

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

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
January 15, 2025

**Roll Call** - The meeting of the Executive Committee, held on Wednesday, January 15, 2025, via the Microsoft Teams virtual platform, was called to order by the President, Russell Petrocelli, at 11:05 am.

The following members were present: Mohammed Abdelaziz, Jeff Baldino, Dr. Carol Birnbohm, Jeremy Braverman, Anthony Browning, Carl Buffalino, Kevin Carroll, Heather Crisci, Maria Crowley, Jorge Diaz, Judy Finch-Johnson, John Fraraccio, Michael Gallo, Natalie Gorman, Steven Jenkins, Kurt Karcich, Dr. Michael Kuchar, Greg Lasher, Brendan McGovern, Jason Miller, Dr. Anne Mucci, Dr. Danny Robertozzi, Senator Paul Sarlo, Steve Shohfi, Sheryl Smith, Jeffrey Steele, Dr. Gregory Troxell, Joseph Ursino, Paul Vizzuso, Tammy Wagner, Barry Walker, Cynthia Wilks, Assemblyman Wimberly, and Sjoquelynn Winstead. Also present: Colleen Maguire, Executive Director; Paul Popadiuk, Chief Compliance Officer; Tony Maselli, Chief Operating Officer; Al Stumpf and Sandy Mamary, Assistant Directors; Alexis Smith, Esq., NJSIAA Counsel. The following sportswriters were in attendance: Jake Aferiat, *NJ Advance Media*, Mike McGarry, *Atlantic City Press*, and Darren Cooper, *NorthJersey.com*. Also in attendance: Paul Anzano of Pringle Quinn Anzano, P.C. and Dave Frazier – Athletic Director at Rutherford HS/Chairman of the Advisory Committee.

---

**Approval of Minutes** - A motion was made by Kurt Karcich, seconded by Steve Shohfi, to accept the minutes of the December 11, 2024 Executive Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

---

**Advisory Committee Proposal – Dave Frazier, Chair – One Reading – Voice Vote** – Mr. Frazier spoke on behalf of the Advisory Committee, who met on 12/11. After review of the proposal and a lengthy discussion, the Advisory Committee passed the proposal with a vote of 11-1 (As Chair, Mr. Frazier was a non-vote). The committee overwhelmingly supported it and felt it was important to move forward. Ms. Maguire provided a high-level overview of the proposal to the Executive Committee (which is detailed below).

*Advisory Committee Proposal –  
Competitive Balance Formula – Public Schools – Football and Basketball Proposal*

---

*NJSIAA staff proposes amending Article III of the Bylaws, which outlines how public schools are classified into groups (based on enrollment) and sections (based on geography). The amendment would allow the NJSIAA to adjust the group classification of certain public schools based on their competitiveness as determined by a “competitive balance formula.” The types of schools and specifics of the “competitive balance formula” would be set forth in the Association’s Policies and Procedures.*

*If adopted by the membership at the May 2025 Annual Meeting, **the proposal would take effect with the 2026–2027 classification cycle**, and the formula’s “success factor” would be calculated using 2024–2025 and 2025–2026 state tournament results.*

**Background**

*NJSIAA currently classifies its member schools in accordance with Article III of the Association’s Bylaws, which requires that member schools first be divided equally into Groups and then equally*

divided into Sections. For public schools, enrollments used in the classifications are based on those submitted by the member school to the New Jersey Department of Education during its annual fall survey. Grades 9–11 enrollments are used to calculate every member school's enrollment in the classification process. Classifications are sport-specific.

These Bylaws have been in place and relied upon for many years and have traditionally served to create a level playing field by ensuring that public schools with similar student populations compete against each other in state tournaments. They are also based on the assumption that public schools are similar to each other because they generally draw their enrollment from a fixed sending district.

However, the rules regarding public school enrollment have evolved, and new types of public schools have emerged. In addition to traditional high schools—those whose students attend based solely on geographic residence and do not enroll students using any other criteria—there are now non-traditional high schools—such as charter schools, choice schools, schools with board approved tuition policies, school districts with open enrollment policies, county-based magnet, vocational and technical schools, and schools serving as satellite campuses for county-based academy programs—which may enroll students from beyond a fixed sending district.

Simply put, non-traditional schools have the opportunity to gain a competitive advantage over other similarly-sized schools. The purpose of this proposed amendment is to identify those non-traditional schools that may be gaining a competitive advantage by virtue of their enrollment policies, and adjust their group placement accordingly.

This proposal was developed by staff after surveying the membership, consulting with the Leagues and Conferences, reviewing similar provisions in other states, and discussion with an eight-member classification review committee. It would initially apply only to the sports of football, boys basketball, and girls basketball.

As proposed, a competitive balance formula will be used to identify non-traditional schools that should move up to the next highest classification group based on state tournament success. The formula will initially identify schools based on a success factor. Schools that meet the success factor will be further reviewed to determine whether the school is a non-traditional school, and if so, the type of non-traditional school it is. Schools that do not meet the success factor will not be considered for any further action. Based on the formula, a non-traditional school may move up one classification group. Lastly, the formula is not applicable to traditional schools – traditional schools will not move for any level of success.

### **Proposed Bylaw Amendment**

Article III “Classification of Member Schools”, Section 3, shall be amended to include the following new paragraph:

C. *Competitive Balance.* A public school's classification may be changed based on a competitive balance formula as approved by the Executive Committee and set forth in the Policies and Procedures.

### **Proposed Competitive Balance Policy**

The following Competitive Balance Policy shall be included in the Association's Policies and Procedures, and may be amended from time to time by the Executive Committee:

## **Competitive Balance Policy**

*To ensure that non-traditional public high schools compete on a level playing field with traditional public high schools, the following competitive balance policy shall be applied to non-traditional public high schools participating in the sports of football, boys basketball, and girls basketball.*

## **Competitive Balance Formula**

*A public high school will move up to the next highest classification group when the school meets the success factor and meets the requirements of a non-traditional school.*

### **Success Factor:**

*Points will be awarded for participation in the NJSIAA state tournament based on the following scale:*

- *One point for a win in each preliminary round (i.e., all rounds prior to the sectional final).*
- *Two points for winning a sectional final.*
- *Three points for winning a state semifinal.*
- *Four points for winning a state championship.*

*During the previous two-year classification cycle, the following sport-specific point totals will be used to determine what schools will be further reviewed for a possible move to the next highest classification group:*

- *Football – cumulative total of six points or more*
- *Basketball – cumulative total of seven points or more*

### **Non-Traditional Schools:**

*For purposes of the competitive balance formula, there are three categories of non-traditional schools—non-defined geographic area, county-based geographic area, and school districts with open enrollment policies. These categories are further defined below.*

#### **1. Non-Defined Geographic Area**

*These schools can enroll students beyond a defined geographic area and are listed below:*

- *Charter Schools*
- *Choice Schools*
- *Schools that Permit Tuition-Paying Students*

#### **2. County-Based Geographic Area**

*These schools can enroll students from an entire county and are listed below:*

- *County Vocational-Technical Schools*
- *County Magnet/Academy Schools*
- *Schools with Satellite Campuses for County-Based Academies*

#### **3. School Districts with Open Enrollment Policies**

*These school districts have multiple high schools and allow students to choose which school they attend or allow students to apply to schools within the district. Schools districts with multiple high schools that enroll students based solely on their home address are not included in this category.*

### **Application of Competitive Balance Formula for Non-Traditional Schools:**

*The following schools will be automatically moved to the next highest classification group if the school has accumulated six or more points in the sport of football, or seven or more points in the sport of basketball, during a two-year classification cycle:*

- *Charter Schools*
- *County Vocational-Technical Schools*
- *County Magnet/Academy Schools*
- *School Districts with Open Enrollment Policies*

*The following schools will be moved to the next highest classification group if it has accumulated six or more points in the sport of football, or seven or more points in the sport of basketball, during a two-year classification cycle:*

- *Choice Schools*
- *Schools that Permit Tuition-Paying Students*
- *Schools with Satellite Campuses for County-Based Academies*

*And three or more student-athletes playing football, or one or more student-athlete(s) playing basketball, are enrolled as choice students, tuition students, or via county academy programs. The school will have to provide a varsity roster and attest to the type of enrollment for each student-athlete.*

*Non-Resident students who are children of school district staff, as defined by NJ statute, and attend one of these types of schools shall be excluded from the minimum number of student-athletes required to move to the next highest classification group.*

*Once a school is subject to the competitive balance formula and moves to the next highest classification group, varsity rosters will not be reviewed during the one-year review or two-year review periods. Potential moves to the next highest classification group, or remaining in the new classification group, will be based solely on points earned in the new classification group. When a school moves back to its original classification group based on its natural enrollment, then varsity rosters will be subject to review when the school earns the required number of success points by sport.*

*This policy does not apply to NJSIAA member schools with student-athletes participating in interscholastic sports who are enrolled in a charter school and/or county vocational-technical/public academy schools and return to their home district when their charter school and/or county vocational-technical/public academy school does not offer the sport (NJSIAA Bylaws Article V – Eligibility of Athletes – Paragraph G. Enrollment – CL 2 – 4).*

### **Future Classification Cycles:**

#### **First-Year Review – One Year Point Total**

*Once placed in the next highest classification group, if the school earns four or more points in football, or five or more points in basketball, in the first year of the next two-year classification cycle, then it will move up to the next highest classification group for the second year of the next two-year classification cycle. If the school does not earn any points in the first year of the next two-year classification cycle, then it will move down to the next lowest classification group for the second year of the next two-year classification cycle. Otherwise, the school will remain in the next highest classification group for both years of the next two-year classification cycle. The varsity rosters will not be reviewed for Choice Schools, Schools that Permit Tuition-Paying Students, and Schools with Satellite Campuses for County-Based Academies, during the first-year review—any move will be based solely on points earned during the first year in the new classification group.*

### Two-Year Review – Cumulative Point Total

*During the two-year classification cycle, if the school earns six or more cumulative points in the sport of football, or seven or more cumulative points in the sport of basketball, then the school will move up to the next highest classification group for the next two-year classification cycle. If the school earns three, four, or five cumulative points in football, or three, four, five, or six cumulative points in basketball, then the school will remain in the same classification group for the next two-year classification cycle. If the school earns two or less cumulative points in either sport, then the school will move down to the next lowest classification group for the next two-year classification cycle. The varsity rosters will not be reviewed for Choice Schools, Schools that Permit Tuition-Paying Students, and Schools with Satellite Campuses for County-Based Academies during the two-year review—any move will be based solely on cumulative points earned during the two-year review in the new classification group.*

#### **Football:**

- *6 or more cumulative points – move to next highest classification group*
- *3–5 cumulative points – remain in current classification group*
- *2 or less cumulative points – move to next lowest classification group*

#### **Basketball:**

- *7 or more cumulative points – move to next highest classification group*
- *3–6 cumulative points – remain in current classification group*
- *2 or less cumulative points – move to next lowest classification group*

*At no point will a school be eligible to move down to a classification group that is lower than its natural classification group based on enrollment.*

#### **Appeals:**

*This provision is meant to be applied objectively. Therefore, a school that is subject to this provision may appeal only (1) the determination that it is a non-traditional school; (2) the calculation of the competitive balance formula; or (3) the application of the competitive balance formula.*

#### **NJSIAA Classification Review Committee:**

*Michael Ben-David, Superintendent, Tenafly Public Schools*

*Carol Birnbohm, Superintendent, Lenape Regional High School District*

*Brian Brotschul, Superintendent, Somerset Hills School District*

*Jorge Diaz, Superintendent, Middlesex County Magnet Schools*

*Judy Finch-Johnson, Assistant Superintendent, Elizabeth Public Schools*

*Michael Rossi, Lenape Valley Regional High School*

*David Salvo, Middle Township Public Schools*

*Greg Troxell, Phillipsburg School District*

Discussion took place and questions were answered. It was stressed that if a student has a choice where to go to high school, then the rule applies, but if a student goes where they are supposed to go, then it doesn't. Mr. Braverman questioned Votech schools being affected and shared that there are multiple magnet schools in Freehold where coaches aren't pulling students for athletics. Mr. Anzano answered that if it's a county-based vo-tech school, the rule could apply but will not if the student returns to their designated hometown high school for athletics. Senator Sarlo commended everyone who worked on this proposal. It's a complicated issue and the committee did a good job tackling it as public schools continue to evolve. Assemblyman Wimberly asked if it will be revisited annually, to which Ms. Maguire explained that the plan will be visited every two years, to coincide with the classification cycle, but there is a review

after the first year, so if a school earlier does not find success at the new classification grouping (details outlined in the proposal), they can move earlier.

A motion was made by Judy Finch-Johnson, seconded by Dr. Carol Birnbohm, to endorse the Competitive Balance formula proposal approved by the Advisory Committee on 12/11. The proposal will now move forward to the membership to review at two sectional meetings. One meeting will take place virtually in March, while the other will be in-person at the DAANJ Conference. The membership can leave as is or recommend changes. Motion carried with one dissent and one abstention.

---

**Legislative Update (Paul Anzano)** – Currently there is no momentum behind any bills that impact NJSIAA, though Mr. Anzano is watching a transgender bill that may affect the association.

---

### **Executive Director Update – Colleen Maguire**

**NFHS Winter Meeting Update** – Ms. Maguire attended the winter meeting from January 3 – January 6. In addition to conversations about competitive balance, transfers continue to be the hot topic. Ms. Maguire was on a panel to discuss New Jersey’s transfer rule, as she continues to receive many inquiries from other state associations. One trend coming out of the Southeast states and Texas, is a move by state legislatures to adopt a universal school choice bill. This means any student can attend any school regardless of where they live or their family income. An annual stipend will be given to families to use at their discretion. These states now need to reconsider both their classification policies and their transfer rules considering these moves, and in a very short period.

**NJSIAA January Newsletter** – Last week, a winter season newsletter was shared with the membership and distributed to the Executive Committee. Ms. Maguire encouraged committee members to forward on. The newsletter includes some important updates around our winter state tournaments and other important reminders.

**Wrestling Update** – Tickets went on sale this past Monday for the individual state championships at Boardwalk Hall. All ticket information is posted on NJSIAA’s website under Featured News. Ms. Maguire was happy to report that all four sites for the girls region tournament have been confirmed and thanked the following sites for hosting: Vernon HS, Union HS, East Brunswick HS and Absegami HS. The tournament will be held on Sunday, February 23, which is the day after the boys district tournament. Over 2300 girls are competing in the sport this season so it is growing.

The boys team tournament cutoff, Saturday, February 1, is fast approaching. Rutgers is confirmed to host the boys team tournament finals on Sunday, February 16. All district and region host sites have been confirmed, and the alignment is posted to NJSIAA’s website. There are 40 schools who will host these tournaments over two weekends. The association is extremely grateful for their hospitality.

---

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

**Eligibility Updates** – The Eligibility Committee met last week and will meet again in February.

**Fall Cooperative Sports Program Application Deadline – January 17, 2025** – Applications are due 1/17. The Cooperative Sports Committee will meet after that date to review all submissions.

---

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

**Ice Hockey Update** – The season is well underway. The finals are set for 3/10 at the Prudential Center.

**Fall Steroid Testing Results** – There were no positive tests in the fall. Two tests initially came up inconclusive but after further testing the tests came back negative.

---

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

**Basketball Update** – Cutoff is 2/15. The public and non-public tournaments begin on 2/26 and 2/28 respectively.

**Fencing Update** – The districts tournament begins on 1/26. All participants have registered.

**Unified Basketball Update** – Cutoff is 2/15. The two championship games will be played on 3/15 and 3/16 at Rutgers, one each day.

**Unified Bowling Update** – The state championships will take place on 2/27 at Bowlero in North Brunswick.

**NGWSD Event** – The event took place on 1/12/25 at Rutgers University. 305 girls were registered. It was a great day and a great girls basketball game (Rutgers played Nebraska).

---

## **Derryk Sellers, Assistant Director Update (provided by Colleen Maguire & Tony Maselli)**

**Bowling Update** – Due to low participation, the girls bowling tournament was restructured to make a more competitive tournament. Instead of the four traditional sections (N1, N2, Central and South), the girls will be divided into two sections, a north and south section. Revised dates have been posted on NJSIAA's website. There were no changes made to the boys tournament.

**Winter Track Update** – Due to the Bubble's size and the increasing number of winter track participants, changes were made to the Sectional Tournament. Most sections will compete on their own date, except for a few that will compete on the same day, but one in the AM and the other in the PM. This should make the meets run quicker.

**NJSCA Tennis Coaches Clinic – January 10, 2025** – Princeton University hosted the NJSCA Tennis Clinic last Friday which had over 100 coaches in attendance. Ms. Maguire thanked Anne Marie Walters for her efforts with coordinating all the association's clinics. There have been five coach clinics to date and there will be a wrestling clinic later in the spring. Reminder that new to this year, all coach clinics are free to member school coaches.

**NJSCA Hall of Fame / Awards Luncheon** – On 1/12, the NJSCA Hall of Fame/Awards Luncheon took place, which celebrated 17 Hall of Fame inductees and 29 state coaches of the year. Ms. Maguire congratulated Lia Kunnapas from Immaculate Heart Academy for being named the NFHS National Girls Swimming & Diving Coach of the Year.

Four coaches were named NFHS Section 1 Coaches of the Year in their respective sports. They were

- o Mike Barrett of Toms River North – B Track & Field
- o Mike Butler – Ranny School – B Golf
- o Max Newill – Bridgewater Raritan – Baseball
- o Megan Mason-Light – Gloucester City – Softball

Ms. Maguire thanked NJSCA President and Executive Committee member Maria Crowley for organizing and presenting at the event, along with Derek Sellers and Sandy Mamary.

---

**Sandy Mamary, Assistant Director Update**

**Swimming and Diving Update** – Team entries are due 1/20, team tournament cutoff is 1/25, and the cutoff for the individual tournament is 2/15.

---

**Finance Committee Update – Russell Petrocelli**

**Approval of Monthly Checks** – The December 9, 2024 through January 13, 2025 checkbook was approved by the finance committee and all checks were approved per policy before they were disbursed. Kurt Karcich made a motion, seconded by Dr. Troxell, to approve the December 9, 2024 through January 13, 2025 check registers. Motion carried unanimously.

---

**Report of Counsel (Alexis Smith)** – The association was served on Monday with an order to show cause for a girls ice hockey player. The firm will defend accordingly.

---

**Old Business / New Business** – Ms. Maguire distributed a communication from Rutgers Prep School about their presentation to the Executive Committee last month.

---

**Adjournment** - There being no further business, a motion was made by Steve Shohfi, seconded by Judy Finch Johnson at 11:43 am, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Maguire  
Executive Director

CEM: In