

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

Minutes of the MPSSAA Executive Council Meeting
January 26-27, 2023

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

Districts Represented: (District 1) Kevin Kendro, (District 2) Kathy Green, (District 3), Shirley Diggs, (District 4) Steve Lee, (District 5) John Davis, (District 6) Jeff Markle, (District 7) Debbie Basler, (District 8) Bryan Ashby (and Irwin Schtierman for Bryan Ashby day 2), (District 9) Tiffany Byrd

Also Present: Michael Sye, President, MPSSAA
Jeffrey Sullivan, President Elect, MPSSAA
Michael Duffy, Past President, MPSSAA
Patrick Saunderson, Principal's Representative
R. Andrew Warner, Executive Director, MPSSAA
Jason Bursick, Assistant Director, MPSSAA
Melissa Jones, Specialist, MPSSAA
Lynette Mitzel, Secretary

1. President Sye called the meeting to order on January 26, 2023, at 12:39pm.
2. Mr. Warner did roll call and confirmed 13 voting members were in attendance.
3. Mr. Sye thanked everyone for coming, adding he was hopeful meaningful conversations would ensue concerning moving the association forward. Mr. Warner indicated dinner would be at 4:45pm, which was earlier than anticipated, therefore the meeting will need to stop by 4:30pm.
4. Mr. Sye requested a motion to approve the minutes from the September 2022 meeting. Ms. Basler made a motion to accept, followed by a second from Mr. Duffy. The minutes were approved 13-0.
5. Mr. Warner provided a few updates concerning MPSSAA staff. First, Mr. Kazmarek is at the NFHS officials meeting in Indianapolis, working with other coordinators of officials in hopes of eradicating the officials shortage issue plaguing the country. He reminded the group the sportsmanship memo went out a few weeks ago. He also told the council another position may be coming to the MPSSAA office. This would be a compliance position with state championship oversight included.
6. Mr. Warner gave a few updates on state championships. First, the swimming pool at the PG Sports and Learning Complex is currently under construction and will be unavailable for region swim meets. Second, there is a potential move from Loyola University to Stevenson University

for boys and girls lacrosse this spring. Third, track and field will be back at the PG Sports and Learning Complex again. Lastly, the Wilde Lake Tennis Center will not be available for use this spring due to construction. They are working on finding a new location.

7. Mr. Sye asked for updates from each district representative.
 - a. District 1: The Ravens and Frederick County have established a partnership for girls flag football. Washington and Frederick counties will have their second student leadership conference in April. Mr. Kendro asked Mr. Duffy for any other information from Carroll, Garrett, and Allegany counties. He indicated they were talking about standardized summer camp rules.
 - b. District 2: Bryan Walker was recently hired as operations coordinator. This new position will manage middle school programs and also manage scheduling for the county. They are looking into hiring a health and safety coordinator to oversee the athletic trainers. A survey was just completed asking stakeholders for information regarding sport offerings. Information will be shared after the data is analyzed. They recently met with their student leadership council to create PSAs to use across the district.
 - c. District 3: The district will be losing their Chief Executive Officer, which is a huge loss for athletics.
 - d. District 4: The supervisors meet monthly and are working on guidance for the new summer camp language. SMAC scheduling for football games will change for the fall. JV will now be on Mondays, with varsity games on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.
 - e. District 5: Howard County has a new school opening in the fall. The unnamed school will need JV contests. They have budgeted for 13 athletic trainers to be specialists in the county. Mr. Warner informed the council Anne Arundel County will hold all day county championships starting either this spring or fall.
 - f. District 6: A student leadership meeting was started and will occur quarterly. The summer camp language is being discussed. The athletic trainer proposal was not passed, but discussions have resurfaced. Mr. Sye also mentioned the superintendent is not returning.
 - g. District 7: Harford County just started middle school athletics. No information about Cecil.
 - h. District 8: The planning for summer engagement has gone well so far.
 - i. District 9: They are currently examining the structure of the athletic director position as well as reviewing ways to implement middle school athletics in the 56 schools. Mr. Saunderson provided information on the principal's association. At the most recent monthly meeting, safety, security, sportsmanship, and engaging students were the topics surrounding athletics.
8. Mr. Warner informed the group three new House Bills were initiated recently. House Bill 343 is identical to a bill that was on the floor in March 2020. The premise is to allow basketball to be played all year. Mr. Sye told everyone he received a phone call the previous night from a constituent indicating there is strong support for the bill. Mr. Warner indicated letters of information will be sent from the MPSSAA. He said in 2020 the bill passed 133-0 before legislative session stopped due to COVID. The hearing is February 8th. House Bill 359 is

concerning saving women's sports. House Bill 375 is an act for mental health first aid training for coaches.

9. Mr. Warner recapped the NFHS winter meeting for the group. He said there was a great session on NIL and how it is impacting high school athletes. The presenter, Bill Carter, said the language Maryland has in place is good. Dr. Sullivan asked if there would be any education coming from the MPSSAA. Mr. Warner indicated he is currently discussing with PIAA what their education plan involved. There is also an NFHS course, which could be a starting place for athletes and parents.
10. Mr. Warner informed the council he and Mr. Bursick have reviewed the fall tournament finances and have concern about the profit to expense ratio being seen in some jurisdictions. He mentioned there needs to be a review and discussion about the financial outlook of the association. It becomes difficult to provide other initiatives such as state wide student leadership conference if the profit to expense ratio continues to be as high as it's been in recent tournaments. In April he will be taking an idea to the finance committee that provides a percent of the profits staying with the district and the rest going to the MPSSAA to cover expenses. Right now there is discrepancy across the state due to procedures taking place. A percentage split would make things more consistent. There was discussion about administration from away schools getting paid to attend the game. Some thought it was a good idea, they know the students better. Some disagreed and felt the people were getting paid to attend and watch a game. According to state bulletin, when a team enters a state tournament, the schools are responsible for running the event, which includes administration. Mr. Davis made a motion for the finance committee to investigate percentages being return to the districts from state tournament games. Mr. Duffy second the motion. Ms. Basler inquired about a minimum amount for games that don't draw a large crowd and therefore expenses are more than profit. Mr. Warner indicated that would be a discussion item with the finance committee as well. He thought a \$500 minimum might work. Dr. Sullivan mentioned another concern is the increase cost of workers and officials, but no increase in the income from gate receipts. He would like the finance committee to investigate district accounting as well. Mr. Lee asked if this is for all sports or just basketball and football. Mr. Duffy explained it is only for those sports where the MPSSAA is responsible for more than just the state semifinals and finals, which is basketball and football. A vote was taken and the motion passed 13-0.
11. Ms. Basler requested the finance committee review paying administrators to attend state playoff games. Mr. Warner indicated he believe the Executive Council already voted on this. Ms. Basler believes administrators should be compensated for their time above and beyond the regular season contests. Mr. Warner indicated there is no tournament fee charged for teams to enter state tournaments, and if a school chooses to participate, they also have the requirement to provide oversight of their school's participation. Mr. Sye asked to have further discussion in the spring.
12. Mr. Warner provided the council information regarding the NFHS Network contract. When PlayOn started, many states had contracts with them. Then NFHS Network began and states joined as profit-sharing owners of the network.. The MPSSAA executive council and based on legal advice has continued to reframe from entering

- into any revenue sharing or ownership of the network. The current MPSSAA contract with PlayOn ends this year. Over a ten year period, the MPSSAA had received \$750,000. He explained where the association is with what kind of contract they are permitted to sign and what this looks like moving forward. Members of the council would like to see numbers from the NFHS Network before making a decision on which direction they would like to proceed if a contract with them is permitted.
13. Mr. Warner asked the group if they had an opportunity to take the Maryland Blueprint Strategic Planning survey he recently sent. He believes this survey would be a good framework for an athletic survey. He would like breakout groups to review sections of the draft membership survey and provide feedback. He hopes to build the survey on information collected at the district meetings he and Mr. Sye attended over the summer. Mr. Warner asked the groups to input questions into the shared document so the office could start formulating the survey.
 14. Mr. Sye requested a motion to adjourn the meeting since dinner was in fifteen minutes. He tabled the cheerleading agenda item until the following morning. Ms. Byrd made a motion to adjourn, followed by a second from Mr. Saunderson. All approved 13-0.
 15. The meeting resumed on January 27th at 9:01am. Mr. Schtierman filled in for Mr. Ashby.
 16. Mr. Sye asked Mr. Warner where the association is with moving forward to get cheerleading as an MPSSAA sport. Mr. Warner stated in order to make this happen, we need to decide what is the outcome and what are the challenges. An intended outcome statement is needed to continue moving forward. Mr. Sye asked Ms. Mitzel to give an overview of where the small task force she has been working with is on the outline. Mr. Mitzel gave a brief summary and Dr. Sullivan said he believes this should be a goal for the 24-25 academic year and asked how we get that to occur and what the timeline is to continue the work. Mr. Warner stated he would like to see two meetings before the April Executive Council and Board of Control meetings. Then based on those two meetings, between April and the September Executive Council meeting, work on COMAR and give the school systems as well as the constitution committee time to review. The proposal would then move to the December 2023 Board of Control meeting and if passed there, on to the state superintendents and the state board of education. Mr. Sye asked for the names requested to serve on the committee. Ms. Basler inquired if it would be beneficial to have coaches and administrators working together since cheerleading is such a unique sport. Some council members agreed. Mr. Warner indicated one such challenge is the current framework the cheer organization uses has four classifications. In order for an MPSSAA sport to utilize four, 65% of member schools need to participate. Ms. Mitzel is confident that number would be hit based on counties who don't currently participate being added once the sport is under the MPSSAA.
 17. Mr. Warner informed the council there was information in the electronic binder outlining the June scholastic events practice guidance. The next step is deciding how many practices teams can have prior to the events. Number of days and weeks was discussed, as was the entire month of June since the events occur in June. Mr. Duffy made a motion which states teams may begin practice 8 calendar days prior to the event. Mr. Lee second the motion. Discussion ensued in which people thought Mr. Davis comment of restricting to June was a better approach. Mr.

- Duffy commented the thought process needs to be broader since we know these events will quickly expand to sports beyond basketball. Mr. Warner reminded the group the MPSSAA provides umbrella regulations and sets thresholds, where local jurisdictions are permitted to be more restrictive. The motion passed 8-4-1.
18. Mr. Warner discussed sanctioning of out of season events with the group. He stated with the COMAR regulations, local school systems may now approve for teams to practice to attend NFHS/MPSSAA approved events. There are indoor track events that take place in late March and he would like to know what criteria should be in place for the MPSSAA to approve such events. Mr. Duffy indicated if the NFHS sanctioned, is there a reason the MPSSAA shouldn't as well? Mr. Warner reminded the group this is for school teams, not unattached runners. If all teams are not school sanctioned teams, the MPSSAA would not approve. Mr. Bursick indicated these events would be posted on the MPSSAA sanctioning portion of the website.
 19. Mr. Warner showed the amateur language on the screen and reminded the group the discussion was tabled in the fall and needs to be addressed at this meeting. He shared a recommendation with the council. Mr. Kendro stated the association should move forward with assisting student athletes who are participate on USA or Olympic teams. Dr. Sullivan motioned to accept the recommendation, with a second from Mr. Davis. All were in favor of the motion. 13-0
 20. Mr. Warner indicated the next agenda item to discuss is emerging sports. Mr. Lee requested to discuss esports. Mr. Warner indicated the state principals association has an agreement with an esports company to provide esports programming. Mr. Lee said their county will be offering it as there is significant interest in his area. Mr. Duffy said they are also offering it, but not as an interscholastic sport, it is currently a club, but eventually will be under the athletics prevue. Mr. Saunderson said he views it more of a club than a sport. Dr. Sullivan indicated if they offer it, it will not be falling under athletics.
 21. Mr. Warner informed the council of the flag football discussion that occurred at the NFHS winter meeting. He said five states currently sanction it with one more adding in 2023. The intention of running something with the MPSSAA and the Baltimore Ravens did not come to fruition and instead local school systems are working directly with the Ravens. Dr. Sullivan informed the group they offered their stakeholders a survey, and included in it was a question about what sport offerings do people want. Flag football emerged as one of the top recommendations, followed by boys volleyball. He is not currently looking to add a sport, but instead is focusing on adding athletic trainers and a health and safety supervisor. Mr. Sye indicated he would be interested in offering it in middle schools since Baltimore County may soon expand what is offered at that level. Mr. Kendro told the group an official announcement will come out next week informing people of the partnership between the Ravens and Frederick County Public Schools. Mr. Duffy asked where people were with their girls wrestling teams. While most are providing females opportunities to wrestle co-ed, Carroll County set a 6 wrestler minimum for a school to have a separate girls team. Dr. Sullivan indicated he would share the data collected from their survey.
 22. Mr. Sye requested additional items for the good of the order. Mr. Kendro asked about language for indoor and outdoor track teams being not able to split and compete as two separate

squads. Mr. Warner shared a memo that was sent out years ago and said he will update and send to membership. The language will also be put in the front section of the bulletins. Ms. Byrd if anyone has finalized their summer camp language and if so, did they implement sport specific periods. She also asked how many people received a request from OCR on female participation. Ms. Green shared she recently attended the student services committee meeting in Indianapolis with the NFHS. She would like to see a state advisory group formed in Maryland. Mr. Duffy shared information from the nominating committee on their new coach of the year form. Mr. Davis asked if others were seeing more transgender student athletes competing and shared more non-binary students are participating.

23. With no further discussion items, Mr. Duffy motioned to adjourn the meeting, followed by a second from Mr. Kendro. All were in favor, 13-0, and the meeting concluded at 11:43am.