

Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association  
(MPSSAA)  
Baltimore, MD

Minutes of the MPSSAA Executive Council Meeting  
April 24, 2025

Refer Questions: R. Andrew Warner, Executive Director, 410-767-0376

Districts Represented: (District 1) Kevin Kendro, (District 2) Kathy Green, (District 3), George McClure for Shirley Diggs, (District 4) Kevin Hook, (District 5) John Davis, (District 6) Jeff Markle, (District 7) Debbie Basler, (District 8) Bryan Ashby, (District 9) Tiffany Byrd

Also Present: Jeffrey Sullivan, President, MPSSAA  
Debbie Basler, President Elect, MPSSAA  
Michael Sye, Past President, MPSSAA  
Donna Clabaugh, Principal Representative  
R. Andrew Warner, Executive Director, MPSSAA  
Jason Bursick, Assistant Director, MPSSAA  
Melissa Jones, Specialist, MPSSAA  
Melissa Mertz, Director of Compliance, MPSSAA  
Ken Kazmerak, Coordinator of Officials, MPSSAA  
Lynette Mitzel, Secretary

1. President Sullivan called the meeting to order on April 24, 2025, at 12:47pm. Thirteen voting members were present to start the meeting. Mr. Warner thanked everyone for being present.
2. Dr. Sullivan requested a motion to approve the minutes of the January 2025 meeting. Mr. Sye made a motion to accept, followed by a second from Mr. Davis. The minutes were approved 13-0.
3. Mr. Warner provided the council with updates on key MPSSAA items. Mr. Warner shared the NFHS has a new platform for online rule books, with details to be shared this summer. Mr. Warner informed the group that the Rule Book process and digital process was part of the NFHS strategic planning discussion. Spring state tournament seeding dates were discussed. Mr. Bursick informed the group of the option for GoFan to supply a digital coach card for next year. Mr. Warner shared the MPSSAA is looking at making improvements to the website as current mobile functionality and technology are out-of-date. Ms. Mertz has background knowledge of more current versions of websites and will be leading this project. Dr. Sullivan added a good mobile app needs to be available since most consumers use apps versus a computer. The Executive Council supported upgrading the MPSSAA Website with better mobile functionality.
4. The council shared updates from all districts, as did the principal representative.

5. Mr. Warner informed the council of current legislative updates. One was passed regarding equal pay for similar boys and girls sports. The bill states officials for similar boys and girls sports must receive the same pay. Mr. Warner reminded the council there is now a mental health requirement per state legislation.
6. Mr. Warner updated the group on MPSSAA sponsorships. The MPSSAA extended Spalding for a year extension on their sponsorships and the following are new partners of the association: Gipper, Digital Scoreboards. Mr. Davis asked if Hudl would be used at state semifinals. Mr. Warner stated no since the NFHS does not have a current partnership with them.
7. Mr. Kendro provided an update on sportsmanship. He feels the group's initiatives are still making a positive impact. He thanked everyone for promoting the official's appreciation week and encouraged people to also promote bus drivers appreciation week at the beginning of May.
8. Mr. Warner gave a report on the finance committee's recommendation to split the gross revenue from football and basketball region and state quarterfinal (also state semifinal for football) games between the MPSSAA and the districts. The recommendation was a 75/25 split with a minimum going to districts of \$750 for football games and \$500 for basketball games. He also informed the group the districts will incur all expenses. Dr. Sullivan asked for a motion, which was granted by Mr. Hook, followed by a second from Ms. Sexton. The motion carried 13-0.
9. Mr. Warner also provided information from the finance committee concerning the need for an increase in ticket prices. In order to balance state tournament staffing and facilities with ticket revenue, increases were needed in pre final matchup contests. The finance committee recommended the following increases: \$8 ticket price for all team sports state quarterfinal contests; \$10 ticket for region track and swimming and also football state semifinal contests. These increases are part of the revenue projections to balance the FY26 proposed budget. Mr. Sye made a motion to accept followed by a second from Mr. Hook. The motion passed 13-0.
10. Mr. Warner reviewed the FY26 budget with the council. He showed the group the finance committee recommendations, which included changes to district reimbursement with the new financial split. Dr. Sullivan brought to the group the fact that no recognition dinner was given last year for Mr. Sye and the sports committees. While he understands sponsorship money was used in the past, he feels there needs to be recognition of the people doing the work to make the association run. He feels this needs to be an allocation in the budget. Mr. Davis inquired to how previous events took place. Mr. Warner indicated in previous years Nightmare Graphics had organized and sponsored the President's party as a thank you to the association. After contracts ended with Nightmare Graphics, the association attempted a MPSSAA event at an Orioles game. For two years 100 bullpen party tickets were purchased for Orioles games and only a partial number of representatives showed up. In 2024-25, the MPSSAA distributed journals to all committee members, athletic directors, and other supporters of the association. The council did not make any motions to include additional funds in the budget. Mr. Hook provided a motion to accept the budget as recommended by the Finance Committee. Mr. Davis second the motion, which passed 13-0.

11. Mr. Warner provided historical context on the region awards and changes from four plaques to eight plaques when the association expanded the number of regions. Hearing concerns on region champions with one or two schools in a region, the MPSSAA office has brought forth a proposal that would still honor region champions with certificates but no plaque. The association would honor winners of the state quarterfinal round with a plaque, thus returning the award to the final four teams per sport classification as compared to the increase of eight when the association moved to eight regions. Mr. Sye made a motion to adopt, followed by a second from Ms. Green. Ms. Byrd would like to know how the information will be communicated. The vote passed 12-0-1.
12. Mr. Warner provided significant bulletin changes to the group, which were included in the electronic binder.
13. Mr. Warner spoke to the group about conflict of interest when officiating contests. Mr. Kazmarek provided a document on a list of conflicts of interest for when an official should recuse themselves from accepting an assignment. The document was built after reviewing counterpart state association policies. After discussion by the council members, Mr. Kazmarek will adjust the language and make it a more guideline-based document. The MPSSAA office will bring a draft version to the fall meeting.
14. Mr. Warner brought forth bids of vendors who desire to become the state championship merchandise supplier of the MPSSAA. The council was reminded the current state merchandise contract will expire at the end of June. Two vendors that met the needs of the association with competing bids were presented. The council reviewed bids, costs associated with families purchasing apparel, experience of purchasing and supply, and online store capabilities. After discussion, Dr. Sullivan requested a motion to accept a state championship merchandise contract. Mr. Sye made a motion to accept the proposal of Northwest Designs. Ms. Sexton seconded it. The motion passed 13-0.
15. Mr. Warner opened discussion on state semifinal sites for team sport participation. Mr. Warner reminded the council of previous action by the council that allowed schools to host their own classification and their own school in state semifinal competition. There have been multiple concerns from schools and sport committees as it relates to schools playing host to their own school in a state semifinal contest. The MPSSAA office presented options to the council for discussion.
  - a. Predetermined sites as currently established.
  - b. Have district's identify multiple sites based on criteria and allow the highest remaining seed to host in their district at a site that is not the participating school's site.
  - c. Have home seed hosts if they meet the criteria. If they do not meet criteria the contest will be moved to the closest venue that does meet hosting criteria.

Ms. Byrd is concerned about basketball since she does not have a site in her jurisdiction where she would meet the criteria to host. Mr. Sye asked how much pushback was heard from football for hosting at home until the state finals. Mr. Warner indicated none. He recommended talking

to athletic directors in all jurisdictions about hosting and not being able to play at your own school. Mr. Kendro made a motion to move to district identified sites for the 25-26 school year. With no second, the motion does not move forward. After further discussion, Mr. Kendro made a motion for district identified sites for the state semifinals. Ms. Green seconded the motion. The motion did not pass (1-10-2). The council requested to further review at their fall meeting.

16. Mr. Warner discussed the COMAR review process and where the review was on the timeline. The council reviewed the latest draft of each workgroup and made collective revisions and recommendations. The Council charged the MPSSAA office to revise a draft and send out to all jurisdictions by the middle of June. Local educational agencies will provide any feedback to district representatives of the council prior to the Fall Council Meeting. The council will take action at the fall meeting with a goal of constitution committee and board of control taking action at their fall/winter meetings, respectively.
17. Dr. Sullivan reviewed the initiatives from August 2024 and was happy to report on the progress of the council and MPSSAA. The association successfully implemented:
  - a. Continued promotion of the Respect the Game sportsmanship initiative, including utilization of the Sportsmanship Survey and Ejection Notification Form
  - b. Administered the COMAR review within an established timeline and check points allowing for action during academic year 2025-26
  - c. Enhanced streamlined communication and flow of information, particularly around sport and standing committee meeting notes.
  - d. Conducted a review of MPSSAA financial structures, including adjustments to district and state allocations for state tournament contests.
  - e. Continued growth in student leadership programing, with more local educational agencies growing programs and an all-time high of 20 representatives at the national conference in July 2025.

The work on the COMAR review additionally incorporated goals of consideration and planning for emerging sports and review of classification process, which will be incorporated into 2025-26 Goals and potential strategic planning work.

18. Mr. Warner thanked Mr. Davis for his service to the MPSSAA and specifically the Executive Council. He also thanked Mr. Hook for his service to the association as he moves on to other leadership areas in his school system. Ms. Mitzel was acknowledged and thanked for her years of taking notes during Executive Council meetings on behalf of the MPSSAA.
19. Dr. Sullivan asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Davis made a motion, followed by a second from Mr. Hook. The motion passed 12-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 5:00pm.