

MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Virtual, May 3, 2024

9:00 a.m.

Committee Members:

Scott Grimes, Grand Haven
John Thompson, Brighton
Vic Michaels, Detroit
Anna Rigby, Harbor Springs
Chris Miller, Gobles

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. 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.

Dexter and Pinckney High Schools (Regulation I, section 1[F-2]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program in ice hockey (varsity only) between these schools. The combined enrollment of 1,728 students will place the team in Division 2, removing one team from Division 3. Dexter will be the primary school. Support from the Southeastern Conference was submitted.

Ishpeming-Westwood and Republic-Michigamme High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program in football (JV and varsity) between these schools. The combined enrollment of 411 students would keep the combined team in Division 6. Westwood will be the primary school. Support from future potential opponents was submitted.

Kalamazoo-Comstock and Galesburg-Augusta High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program in boys and girls soccer (varsity only) between these schools. The combined enrollment of 604 students would remove one team from Division 4 into Division 3. Comstock will be the primary school. Support from the Southwest 10 League was submitted.

Middleville-Thornapple Kellogg, Grand Rapids West Catholic, Hopkins and Grand Rapids-West Michigan Aviation Academy High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[F-1]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program in girls swimming (varsity only) between these schools. The combined enrollment of 2,515 students would add one team to Division 1. Thornapple Kellogg will be the primary school. Support from both the OK Conference was submitted.

Middleville-Thornapple Kellogg, Grand Rapids West Catholic, Hopkins, Hudsonville-Unity Christian and Grand Rapids-West Michigan Aviation Academy High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[F-1]) – The Executive Committee approved the addition of West Michigan Aviation Academy to an already existing cooperative program in boys swimming (varsity only) between these schools. The combined enrollment will be 3,214 students would keep the team in Division 1. Thornapple Kellogg will be the primary school. Support from both the OK Conference was submitted.

Muskegon Catholic Central and Fruitport-Calvary Christian 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 157 students will place the team in Division 4. Muskegon Catholic Central will be the primary school. Support from the Alliance League was submitted.

Muskegon-Reeths-Puffer, North Muskegon, Muskegon Catholic Central, Fruitport, Montague and Muskegon-Orchard View High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[F-2]) – The Executive Committee approved the addition of Muskegon-Orchard View to an already existing cooperative program in ice hockey (varsity only) between these schools. The combined enrollment of 3,260 students would keep the team in Division 2. Muskegon-Reeths-Puffer would remain the primary school. Support from the OK Conference was submitted.

New Boston-Huron, Carlton-Airport, Dearborn Heights-Crestwood, Flat Rock and Garden City High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[F-2]) – Application is made to add Flat Rock to an already existing cooperative program in ice hockey (varsity only) between these schools. The combined enrollment of 4,186 students would keep the team in Division 1. New Boston-Huron would remain the primary school. Support from the Huron League was submitted.

Oxford, Auburn Hills-Avondale, Ortonville-Brandon, Pontiac-Notre Dame Prep and Auburn Hills-Oakland Christian High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[F-2]) – The Executive Committee approved the addition of Auburn Hills-Oakland Christian to an already existing cooperative program in ice hockey (varsity only) between these schools. The combined enrollment of 4,291 students will keep the team in Division 1. Oxford will remain the primary school. Support from the Oakland Activities Association was submitted.

Pinckney and Whitmore Lake 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 800 students will place the team in Division 2, removing one team from Division 3. Pinckney will be the primary school. Support from the Southeastern Conference was submitted.

Saginaw United and Saginaw Arts & Sciences Academy High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E-2]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program in football (varsity, JV and freshman) and wrestling (varsity and JV) between these schools. The combined enrollment of 1,248 students will place the team in Division 2 for football and Division 1 for wrestling. Saginaw United will be the primary schools. Support from the Saginaw Valley League was submitted.

Whitmore Lake and Whitmore Lake-Livingston Classical Academy High School (Regulation I, Section 1[E]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program in boys and girls cross country (varsity only) between these schools. The combined enrollment of 219 students will place the team in Division 4. Whitmore Lake will be the primary school. Support from the Michigan Independent Athletic Conference was submitted.

Wolverine and Vanderbilt High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program in volleyball (JV and varsity) between these schools. The combined enrollment of 91 students will place the combined team in Division 4, removing one team from the division. Wolverine will be the primary school. Support from the Northern Lakes Conference was submitted.

Caledonia High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made for a current 10th-grade student who attended Middleville-Thornapple Kellogg High School for his 9th-grade year and the start of his 10th-grade year before transferring to Caledonia High School. The student and family have struggled with concerns about the environment at Thornapple Kellogg. The student and family desired a new school environment and a fresh start for the student. The student competed in boys basketball at Thornapple Kellogg. The school asks for immediate eligibility in boys basketball.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Grand Rapids-Kenowa Hills High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A second request to waive the transfer regulation was made for an 11th-grade student who enrolled at Kenowa Hills High School in January 2024. The student transferred from Grand Rapids-CA Frost Environmental Science Middle High School and competed in football and wrestling at Union High School. The student is a ward of the court and foster child of a newly hired Kenowa Hills assistant coach who also coached at Union. The family lives in the Kenowa Hills District. The student desired to play for his father at Kenowa Hills for his senior year. The request was for immediate football and wrestling eligibility. New information included letters of support from the student's case worker and attorney.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Grand Rapids-Kenowa Hills High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A second request to waive the transfer regulation was made for an 11th-grade student who enrolled at Kenowa Hills High School in January 2024. The student transferred from Grand Rapids-West Catholic High School and competed in basketball and golf at West Catholic. The student experienced negative interactions at the former school. The student desired a new start and left during basketball season to attend Kenowa Hills. The request was for immediate golf and basketball eligibility at Kenowa Hills. New information included a detailed letter with examples of the health issues that the student experienced, and a letter from West Catholic acknowledging the incident that occurred.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Grand Rapids-Kenowa Hills High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A second request to waive the transfer regulation was made for a 9th-grade student who enrolled at Kenowa Hills High School in January 2024. The student transferred from Grand Rapids Catholic Central High School after starting his 9th-grade year at Grand Rapids-CA Frost Environmental Science Middle High School and playing football at Union High School. The student needed a new start because of his father's removal as the head football coach at Union. The father has now been hired at Kenowa Hills as the head football coach. While playing football for Union, the student played in 3 varsity games and 1 JV game. When the student transferred to Catholic Central, he played 9th-grade basketball for three games before being injured. The request was for immediate football and basketball eligibility. The student was granted football eligibility after four games at Kenowa Hills for the fall of 2024 and after three basketball games for 2024-25 by the Executive Committee in March. The new request was for immediate eligibility in both sports and new information supplied included letters of support from both Union and Catholic Central on behalf of the student.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver. The student remains eligible in football after four games in basketball and after three games in the 2024-25 school year.

Grand Rapids-West Catholic High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A third request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 10th-grade student who competed for the previous school year in baseball at Allendale High School. The student transferred from Allendale at the start of the 2023-24 school year, needing a new start because of incidents, which included bullying from a teammate via social media. The family made the decision to go to West Catholic High School, as the student previously attended there and has a 12th-grade sister who also attends there. New information includes a doctor's note and a signed letter by both athletic directors. The continued request was for immediate eligibility in baseball this spring.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Holland-West Ottawa High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of an incoming 11th-grade student. The student transferred from Allendale High School to West Ottawa High School to start the second semester of the 2023-24 school year. The student transferred because her brother attends West Ottawa, and the family suffered a tragedy with the loss a family member. The family desired to have the siblings together at West Ottawa. In addition, the student was challenged with a family member's death and her grades began to slip. They have risen since the transfer with the support the student has received. West Ottawa requested immediate eligibility in softball.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Howell High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A third request to waive the transfer regulation was made for an 11th-grade student who competed in baseball the previous two years at Orchard Lake-St Mary's Prep High School. The student transferred to Howell High School at the start of the 23-24 school year, where he had previously attended, because he needed a fresh start after his grades declined, and subsequently, his health was impacted. This followed issues the student and family had at St Mary's Prep. The continued request was for immediate eligibility in baseball at Howell in the spring of 2024. The new information provided was a statement from OLSM and an updated letter from a therapist.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Jenison High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made for an 11th-grade student who competed for the previous school year in tennis at Zeeland East High School. The student transferred from Zeeland East needing a fresh start socially, emotionally, and mentally to complete her high school education. The student faced issues which required counseling. The request was for immediate eligibility in girls tennis.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Madison Heights-Lamphere High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of an 11th-grade student who enrolled at Lamphere High School in April of 2024 after attending University Prep High School in Rochester, NY, for his 9th and 10th-grade years. While at University Prep, the student competed in track. The student transferred to Lamphere to live with guardians after living with his grandmother in NY. The grandmother could no longer provide a stable living environment and the family reached out to a family friend in the Lamphere District to help. The student has had unstable living arrangements in the last 4 years, bouncing between his mother (Las Vegas), stepmother (Oklahoma), and grandmother (Rochester) after his father passed in an accident in 2014. The stability of living in Michigan with this family is needed for the student. The request was for immediate eligibility in track.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Rochester-Adams High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of an incoming 11th-grade student who has transferred from Auburn Hills-Oakland Christian High School, where she competed in cross country, basketball, and track. The student's younger sister will also enroll at Adams High School in the fall, and the family desires the sisters to stay together for social, emotional, and mental health needs. The younger sister has academic needs that Adams can better support, hence the transfer from Oakland Christian. The school asked for eligibility in all sports starting in the fall of 2024.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Troy-Athens High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a current 9th-grade student who has transferred from Warren-De La Salle High School, where he competed in boys basketball. The student attended Troy Public Schools before transferring to De La Salle to start his high school career. The family indicated that coming back to Athens would be beneficial for his well-being. While at De La Salle, the student experienced a toxic environment. The school asked for full eligibility in basketball starting in the 2024-25 school year, but if that couldn't be granted, then subvarsity eligibility in basketball was requested.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Vassar High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 10th-grade student. The student, in anticipation of his mother's relocation to Tennessee, changed his education to an online program administered by Berrien ISD in February of 2024. The student's intended move never occurred. The student moved back into his father's home in Vassar reenrolled fully at Vassar High School on March 4. Vassar requested immediate eligibility in baseball and football.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Vestaburg 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 a 10th-grade student who recently moved between parents to live with her mother. The student attended Central Montcalm High School at the start of the 2022-23 school year as a 9th grader, where she lived with her father and competed in softball. The student had issues with fellow students that impacted her health. The student's parents are divorced, and the mother lives in the Montabella School District but is closer to Vestaburg, where the student's brother also attends. The request was for immediate eligibility in softball.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver pending an otherwise completed and approved Educational Transfer Form.

Kalamazoo-Comstock and Galesburg-Augusta Middle Schools (Regulation III, Section 1[D]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program in and girls soccer (6th, 7th and 8th grades combined) between these schools. Comstock will be the primary school.

Interstate 8 Middle School Athletic Conference (Regulation IV, Section 10[B]) – A request to allow this league to begin middle school football practice five days earlier than allowed by the regulation on Wednesday, Aug. 21, 2024. Practice is permitted on the 14th Monday before Thanksgiving (Aug. 26, 2024). The early start date would allow schools to have five days of practice (they do not practice on the weekends) prior to their first contest. It would also permit the league to complete their league schedule in mid-October. The Interstate 8 Middle School Athletic Conference offers four seasons of participation with winter sports beginning on Monday, Oct. 21, 2024, and this would permit some time off between the fall and winter seasons.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

River Cities Alliance Middle School Conference (Regulation IV, Section 10[B]) – A request to allow this league to begin middle school football practice seven days earlier than allowed by the regulation on Monday, Aug. 19, 2024. Practice is permitted on the 14th Monday before Thanksgiving (Aug. 26, 2024). The early start date would allow schools to have five days of practice (they do not practice on the weekends) prior to their first contest. It would also permit the league to complete their league schedule in mid-October. The River Cities Alliance Middle School Conference offers four seasons of participation with winter sports beginning on Monday, Oct. 21, 2024, and this would permit some time off between the fall and winter seasons.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Jackson-Lumen Christi High School (Football Classification) – The Executive Committee approved a request to opt-up in football from Division 7 to Division 6. Lumen Christi High School has now joined the CHSL and many of their league opponents are bigger programs who planned for Lumen Christi to be a Division 6 school for scheduling and MHSAA playoff points. Under the opt-up policy for football, this request came to the Executive Committee for approval.

Oak Park High School (Football Classification) – The Executive Committee approved a request to opt-up in football from Division 3 to Division 2. Oak Park High School anticipated being in Division 2 when scheduling opponents for the 2024 football season as they have historically been a Division 2 school. In addition, many of their league opponents are Division 1 programs who planned for Oak Park to be a Division 2 school for scheduling and MHSAA playoff points. Under the opt-up policy for football, this request came to the Executive Committee for approval.

Next Meetings – Thursday, June 13 at 9 a.m. – Virtual; Monday, August 5 at 9 a.m. – Virtual; Wednesday, August 21 at 9 a.m. – Virtual; Thursday, September 5 at 9 a.m. – Virtual; Thursday, October 3 at 9 a.m. – Virtual; Wednesday, November 6 at 9 a.m. – Virtual; Thursday, December 5 at 3 p.m. in East Lansing (Representative Council meets the next day).