

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

Minutes of the MPSSAA Executive Council Meeting
September 24, 2021

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

Districts Represented: (District 1) Kevin Kendro – in person, (District 2) Jeff Sullivan – virtual, (District 3), Shirley Diggs – virtual, (District 4) Steve Lee – in person, (District 5) John Davis – in person, (District 6) Jeff Markle – virtual, (District 7) Debbie Basler – in person, (District 8) Bryan Ashby – virtual, (District 9) Tiffany Byrd – in person,

Also Present: Michael Sye, President Elect, MPSSAA – virtual
Dana Johnson, Past President, MPSSAA – on phone
Patrick Saunderson, Principal’s Representative – virtual
R. Andrew Warner, Executive Director, MPSSAA – virtual
Ken Kazmarek, Coordinator of Officials, MPSSAA – virtual
Lynette Mitzel, Supervisor of Athletics, Secretary – in person

Excused: Jason Bursick, Assistant Director, MPSSAA

1. The meeting was called to order on September 24, 2021 at 1:06pm.
2. Mr. Duffy requested a motion to approve the minutes from the last two meetings. Mr. Davis motion to accept, followed by a second from Ms. Basler. The minutes were approved 11-0. (Ms. Diggs joined the meeting at 1:08 after the vote.)
3. Mr. Duffy informed the council today’s meeting was being held to discuss and vote on the recent football proposal that would allow all teams to enter the MPSSAA state tournament. Mr. Warner indicated the football committee was in favor of the proposal by a 6-3 vote. He showed the six classifications as they would be for this year, and there were no questions concerning the breakdown.
4. Mr. Warner shared his perspective on the proposal, mentioning this proposal would be a huge step to change something at this point during the school year without compelling reasons to do so. He indicated there were only three or four COVID cancellations per week out of approximately 90 contests. He said other states across the country are not making significant changes at this point. He believes there will be a microscope on football if a change is made. Mr. Saunderson echoed Mr. Warner’s sentiments, and said introducing a change now would confuse people.

5. Mr. Duffy asked each district how the constituents in their respective district felt about the proposal.
 - a. District 1: majority of school systems would like to see the tournament changed
 - b. District 2: aligns with Mr. Warner and Mr. Saunderson and would not like to see a change
 - c. District 3: does not support it
 - d. District 4: yes, is in support
 - e. District 5: mixed feelings from coaches; Mr. Davis would like to wait until week 6 or 7 to make a decision
 - f. District 6: yes, in support
 - g. District 7: leadership is in favor, but Ms. Basler would like to know other options
 - h. District 8: in favor as originally presented; what does a timeline look like
 - i. District 9: in favor as originally presented.
 - j. Past President: in support of her supervisor
 - k. President Elect: yes, in support
 - l. President: yes, in support
 - m. Principal rep: no, not in support
6. Mr. Duffy stated a decision needed to be made at this meeting. He echoes the statements of Mr. Sye and the need for expanded opportunities for student athletes and the need for a decision based on what is in best interest of football players across the state.
7. Mr. Warner asked the committee to look at where teams were now. If incremental steps are taken and patience is used, there is no need to decide today. Dr. Sullivan agrees and would support delaying a decision. Several others said waiting is not a bad idea. Mr. Davis made a motion to delay the decision until the start of week 6. Ms. Basler second the motion. Ms. Byrd asked how a decision would be made later; asked what measures would be considered in order to make a decision to open the tournament to all teams. Mr. Warner reminded the committee this proposal is about how COVID affects teams that may not make playoffs. A six or seven game divisor could be used instead of allowing all teams to enter the tournament. Mr. Sye asked why superintendents, football coaches, athletic directors, and other stakeholders were polled if nothing was going to change. He stated the best interest of the student athletes should be considered. Ms. Diggs agreed. The vote was taken and 7 were not in favor of waiting; 6 were in favor of waiting. The motion failed.
8. Mr. Markle made a motion to vote for the open tournament as proposed. Mr. Lee second the motion. The motion passed 12-1
9. Mr. Kendro asked how this information would be disseminated and what others around the table would say when asked if the proposal passed. Mr. Warner indicated he would put out a press release on the website. Everyone else agreed to keep the wording simple and let people know the proposal was approved with details from the MPSSAA to follow.
10. Mr. Kendro made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Basler second the motion. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 1:59pm.