

**NEW JERSEY STATE INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION**  
1161 Route 130 North Robbinsville, NJ 08691

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**November 13, 2024**

**Roll Call** - The meeting of the Executive Committee, held on Wednesday, November 13, 2024, via the Microsoft Teams virtual platform, was called to order by the President, Russell Petrocelli, at 11:04 am.

The following members were present: Al Abdelaziz, Mohammed Abdelaziz, Jeff Baldino, Dr. Carol Birnbohm, Jeremy Braverman, Anthony Browning, Carl Buffalino, Mark Cantagallo, Kevin Carroll, Tony Cattani, Jason Corley, Maria Crowley, Jorge Diaz, Judy Finch-Johnson, John Fraraccio, Michael Gallo, Dr. Kimberly Gruccio, Steven Jenkins, Howard Krieger, Greg Lasher, Brendan McGovern, Jason Miller, Dr. Anne Mucci, Dr. Danny Robertozzi, Senator Paul Sarlo, Steve Shohfi, Sheryl Smith, Jeffrey Steele, Dr. Gregory Troxell, Michael Vinella, Paul Vizzuso, Tammy Wagner, Barry Walker, Tripp Welborne, Assemblyman Benjie Wimberly, and Sjoquelyn Winstead. Also present: Colleen Maguire, Executive Director; Paul Popadiuk, Chief Compliance Officer; Tony Maselli, Chief Operating Officer; Al Stumpf, Derryk Sellers, and Sandy Mamary, Assistant Directors; Steven P. Goodell, Esq., NJSIAA Counsel. The following members of the press were in attendance: Jake Aferiat, *NJ Advance Media*. Also in attendance: Paul Anzano, Esq. of Pringle Quinn Anzano, P.C.

As Fall National Signing Day for students, Mr. Petrocelli hoped everyone had an exciting morning at their schools, like he did.

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**Approval of Minutes** - A motion was made by Steve Shohfi, seconded by Judy Finch-Johnson, to accept the minutes of the October 16, 2024 Executive Committee meeting. Motion carried with two abstentions.

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**Legislative Update (Paul Anzano)** – After recognizing the tragic death of his associate, Michael O’Connell, Mr. Anzano provided a brief legislative update. Now that the election is over, the legislature will focus their energies on next year’s gubernatorial race and the legislative seats that will be up for election. Right now, there’s little concern about the proposals currently being considered.

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**Executive Director Update – Colleen Maguire**

**Fall State Championships** – First, Ms. Maguire thanked all member schools who have been working together to host state tournaments games across several sports with little to no issues. And she encouraged all Executive Committee members to use their gold passes and attend a fall championship event.

Overall, the weather has been fantastic so staff is hoping it will continue for the upcoming three-week stretch that will culminate with the football state championships at Met Life Stadium and Rutgers University.

Certain parts of the state have been receiving air quality alerts due to wildfire activity. The association has instructed schools to follow state and local guidance, and to consult local health officials with any concerns around their ability to host outdoor events. Schools have the discretion to reschedule their events as necessary to ensure the health and safety of everyone involved.

**Annual Meeting Legislation Deadline – December 1** – The deadline to submit legislation proposals for the 2024-2025 Annual Meeting is December 1. Since December 1 is a Sunday, NJSIAA staff will accept

proposals through Monday, December 2. NJSIAA staff has posted, and will continue to post, deadline reminders via its Alert email system.

**Advisory Committee Meeting – December 11, 2024** – Following the December Executive Committee meeting, which is scheduled for December 11, the Advisory Committee will meet at 1:00pm. The Advisory Committee meeting is the first step in the legislation process – proposals passed by the Advisory Committee will be presented to the Executive Committee at the January meeting.

**Student Ambassadors – Class of 2026** – Ms. Maguire distributed a list of NJSIAA’s new student ambassadors, 13 in total. 12 are from the Class of 2026 and will serve a two-year term. The last ambassador is returning to the program and will graduate in 2025. Ms. Maguire will host smaller virtual sessions, with a few students each session, so she can get to know the new group more intimately. Then she will convene the entire group together to meet in person in early February at the NJSIAA office.

**NorthJersey.com Article** – Ms. Maguire addressed her concerns regarding an article on NorthJersey.com regarding a proposal that she is planning to submit to the Advisory Committee. She expressed her concerns with some colleagues that leaked a draft proposal and disappointment with a media outlet who published a draft proposal without anyone’s knowledge or consent.

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### **Program Review Committee – Colleen Maguire**

Ms. Maguire thanked the twelve members of the Program Review Committee who met virtually on 11/11 to review one proposal, which was unanimously endorsed. Liz Arango, Newark Public School District Director of Athletics, also attended the meeting on behalf of her school district to answer questions. The proposal is requesting a waiver to the enrollment mapping methodology used when creating NJSIAA’s sport specific classifications – the request is specific to boys and girls basketball.

Currently, the Newark Public School District has six primary high schools whose enrollments include the school’s natural enrollment plus a share of the enrollments for 11 alternate schools – the enrollments are provided by the Department of Education. An alternate school is one where students are allowed to play sports at other high schools within the same school district. The additional enrollments for 11 alternate schools is due to the district’s policy that allows students enrolled at and attending these alternate school to participate in sports at either the alternate school or a primary school, depending on what sports are offered at the alternate school. The methodology has resulted in approximately 365 additional students being mapped to the enrollments of each primary school, which are used in the classifications for all sports.

Basketball is the most populous sport within the Newark Public School District – all schools host a boys and girls basketball team with the exception of one alternate school, Newark Data Science and Information Technology, which is not an NJSIAA member school, nor does it host sports. Students attending this alternate school are eligible to participate in basketball at a primary school and will continue to be included in the enrollments of the primary schools (approximately 50 students per primary school). Students attending all other alternate schools are only eligible to participate at the Newark Public School District school where they are enrolled and attending.

By including the enrollments for these alternate schools, the Newark Public School District primary schools are at a competitive disadvantage because students attending these alternate schools are not eligible to participate at the primary schools – they are playing basketball at the school they are enrolled at and attending. Of the six primary schools, two are large enrollments and will continue to be classified as Group IV while the four other schools will most likely move down a classification group as compared to other sports such as soccer or girls volleyball.

It is important to note that this situation is unique to the Newark Public School District – they are the only member school district that has alternate schools within the district that offer interscholastic sports. All other member school districts do not offer interscholastic sports at their alternate high schools – students attending their alternate high schools are only eligible to participate at a primary school.

Lastly, the Newark Public School District recognizes that any violation of this waiver will result in immediately ineligibility for the state tournament – meaning if any student participates for a school other than the school that they are enrolled at and attending, then that school will not be eligible to participate in the state tournament.

On behalf of the Program Review Committee, a motion was made by Tripp Welborne, seconded by Jason Corley, to allow The Newark Public School District a waiver to the classification methodology for the sports of boys basketball and girls basketball by not mapping the enrollments for the 9 alternate high schools that are NJSIAA member schools who offer interscholastic sports to the 6 primary high schools. Furthermore, the enrollments for the one alternate high school that is not an NJSIAA member school (Newark Fashion and Design School), will not be mapped to the 6 primary high schools, but these students are also not allowed to play for any other Newark Public School District high school. Any Newark school who violates this waiver will result in immediate ineligibility for that year’s NJSIAA state tournament. There is no appeal of the violation, with the exception of students enrolled at and attending Newark Data Science and Information Technology, these students are eligible to participate at one of the six primary high schools.

Discussion took place. Mr. Jenkins, a member of the same conference as the Newark schools, shared that this proposal is fair because all Newark schools have basketball, unlike the other sanctioned sports. Sjoquelyn Winstead, a former Newark Athletic Director, shared that unlike other sports, it is very hard to have violations of this rule in basketball since the Athletic Directors in Newark monitor basketball compliance very well. Motion carried unanimously.

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### **Chief Compliance Officer Update (Paul Popadiuk)**

**Eligibility Updates** – There are no major updates. All eligibility meetings and hearings have taken place for winter sport athletes.

**Cooperative Sports – Spring Season Approvals – Voice Vote** – The Cooperative Sports Committee met in October 2024 to review 11 cooperative sports applications for spring sports and one emergent relief request for this winter. The committee approved the following applications to be in place for a four-year period, with exception of the one emergent application, which will be in place for one year starting with the 2024-2025 school year.

1. Belvidere-North Warren: B&G Spring Track, B&G Lacrosse
2. Eastern Christian-Hawthorne Christian: Softball and Baseball
3. Garfield-Saddle Brook: Girls Lacrosse
4. Hanover Park-Whippany Park: B&G Golf and B&G Lacrosse
5. Henry Hudson-Keyport: Boys Volleyball and Boys Tennis
6. High Point-Walkkill Valley: Boys Lacrosse
7. Hoboken-Weehawken: B&G Lacrosse
8. Lakeland/Kinnelon: Softball
9. Park Ridge-Emerson: Girls Lacrosse, Boys Golf, Boys Lacrosse
10. University-Shabazz: Boys Volleyball
11. West Deptford-Gateway: Boys Lacrosse
12. Newark Academy-Morris Catholic: Emergent Relief, Wrestling

A motion was made by Kurt Karcich, seconded by Steve Shohfi to approve the 11 spring cooperative sports programs and 1 emergent relief winter cooperative sports program request, approved by the Cooperative Sports Committee in October 2024 (the 11 approved spring programs will be in place for a four-year period starting with the 2024-2025 school year and the one emergent relief request for one year starting with the 2024-2025 school year.) Motion carried unanimously.

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### **Chief Operating Officer Update (Tony Maselli)**

**Winter Sports Updates** – All winter tournament regulations will be posted on NJSIAA’s website by 11/15. Draft classifications for all winter sports have been sent to schools to review. Final versions will be shared immediately after Thanksgiving. All winter state tournament dates are posted on the association’s website and all facilities for state tournament events are set.

**Officials Update – Suspensions** – This past fall, the association experienced several officials arrested during the season. These officials are currently suspended and won’t be eligible for officiating until the charges are resolved and the official passes a background check. Committee member, Dr. Mucci, noted that schools receive weekly background check reports from the DOE and wondered if the service NJSIAA uses does the same, which it doesn’t.

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### **Al Stumpf, Assistant Director Update**

**Cross Country Update** – Mr. Stumpf shared the results from the Group Meets that took place on 11/9 at Holmdel Park.

**Soccer Update** – The girls sectional finals will take place on 11/14, the public state semifinals on 11/18 and the non-public finals on 11/20 or 11/21. The girls public finals is set for 11/23 at Franklin HS.

**National Girl & Women in Sports Day (NGWSD) Event** – This event will take place on 1/12/25 at Rutgers University at the Rutgers-Nebraska girls basketball game. The nomination form will be open from December 2 – 13, 2024. It was a great day last year, and Mr. Stumpf anticipates this year to be another great event.

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### **Derryk Sellers, Assistant Director Update**

**Gymnastics Update** – The gymnastics tournament has concluded. Underdog, Mount Olive HS, won the team state championship.

**Girls Volleyball Update** – The semifinals round will be tomorrow, 11/14, followed by the championship games over the weekend.

**Boys Soccer Update** – The boys public state finals is scheduled for Sunday, 11/24 at Franklin HS.

**NJSCA Hall of Fame / NFCA Coach of the Year Program** – This event will take place on 1/12/25 at the Pines Manor in Edison.

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**Sandy Mamary, Assistant Director Update**

**Tennis Update** – The team tournament has concluded. The Tennis Committee will meet next week to review the season.

**Field Hockey Update** – The tournament is currently in the sectional finals level. The state finals will be on Saturday, 11/16. Everything has been running smoothly.

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**Finance Committee Update – Russell Petrocelli**

**Approval of Monthly Checks** – The October 12, 2024 through November 11, 2024 checkbook was approved by the finance committee and all checks were approved per policy before they were disbursed. Jeffrey Steele made a motion, seconded by Barry Walker, to approve the October 12, 2024 through November 11, 2024 check registers. Motion carried unanimously.

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**Report of Counsel (Steven P. Goodell)** – On 10/28, the Commissioner of Education ruled in favor of the NJSIAA and denied the appeal of a private Christian school student who wished to play sports at their public school. The student was first denied a waiver by NJSIAA, so the family appealed the decision to the Commissioner. There is no indication whether the student will appeal the Commissioner’s decision to the Appellate Courts.

There was a three-hour Controversies Committee hearing earlier in the month. Spotswood HS alleged that another NJSIAA school recruited one of their students. After testimony, the committee sustained the recruiting charges. A written decision will be sent by end of week.

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**Old Business / New Business** – none

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**Adjournment** - There being no further business, a motion was made by Judy Finch-Johnson, seconded by Kurt Karcich at 11:44 am, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Maguire  
Executive Director

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