, 2026

**Council Members:**

Chris Adams, Camden  
Jay Alexander, Detroit  
Mike Bakker, Fenton  
Fred Bryant, Cadillac  
Jerry DeGroot, Hudsonville  
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  
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

**Staff Members Present:**

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

President John Thompson welcomed all Council members and staff, including new Council member Jerry DeGroot.

**Accounts of Meetings** – Motion by Mike Bakker, supported by Chris Miller, to approve the minutes of the Representative Council meeting of Dec. 5, 2025; the minutes of the Executive Committee meetings of Dec. 4, 2025, Jan. 7, 2026, and Feb. 12, 2026; and the minutes of the Upper Peninsula Athletic Committee meeting of Feb. 16, 2026. Adopted.

**REPORTS**

**Legislation** – The Council reviewed a report from Governmental Consultant Services, Inc. regarding activities of the Michigan Legislature that could directly or indirectly affect member schools' administration of interscholastic athletics.

**Litigation** – The Council received a report on legal issues in which the MHSAA has been engaged.

**Administration** – MHSAA staff provided a series of brief reports on winter tournaments, the MIAAA Conference, the WISL Award and the NFHS Network relative to inaugural streams of the MHSAA Football and Basketball Finals in 2025-26.

## ONGOING BUSINESS

**National Issues** – Staff provided an overview of challenges facing other state high school athletic associations, particularly those stemming from increased legislative involvement and policy mandates that impact governance, eligibility, and local control. The discussion highlighted how rapidly changing legal environments are requiring associations to devote more time and resources to compliance and advocacy. In response, staff shared information previously presented at the MIAAA conference, emphasizing the importance of proactive engagement with elected officials. Member school leaders were encouraged to build and maintain strong relationships with lawmakers to help ensure that the educational and student-centered mission of school sports is understood and considered in future legislative decisions.

**Personal Branding Activity (PBA/NIL)** – Staff provided an overview of the first eight weeks of the MHSAA's allowance of Personal Branding Activity. This regulation change in January has produced limited engagement, with only a modest number of PBA agreements having been disclosed thus far. Among those reported deals, the overall financial impact has been minimal, reflecting low dollar amounts with most agreements including merchandise, food and small gift certificates.

**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 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Staff provided a status report on the positive progress, along with key questions and concerns, that have developed during this process. The Council will look to take action on this item in May of 2026.

**Softball Committee** – The Softball Committee recommended the following change, for immediate effect in the spring of 2026, to mirror the current allowances in baseball.

Motion by Jenni Thunberg, supported by Chris Adams, to amend competition limits to permit students to compete on multiple levels of softball on the same day, while maintaining the 38-game regular season limit. Adopted.

**Track & Field Committee** – The Track & Field Committee recommended the following change, for immediate effect in the spring of 2026, to give Regional sites added flexibility.

Motion by Adam Stefanski, supported by Sean Jacques, to add Wednesday as an option for Regional Track & Field host sites, which would be in addition to the current Thursday-Saturday window. Adopted.

**Golf and Tennis Committees** – The Golf and Tennis Committees recommend the following change for the 2026-27 school year.

Motion by Mike Bakker, supported by Jason Malloy, to amend *MHSAA Handbook* language regarding the allowed first day competition. After three separate days of practice for the team, and not before four calendar days after the first date of practice is permitted. Adopted.

## NEW BUSINESS

**Meetings** – The Representative Council reviewed expenses for this meeting and the schedule for the May 2026 Council meeting. Motion by Jenni Thunberg, supported by Dr. Monica Merritt, to approve expenses for the March Council meeting. Adopted.

**Audit & Finance Committee Report** – This committee is responsible for reviewing past financial performance and future projections, reviewing and making revenue and expense recommendations for MHSAA programs, and finalizing the annual budget for the Council's approval in May. The Council reviewed the minutes of the committee's Feb. 12 meeting.

The 2024-25 budget performed largely as anticipated, with the year concluding with a modest deficit of 1.1% of budgeted expenses. While not ideal, this outcome aligned with projections given the budget surplus goal was only \$898, which reflected a normalization from the good results of the prior three years. Staff anticipates a deficit in 2025-26 with lower revenues in fall sports impacting overall financial performance. The AFC will consider an increase in ticket prices for 2026-27 at the first level of various tournaments (Districts and Regionals) in addition to a handful of other ticket adjustments. This AFC decision will be shared with the Council and will be part of the budget discussion in May.

The Council discussed the Audit & Finance Committee recommendation for National Federation (NFHS) Annual Meeting attendance by Council members in Utah this coming summer and supported the specific reimbursement limits for those attending the 2026 meeting in Utah. Reimbursement will be after the meeting and based on actual length of stay and required paperwork.

Motion by Sean Jacques, supported by Fred Smith, to approve the Audit & Finance Committee recommendations regarding staff compensation for 2026-27. Adopted.

**Future Meetings** – The next meeting of the Representative Council is Sunday and Monday, May 3 and 4, 2026 in Gaylord.