

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

Minutes of the MPSSAA Executive Council Meeting
October 28, 2020

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

Districts Represented: (District 1) Kevin Kendro, (District 2) Jeff Sullivan, (District 3) Shirley Diggs (joined at 12:42), (District 4) Steve Lee, (District 5) John Davis, (District 6) Jeff Markle, (District 7) Debbie Basler (joined at 12:51), (District 8) Bryan Ashby, (District 9) Tiffany Byrd

Also Present: Michael Duffy, President, MPSSAA
Michael Sye, President Elect, MPSSAA
R. Andrew Warner, Executive Director, MPSSAA
Jason Bursick, Assistant Director, MPSSAA
Ken Kazmarek, Coordinator of Officials, MPSSAA
Dana Johnson, Past President, MPSSAA
Lynette Mitzel, Supervisor of Athletics, Secretary

1. The meeting was called to order on October 28, 2020 at 12:35pm by President Duffy.
2. Mr. Duffy asked the committee to review the minutes from the previous meeting. Mr. Davis made a motion to accept the minutes, followed by a second from Ms. Johnson. The minutes were approved 11-0.
3. Mr. Duffy opened the meeting asking for updates from the MPSSAA office. Mr. Warner informed the council the Maryland State Board of Education approved the modification to the two-semester plan which moved the start of winter athletics from February 1, 2021 to December 7, 2020. The MPSSAA website has been updated to reflect the new start date.
4. Mr. Warner requested feedback on the update of the contingency season that now reflects December 7.. Ms. Byrd opened the discussion by asking if districts were unable to begin on December 7th, what options could be provided for the student athletes. Mr. Warner indicated if local school systems are unable to administer sport seasons, the season will be cancelled and the school system would be able to continue with out of season engagement opportunities, which are currently available now.
5. Dr. Sullivan asked Mr. Warner if the language the subcommittee that met to discuss guidance for COMAR waivers would be inserted into the roadmap document. Mr. Warner informed the group he has not seen that language, but would be willing to review. Mr. Sye noted he would have Ms. Basler send a copy.

6. Mr. Lee inquired as to how school systems are to handle the amendment the State Board of Education approved in relation to the December 7th start date. Mr. Duffy reminded Mr. Lee the amendment was changed to strongly encourage school systems to start in person engagement leading up to the December 7th start date for MPSSAA athletics.
7. Mr. Markle asked how other districts were working schedules as it related to the December 7th. He wanted to know if the 6 weeks should include three games per week during the two weeks permitted by COMAR. Mr. Warner informed the group the weekly and seasonal limitations are still in effect and are mentioned in the roadmap.
8. Dr. Sullivan inquired as to whether state tournaments were still on the table since that decision would determine how many games and weeks of county scheduling would take place in Montgomery County. He feels strongly about the need for a decision to be made at the state level so there is consistency across the school systems. At this time Montgomery County is not planning on out-of-county competition for at least the winter season. Ms. Byrd asked Dr. Sullivan if he is planning on 4.5 weeks of basketball instead of 6, does that mean the maximum number will not be scheduled, and is that permitted within the scope of normal operations. He replied they were going to do a full six weeks but the last 1.5 weeks would consist of a county tournament. How that tournament would look is still being discussed and will be determined closer to the end of the regular season based on the health metrics. Mr. Kendro, who in previous meetings was very adamant about not cancelling the state tournaments, vocalized Frederick County will not be participating in out-of-county competition, at least for the winter. Mr. Lee, Mr. Davis, and Mr. Duffy all concurred their counties would not be participating in out-of-county competition as well.
9. Ms. Diggs inquired as to whether a decision has been made on holding state tournaments. Mr. Warner said at this time he recommends taking gradual steps and not eliminating all state tournaments yet. He stated what is in the best interest of the winter state tournaments needs to be considered, but the fall and spring shouldn't be included in that decision at this time. Ms. Diggs expressed concern about schedules, state tournaments, and the real potential of not starting on December 7th. Mr. Warner stated he supports each local jurisdiction making decisions for their schools based on local guidance and health metrics. His concern is having equity across the state in terms of culminating events and if metrics permit, returning to a normal state tournament. (Mr. Saunderson had another meeting to attend and left at 1:03)
10. Mr. Markle posed a question regarding a potential deadline for determining whether state tournaments are going to be held. He stated there needs to be some guidance for counties so they know how to prepare. He suggested a February 1, 2020 deadline for fall tournaments and an April 1, 2021 deadline for spring tournaments. Mr. Davis reminded the group there was no support for state tournaments during the last supervisor meeting. Mr. Lee agreed and stated it was the charge of the group to speak to their respective superintendents to gauge the support. Dr. Sullivan concurred the discussion was around the concern over winter and fall and potential for spring when the calendars for both start date options coincide. Mr. Davis said the superintendent in Howard County isn't in favor of state tournaments at this time. Mr. Warner agreed with Mr. Davis' statement regarding "at this time." He suggested not making too many long term decisions right now. The determination of counties competing within

their local school system as compared to statewide will be determined by the local health departments and not by the MPSSAA or Executive Council making a declaration of state tournaments.

11. Mr. Ashby, Mr. Duffy, and Mr. Sye all stated their school systems were leaning toward local competitions this year, instead the focus would be on re-engaging student athletes. Mr. Duffy also stated it was difficult to have state championships with three school systems already participating in a different option. Mr. Sye agreed and asked if the council could come to a conclusion before moving on from this topic. His feeling is at some point the stakeholders deserve to hear what is going to take place. The lack of communication and information puts everyone behind the eight ball and in a bad light. Ms. Basler suggested making decision about winter but waiting on fall and spring. Dr. Sullivan reminded the group the issue with not making a decision is the there are three school systems already competing in fall athletics so waiting on a decision was not fair to those counties. Mr. Warner requested time to discuss with other individuals. He would like to convene somebody from western Maryland, a few from the Executive Council, and a few supervisors and bring back guidance. Mr. Sye stated the charge of the Executive Council was to make decisions like the one Mr. Warner is suggesting be made by a different group. The council is made up of people around the state, so there is already good representation. Mr. Warner suggested a work session to discuss moving forward regarding post season beyond the county level. Discussion ensued regarding how to effectively move forward with a decision about winter state championships. Ms. Basler made a motion to not hold state championships for winter sports this year, with a second from Ms. Diggs. Several council members stated they did not feel comfortable voting since the suggestion at the supervisor meeting was to discuss with their superintendents first and report back. Ms. Basler withdrew the motion.
12. Dr. Sullivan asked Ms. Basler if there was a final draft of the document the subcommittee worked on for COMAR waiver guidance. She indicated it was finalized and sent to Mr. Warner for review at the start of the meeting. Several council members agree the document is acceptable as is, and local jurisdictions are permitted to be more restrictive if desired. Mr. Warner indicated he has briefly reviewed the document and has a few concerns. He would like to discuss before making decisions about COMAR interpretations. Dr. Sullivan clarified by stating the locals should be allowed to work through the logistical challenges and to not permit it would be inequitable to those school systems that haven't yet been able to have in person conditioning or sport specific skill sessions. Mr. Sye indicated discussion in the subcommittee took place and what the committee is asking is to provide opportunity no different from what is currently taking place. The subcommittee did the work and are now providing the Executive Council the material for review. Mr. Warner will review the document before the next Executive Council meeting and be prepared to make recommendations.
13. Mr. Duffy requested feedback on the winter sport modifications. Mr. Lee suggested basketball substitutions be made by the head coach while players remain on the bench. Dr. Sullivan mentioned the basketball committee discussed having bleachers behind scorers table remain closed to permit proper social distance for substitutions. Ms. Basler stated her county was considering using substitution cards for the coach to show when requesting to put a new

player in the game. This would allow the player to remain in the seat until directed by the official. Mr. Kendro shared a document outlining guidelines for all winter sports, which included facility diagrams. Mr. Sye asked for feedback on the status of wrestling. Mr. Duffy informed the council there is concern about weigh ins and weight certifications. Currently weigh ins can be done in uniform, making the necessity of using a locker room unnecessary, therefore a more open space such as a gymnasium could be used. Mr. Kendro informed the group Frederick County is considering each team weigh in at their school before leaving to attend a match.

14. Mr. Kendro stated Frederick County will be contesting indoor track outside for the 2020-2021 season. Mr. Duffy and Mr. Ashby stated their jurisdictions will be doing that as well. Dr. Sullivan inquired as to specific modifications around how a meet should be run outside. He would like to see guidance from the indoor track committee. He is looking for guidance not only with that, but for how many teams can participate in a meet and in a wrestling match. (Mr. Ashby left for another meeting at 2:30) Mr. Warner indicated he will obtain more guidance from all winter sport committees. (Mr. Lee left for another meeting at 2:32)
15. Mr. Duffy asked for a timeframe to obtain the needed information and to reconvene this group. Dr. Sullivan suggested postponing the Monday Executive Council meeting until later in the week. The consensus is to move the meeting to Friday, November 6th at 11am. Mr. Duffy stated prior to the meeting three items need to be addressed:
 - a. Superintendents stance on winter state championships
 - b. Out-of-season interpretation from Mr. Warner
 - c. Clarification on sport modifications from winter sports.
16. Mr. Sye made a motion to adjourn the meeting, followed by a second from Mr. Davis. The meeting was adjourned at 2:42pm with a 10-0 vote.