ATHLETIC COUNCIL MINUTES

March 25, 2026

HIGHLIGHTS

3.1 **CARRIED:** January 14 2026 Section VI Athletic Council meeting minutes

4.3 **CARRIED:** Remove City Honors Softball independent status, spring 2026

4.4 **CARRIED**: Lackawanna independent status in the sport of baseball, spring 2026

5.1 **CARRIED:** Combining of schools applications

6.3.1 **CARRIED**: Treasurer's report

6.4.1 **CARRIED:** Proposed 2026 football alignments

ATHLETIC COUNCIL
MINUTES

1.0 **CALL TO ORDER** (B. Banker)

1.1 Pledge of allegiance

2.0 **PRESENTATION & AWARDS**

2.1 D&G Wellness -Lunch Sponsor

2.2 Winter 25-26 State Champions
a) Miles Moore (Frewsburg) – Boys Swimming, 50 Freestyle
b) Melia Kupchanko (Williamsville North) – Indoor Track, 1,000 meter run
c) Depew Girls Bowling, Division 2
d) Emma Felton (Depew)- Girls Bowling
e) Tavio Hoose (Southwestern) – Wrestling D2, 190

2.3 CSP Football Stage 3 Appeal Hearing

2.4 ***Motion to move 6.7a to 7.2.1***
CARRIED
Fallacaro/Dougherty/Sortisio

3.0 **MINUTES** (B. Banker)

3.1 ***Motion to approve the January 14, 2026 Section VI Athletic Council meeting minutes***
CARRIED
Kelly/Salisbury

4.0 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT** (M. DiFilippo)

4.1 Mandatory AD Workshop – January 22, 2026 at Erie 1 BOCES
M. DiFilippo shared the workshop went well with a positive response to the sessions offered.

4.2 Stage 2 Appeal Upheld – CSP Girls Cross Country Class C 26-27
On January 14, 2026, the Athletic Council approved the Combining of Schools recommendation to keep CSP Cross Country at Class C for the 2026-2027 school year. CSP Cross Country filed an appeal, to which the Appeals Committee upheld the Athletic Council's decision.

4.3 ***Motion to remove City Honors Softball independent status, spring 2026***
CARRIED
Lloyd/Zirkle

4.4 ***Motion to approve Lackawanna's independent status in the sport of baseball, spring 2026***
CARRIED
Zirkle/McDuffie

4.5 2nd Annual Officials Recruitment Day – April 25th
Section VI officials are hosting a Recruitment Day on **April 25th, 2026, from 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM** at select Dick's Sporting Goods locations - **Dick's House of Sport:** 4200 Ridge Lee Road and **Dick's Orchard Park Location:** 3434 Amelia Drive. This event offers the chance to gain firsthand insight into officiating skills and techniques, with opportunities to speak directly to current officials about joining the team.

4.6 Fall Start Date – August 24, 2026; Football – August 17, 2026 (informational)

4.7 Fall Mandatory AD Workshop – August 20, 2026 (informational)
To be held at Buffalo Toronto Public Media

4.8 Fall Mandatory Coaches Meetings – August 19, 2026; Football August 12, 2026 (informational)

4.9 WNYSO/Section VI Negotiations Update
Section VI lead negotiators, J. Sortisio and M. Kruzynski, are scheduled to meet with WNYSO lead negotiators, C. Hope and M. Binkowski, on April 16th, 2026. The Section VI negotiating team is scheduled to meet April 21. Council members were asked to remind their respective leagues to submit feedback to M. DiFilippo.

4.10 NYSPHSAA Summer Meeting / Foundation Golf Tournament July 27, 2026
Reminder for league groups and individuals to register and consider sponsorship (Appendix A).

5.0 **COMMUNICATIONS** (M. DiFilippo)

Emergency Combining of Schools Combinations Approved by the Executive Committee

- Brocton/Cassadaga Valley, Baseball, V, 230, Class C, Approved 3/10/26
- Gowanda/Silver Creek, Girls Lacrosse, V, 298, Class D Approved 3/10/26
- Niagara Wheatfield/Niagara Falls, Girls Lacrosse, V, 2359, Class A, Approved 3/4/26

5.1 ***Motion to approve Combining of Schools applications, numbers (1) through (37)***
CARRIED
Alvarez/Taylor

1. Football, New, **Medina,** Albion, 520, V, JV, 7/8, Federated, NA
2. Cross Country BG, Existing, **West Seneca West,** West Seneca East, 1047, V, 7/8, ECIC, TBA
3. Cross Country BG, New, **Silver Creek,** Forestville & Dunkirk, 573, V, CCAA, TBA
4. Cross Country BG, Existing, **Fredonia,** Westfield, 420, V, 7/8, CCAA, TBA
5. Cheer GameDay, Existing, **East Aurora,** Holland, 477, V, ECIC, TBA
6. Cheer GameDay, New, **Frewsburg,** Southwestern, 334, V, CCAA, 3/11/26
7. Cheer GameDay, Existing, **Portville,** Cuba Rushford, Bolivar-Richburg, 326, V, JV, Mod 7/8, CCAA, TBA
8. Cheer - Game Day, NEW, **Franklinville,** Ellicottville, West Valley, 214, V, 7/8/9, CCAA, TBA
9. Cheer GameDay, Existing, **West Seneca West,** West Seneca East, *997 Mod only, 7/8 ONLY, ECIC, TBA
10. Field Hockey, Existing, **Kenmore East,** Kenmore West, 1126, V. JV, NFL, TBA
11. Field Hockey, Existing, **West Seneca West,** West Seneca East, 1047, V, 7/8/9, ECIC, TBA
12. Field Hockey, Existing, **Holland,** East Aurora, 477, V. JV, 7/8/9, ECIC, TBA
13. Golf B, Existing, **West Seneca West,** West Seneca East, 1322, V, ECIC, TBA
14. Gym G, New, **Williamsville North,** Starpoint, 1596, V, Federated, NA
15. Gym G, Existing, **Williamsville East,** Sweet Home, 1465, V, Federated, NA
16. Gym G, Existing, **Frontier,** Lake Shore, 1442, V, Federated, NA
17. Soccer B, Existing, **West Seneca West,** West Seneca East, 1322, V, JV & 7/8, ECIC, TBA
18. Soccer B, Existing, **Pine Valley,** Gowanda, 281, V, 7/8/9, CCAA, TBA
19. Soccer B, New, **Allegany-Limestone,** Hinsdale, 273, V, CCAA, TBA
20. Soccer B, Existing, **Silver Creek,** Forestville, 244, V, JV, 789, CCAA, TBA
21. Soccer B, Existing, **Westfield,** Brocton, 204, V, 7/8/9, CCAA, TBA
22. Soccer G, Existing, **West Seneca West,** West Seneca East, 1322, V, JV, ECIC, TBA
23. Soccer G, Existing, **Pine Valley,** Gowanda, 281, V, 7/8/9, CCAA, TBA
24. Soccer G, New, **Allegany-Limestone,** Hinsdale, 273, V, CCAA, TBA
25. Soccer G, Existing, **Silver Creek,** Forestville, 244, V, 789, CCAA, TBA
26. Soccer G, Existing, **Westfield,** Brocton, 204, V, 7/8/9, CCAA, TBA
27. Swim G, Existing, **Kenmore East,** Kenmore West, 1463, V, NFL, TBA
28. Swim G, Existing, **West Seneca West,** West Seneca East, 1322, V, ECIC, TBA
29. Swim G, Existing, **Southwestern,** Jamestown, 1323, V, CCAA, TBA
30. Swim G, Existing, **Fredonia,** Dunkirk, Forestville, Pine Valley, Cass Valley, 1198, V, CCAA, TBA
31. Swim G, New, **Cleveland Hill,** Maryvale, 828, V, ECIC, TBA
32. Swim G, Existing, **East Aurora,** Holland, 575, V, ECIC, TBA
33. Tennis G, Existing, **West Seneca West,** West Seneca East, 1322, V, ECIC, TBA
34. Tennis G, New, **Frewsburg,** Southwestern, 429, CCAA, 3/11/26
35. Volleyball B, Existing, **Kenmore East,** Kenmore West, 1126, V, JV, 7/8/9, NFL, TBA
36. Volleyball B, Existing, **East Aurora,** Holland, 493, V, JV. 7/8, ECIC, TBA
37. Volleyball G, Existing, **West Valley,** Franklinville, 165, V, JV. 7/8, CCAA, TBA

6.0 **STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS**

6.1 Combining of Schools Committee (J. Sortisio)

The winter 25-26 combined schools end of season reports were due March 20, 2026. Schools with outstanding reports were contacted.

6.2 Charter Schools Classification Committee (J. Sortisio)

Nothing to report.

6.3 Finance Committee (S. Penhollow)

6.3.1 ***Motion to approve the Treasurer's report*** (Appendix B)
CARRIED
Ljiljanich/Penhollow

6.4 Sectional/Intersectional (M. DiFilippo)

6.4.1 ***Motion to approve the proposed 2026 football alignments*** (Appendix C)
CARRIED, 1 Opposed (Kruzynski)
Fallacaro-Dougherty/Zirkle

M. Kruzynski questioned and expressed concern with Classes A & B aligned by size and Class C by geography.

The Football Committee made the recommendation to align the classes that way. There is no clear defining North/South border in Class A and B. In Class C, there is a clear defined border.

*An error was discovered and the football alignments were revised after this meeting was held. They are now accurate in Appendix C.

6.4.1 Modified Committee – Revision to the NYSPHSAA Promotion Rule (approved at 1/14/26 AC)
- Clarification on moving forward approval (Appendix D)

See agenda item 6.7c

6.5 Safety (M. McKenna)

6.6 Modified Committee (L. Bergman, M. Librock)

6.6.1 Rolling agenda
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1X_iVIWi-nmrYKJ5C3IaJsbgWXMoZuray1XyZb79uuto/edit

6.7 State Executive Committee/Central Committee

a) Superintendent (J. Sortisio)

- Update from Schools without Borders March 11th meeting.
  Moved to 7.2.1

b) Principal (C. Alvarez)

Nothing to report

c) Female Rep./Male Rep. (M. Fallacaro-Dougherty/J. Roth)

The following are discussion items. Action will be taken via Google survey, sent Tuesday, April 14, 2026, due Tuesday, April 21, 2026 close of business, to provide direction for M. Fallacaro-Dougherty, Female Representative, and J. Roth, Male Representative at the May 2026 NYSPSHAA Executive Committee meeting (Appendix D):

6.7c1 Field Hockey – Establish a Pilot Program for Modified and Junior Varsity Teams

6.7c2 Competitive Cheerleading: Classification Cut-off Numbers

6.7c3 Softball – Establish pregame timeline and protocol for regular season games

6.7c4 NYPSHAA Promotion Rule

At the January 14, 2026 Athletic Council Meeting, the Athletic Council directed M. Fallacaro-Dougherty, Female Representative, and J. Roth, Male Representative, to support the Modified Committee – Revision to the NYSPHSAA Promotion Rule. At the February 2026 NYSPHSAA Executive Committee Meeting, the Revision to the NYSPHSAA Promotion Rule was supported at the beginning of the 26-27 school year. "With Section approval, contestants may be promoted to a higher classification within the modified program or to a junior varsity or varsity team at any time." With that, sections now have the choice to apply the revision to the NYSPHSAA Promotion Rule.

Council members should discuss this item with their respective leagues as a vote will be taken on how to proceed, beginning with the 26-27 school year.

6.8 Extended Eligibility (M. DiFilippo)

Nothing to report

6.9 SAAC (J. Grzymala)

6.9.1 Leadership Conference April 15th and 16th in Albany --NYSPHSAA Leadership
Departing from Kenmore West HS on 4/15
(Chaperones: Bourke, Iwankow, Burnett, Grzymala, Williams, Juergens-Tonge)

6.9.2 SAAC Committee will meet in May to provide more Student Leadership Opportunities for 2026-27 School Year (3 Locations - looking more towards the Chat/Catt Region, PBS, UB/Villa Maria College)

6.9.3 Rising Sophomore Girl Application online on NYSPHSAA for Student Athlete in Section VI to complete for new Representative to Student Representative for Section VI

6.10 Transfer/Foreign Student (M. DiFilippo)

Data accessible by the executive committee

6.11 Sportsmanship (J. Graczyk, D. Ames)

6.11.1 Sportsmanship promotion survey submission deadline is April 6th. Seeking 100% participation.

6.12 Veterans (J. Trampert)

The Veterans' Dinner is scheduled for September 15, 2026.

6.13 Mixed Competition (C. Alvarez)

Nothing to report

6.14 Nominations (B. Banker)

6.14.1 Section VI Female Representative (M. Fallacaro-Dougherty) Term Expiration June 2026

- Incumbent wishes to renew term
- No challengers
- Action item May 13, 2026 athletic council meeting

6.14.2 President-Elect Position, term July 2026 – June 2028

- Action item May 13, 2026 athletic council meeting
- 1 application received

6.14.3 Winter Sports Chairs, term July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2029

- Action Item May 13, 2026 athletic council meeting
- The following incumbents provided intention to renew their terms: Alpine Skiing – Jason Lehmbeck, Boys Basketball – Larry Jones, Girls Basketball – Chris Durr, Girls Bowling – Joe Biondo, Boys Bowling – Dan Kaplan, Cheerleading – Justina Grudzinski, Boys Ice Hockey – Rick Brooks, Girls Ice Hockey – Rick Hopkins, Boys Indoor Track – Jason Bibler, Girls Indoor Track – Justin Craddock, Rifle – Kristina Brown, Boys Swimming Co-Chairs– Nate Bourke & Chris Miller, Boys Wrestling – Mike DeBarbieri, Girls Wrestling – Tom Shifflet, Unified Bowling – Doug Ames

- 2 Challenger Applications Received in the sports of Boys and Girls Wrestling

6.14.4 Girls Tennis Chairperson

- Alex Chambers as Co-Chair (Remaining term: present to June 2027) - Action Item May 2026 AC

6.15 Corporate Partners (K. Schon)

K. Schon is in talks to re-engage Connors & Ferris as a partner. While the firm has moved away from sport-specific sponsorships—having formerly sponsored the football sectional championships—they are open to exploring new, broader collaborative opportunities.

6.16 Hall of Fame (C. Bullis)

Reminder: Nominations are due by the May 13, 2026 athletic council meeting.

6.17 Policy Committee (K. Schon)

The Policy Committee is in the process of scheduling their final meeting of the 25-26 school year. A reminder of process was shared – annual policy approvals will be acted on at the June athletic council meeting. A document of updates will be distributed to the council in advance of this June meeting's vote.

7.0 SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

7.1 All WNY Scholar Athlete (J. Roth)

The committee is in the voting process for winter 25-26.

7.2 Schools Without Boundaries Ad Hoc Committee (M. Fallacaro-Dougherty)

7.2.1 Three Options (Appendix E)

J. Sortisio shared key concerns of Section VI

a) Private schools located within the boundaries of Section VI are not included in league play. The issue typically does not arise until regional or championship level competition. There is concern that potential changes to Schools Without Boundaries policies could require structural changes within Section VI.
b) Another concern is the randomness of the 30%. There is no data to backup what that means or who that affects.

Ultimately, the meeting culminated with three (3) options regarding the Schools Without Boundaries Proposal:
1. Stay with the approved process and evaluate after 2 years.
2. Continue to examine potential revisions / hybrid model.
3. Consider complete separation of non-public and public, recognizing potential costs of litigation.

Sections have been requested to provide feedback on these 3 questions. The next Schools Without Boundaries meeting is scheduled for April 24th where section representatives must report their vote.

Section VI's outline for preparation:

a) Information (synopsis of the meeting, 3 options, zoom meeting details, timeline and mechanism for voting) will be shared with the membership end of March.
b) Votes from member districts due, end of business, April 21. One vote per district, athletic director and superintendent signatures.

7.3 DEI Committee (A. Lloyd)

Nothing to report.

8.0 **STATE COMMITTEE REPORTS** (informational only) Appendix F

- Field Hockey 1/9/26
- Football 1/9/26
- DEI Report 1/12/26
- CAC Report 1/14/26
- Boys Wrestling 1/15/26
- Handbook Committee Report 1/13/26
- Combining of Teams Report 1/20/26

9.0 **GUEST REPORTS**

9.1 NYSPHSAA (R. Zayas)

- The positive impact of the sport of Girls Wrestling on young female athletes and respective communities was highlighted. Girls Wrestling State Championships – 208 girls participating in the 2nd year of championships, 1300 girls weight certified.
- The 3-region rotation continues to be topic of discussion. Some elements are frustrating, but it treats all 11 sections in a more equitable fashion.

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9.2 NYSAAA Report (J. Lehmbeck)

No report.

10.0 **OLD BUSINESS**

Nothing to report.

11.0 **NEW BUSINESS**

11.1 Independent Status

The council was informed independent status is now an ongoing discussion item by the Executive Committee. It has come to the attention of the Section VI office, at times, teams are playing independent without notification and proper process of approval and follow through. The executive committee will further discuss implementing an ad hoc committee to explore the timeline, process and potential evaluation of independent teams.

12.0 **GOOD OF THE ORDER/ADJOURNMENT**

12.1 ***Motion to adjourn***
CARRIED
Zirkle/Penhollow

APPENDIX A

NYSPHSAA FOUNDATION

GOLF TOURNAMENT SPONSORSHIPS

BROOKFIELD COUNTRY CLUB, CLARENCE
MONDAY, JULY 27, 2026



TITLE SPONSOR
$10,000

- Company name/logo added to all event promotion materials and course signage
- Company representative invited to speak at dinner and assist with awards
- Two complimentary golf foursomes
- On-course setup with choice of location
- 2 hole sponsorships
- Branded item in all gift bags

MEAL SPONSOR
$5,000

- Company name/logo on table signage for lunch and dinner
- Materials included at place settings for dinner
- Complimentary golf foursome
- Branded item in all gift bags

PREMIUM GIFT
$3,000

- Company name/logo on premium gift provided to all participants
- Logo on recognition signage at dinner

COURSE GAMES
$500 each

- Company name/logo on signage indicating course game
- Mention during awards
- Logo on recognition signage at dinner
- May include, but not limited to: Hole-in-One, Longest Drive, Closest to Pin, etc.

PUTTING GREEN
$500

- Company name/logo on signage at practice green and signage indicating the location.
- Logo on recognition signage at dinner

DRIVING RANGE
$500

- Company name/logo on signage at driving range and signage indicating the location.
- Logo on recognition signage at dinner

PIN FLAG LOGOS
$1,000

- Company name/logo on one side of all 18 pin flags.
- Logo on recognition signage at dinner

GOLF CARTS
$1,500

- Company name/logo on all carts used for the tournament, including the beverage cart
- Logo on recognition signage at dinner

HOLE SPONSOR
$250

- Company name/logo on signage at one hole
- Logo on recognition signage

Chris Joyce
cjoyce@nysphsaa.org
518-690-0771

CUSTOM PACKAGES AVAILABLE!

NYSPHSAA FOUNDATION

GOLF TOURNAMENT SPONSORSHIPS

BROOKFIELD COUNTRY CLUB, CLARENCE
MONDAY, JULY 27, 2026

☐ **TITLE SPONSOR $10,000**	• Company name/logo added to all event promotion materials and course signage • Company rep invited to speak at dinner and assist with awards • Two complimentary golf foursomes • On-course setup with choice of location • 2 hole sponsorships • Branded item in all gift bags
☐ **MEAL SPONSOR $5,000**	• Company name/logo on table signage for lunch and dinner • Materials included at place settings for dinner • Complimentary golf foursome • Branded item in all gift bags
☐ **PREMIUM GIFT $3,000**	• Company name/logo on premium gift provided to all tournament participants • Logo on recognition signage at dinner
☐ **GOLF CARTS $1,500**	• Company name/logo on all carts used for the tournament, including the beverage cart • Logo on recognition signage at dinner
☐ **PIN FLAGS $1,000**	• Company name/logo on one side of all 18 pin flags • Logo on recognition signage at dinner
☐ **COURSE GAMES $500**	• Company name/logo on signage indicating course game • Logo on recognition signage at dinner and mention during awards • May include, but not limited to: Closest to Pin, Longest Drive, etc • Selected Game(s): _____
☐ **PUTTING GREEN $500**	• Company name/logo on signage at the practice green and directional signs indicating the location. • Logo on recognition signage at dinner
☐ **DRIVING RANGE $500**	• Company name/logo on signage at driving range and directional signs indicating range location. • Logo on recognition signage at dinner
☐ **HOLE SPONSOR $250**	• Company name/logo on signage at one hole • Logo on recognition signage at dinner Qty: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Company (if applicable): _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Date: _____ Total Due: _____

Please make checks payable to *NYSPHSAA Foundation.* Mail to: 8 Airport Park Blvd, Latham, NY 12110
For credit card payments, custom packages, or questions contact Chris Joyce at cjoyce@nysphsaa.org

APPENDIX B

Section VI NYSPHSAA, Inc.

Treasurer's Report

As of March 17, 2026

	Mar 17, 26
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1040.2 · Bankof America CD #2	101,249.29
1040.1 · Bank of America CD	27,649.31
1043.1 · Northwest CD	357,740.87
1050 · Arbiter Pay	143,415.00
1000 · Petty Cash	2,100.00
1030 · Bank of America Checking	327,483.90
1040 · Bank of America Money Market	1.69
1043 · Northwest Savings Bank	100,800.79
Total Checking/Savings	1,060,440.85
Total Current Assets	1,060,440.85
TOTAL ASSETS	**1,060,440.85**
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	0.00

Dedicated Funds

	Received	Accural	Expenses	Current Assets
Boys Ice Hockey	$ 100,000	$ 100,000	$ 98,982	$ 1,018
Girls Ice Hockey	$ 56,250	$ 56,250	$ 39,978	$ 16,272
Indoor Track	$ 132,600	$ 132,600	$ 111,000	$ 21,600
	Budgeted			
State Championships	215,000		33,864	181,136
	503,850		283,824	220,026

FUND BALANCE **840,414.85**

APPENDIX C

Alignments 2026

AA

Niagara Falls 1475
Lancaster 1308
Jamestown 1053
Lockport 1025
Bennett
Hutch Tech
Health Sciences~~/Global/~~BACS 612

A

A1

Orchard Park 1019
Clarence 948
Frontier 939
Williamsville North 930
Kenmore West 788
Sweet Home 782
West Seneca West 771
Niagara-Wheatfield 756

A2

WNY-Maritime/Tape/CSAT - 724
Hamburg 717
North Tonawanda 701
South Park 684
Grand Island 683
Williamsville East 683
Kenmore East 675
Starpoint 666

B

B1

Amherst 626
McKinley 594
Williamsville South 560
West Seneca East 551
Albion/Medina 520
Lew-Port 516
Maryvale 516
Lake Shore 503
~~Cheektowaga 497~~

B2

~~Albion/Medina 492.2~~
Cheektowaga 497
Lackawanna 488
East Aurora/Holland 476.6
Pioneer 464
Dunkirk 456
Depew 446
Iroquois 444
Olean 414

C

C North

Tonawanda 384
Springville 363
Alden 359
Cleveland Hill 312
Akron 279
Eden/NC 325
JFK 273
Barker/RH 298

C South

Fredonia 356
Salamanca 329
Falconer/CV/MG 375
SW/Frew 334
Gowanda/PV 281
Portville/CR/BR 325
CL/W/B ~~343~~ 316
Allegany-Limestone/Hinsdale 273.2
CSP 182.4

D

Newfane 263
Randolph 225
Wilson 209
Silver Creek/Forest 244.2
Catt/LV 203
Frank/EV 199

New York State Public High School Athletic Association

Executive Committee Meeting – February 4, 2026

FIELD HOCKEY – Establish a Pilot Program for Modified and Junior Varsity Teams

Action MAY

____ Action Item
__X__ Discussion Item
____ Informational Item

Presenter:
Bev Hooper, NYSPHSAA Field Hockey State Coordinator

Proposal:
Consider approval of a two-year pilot program to allow 9 vs 9 players at the JV and/or Modified level using a regulation field with adjusted rules.

Some adjustments would be:

1. Narrowing the width of a regulation field.
2. Play 12-minute quarters instead of 15 minutes with substitution on the fly.
3. Play penalty corners with a full defensive team available.
4. All players at the Modified level are 5 yards away on all free hits.
5. Both teams will play with an equal number of players on the field during games.
6. No overtime with teams with less than 11 v 11 games.

Effective Start Date:
Fall 2026

Rationale:
The field hockey state committee has reported the sport is struggling with Modified and JV programs. Modified and JV teams who do not have 11 players on their teams are having their games canceled. A two-year, 9v9 pilot program would help keep programs alive and competing while also reinstating programs that were previously dropped due to low participation. Modified and JV sports focus on player development, and programs should not be eliminated simply because they lack a full roster of 11 players.

According to the NFHS rulebook, **Rule 1-4-1 states that "Each team shall consist of not more than 11 players, one of whom is the goalkeeper. A team may compete with a minimum of seven players. When a team plays with fewer than 11 players, a goalkeeper shall be one of the players."**

Proposal Originated:
Field Hockey Committee - January 9, 2026

Notes:
The Field Hockey Committee voted 9-0 in unanimous support of this proposal.
No budgetary impact.

DATE REVISED: January 16, 2026

To: Section Coordinators

From: Bev Hooper, State Field Hockey Coordinator

Re: Modified/ Junior varsity Field Hockey teams hold an important role in the success of field hockey in NYS

It appears throughout the state, field hockey seems to be struggling with the Modified and JV programs. To help grow the sport, the NYS Field Hockey Committee have discussed several ideas that would give opportunities for student athletes to participate in the sport of field hockey. Ways to help struggling programs and give student athletes the opportunity to play the game.

It was discussed at our last meeting that Modified and JV teams who do not have 11 players on their squads are canceled. This is detrimental to the Varsity program and field hockey in general as it does not feed the Varsity level team with quality players or encourage/increase participation. In addition, it has younger players playing at the higher level just to have a varsity team able to compete for that school.

According to the NFHS rulebook, **Rule 1-4-1 states that "Each team shall consist of not more than 11 players, one of whom is the goalkeeper. A team may compete with a minimum of seven players. When a team plays with fewer than 11 players, a goalkeeper shall be one of the players."**

Based on the NFHS rulebook, teams can play if they have fewer than 11 players. The reason games are not being played at the Modified/ JV level should not be because there are not 11 players on game day. The Field Hockey committee is suggesting to pilot for 2 years a 9 V 9 game at the Modified and JV level using a regulation field with minimum adjustments and adjusted rules for this level game.

Some adjustments would be:

1. Narrowing the width of a regulation field.
2. Play 12-minute quarters instead of 15 minutes with substitution on the fly.
3. Play penalty corners with a full defensive team available.
4. All players at the Modified level are 5 yards away on all free hits.
5. Both teams will play with an equal number of players on the field during games.
6. No overtime with teams with less than 11 v 11 games.

Modified/ JV teams exist to allow young players in a high school program to develop, learn to compete, deal with wins and losses, plus individual successes, and failures. It gives coaching staff a chance to evaluate how their players are progressing. This pilot program may bring Modified and JV programs that have been dropped due to low enrollment back. Modified/ JV sports are about young developing players. Let's not drop a Modified or JV program because they don't have 11 players on their team. Let's allow the smaller schools or programs the opportunity to play.

Let's continue to grow the game of Field Hockey!

Competitive Cheerleading: Classification Cut-Off Numbers

Action MAY

____ Action Item
__X__ Discussion Item
____ Informational Item

Presenter:
Jen Simmons, NYSPHSAA Cheerleading State Coordinator

Proposal:
The NYSPHSAA Cheerleading Committee is recommending the following Classification Cut-Off numbers for Competitive Cheerleading. The proposal updates the same philosophy as has been currently used for classifications: top 75, bottom 100 and splitting the rest into two divisions, along with a CO-ED division. Viewing our current numbers, due to changes in enrollment as well as teams participating, the below new numbers are being recommended.

Class A – 973 and up – 75 schools
Class B – 972 to 613 – 110 schools
Class C – 612 to 274 – 110 schools
Class D – 273 and below - 100 schools
Co-Ed – One Class

Effective Start Date:
2026—2027 Winter Competitive Season

Rationale:
The Cheer Committee felt that the numbers needed to be reviewed, as once again the number of teams in one division was much higher than the others and was no longer close to our initial class divisions number of teams. So after the two years at the current numbers, the participating schools BEDS numbers were reviewed. To reinforce our initial philosophy, The Cheer Committee agreed that most of our smaller schools were once again not able to compete and be successful against the larger schools with the current divisional breakdown. The current numbers left: Class A with 68 schools, Class B with 129 schools, Class C with 109 schools and Class D with 89 schools.

Proposal Originated:
NYSPHSAA Cheerleading Committee

Budgetary Impact:
None.

Notes:
All Section Cheerleading Representatives, reviewed and approved these new numbers

DATE REVISED: January 12, 2026

New York State Public High School Athletic Association

Executive Committee Meeting – February 4, 2026

SOFTBALL– ESTABLISH PREGAME TIMELINE AND PROTOCOL FOR REGULAR SEASON GAMES

___ Action Item
_X_ Discussion Item
___ Informational Item

ACTION MAY

Presenter:
Dr. Jim Wright, NYSPHSAA Softball State Coordinator

Proposal:
The NYSPHSAA Softball State Committee is requesting approval to adopt a standardized pregame timeline and protocol for all regular season contests to start at the scheduled time for that game.

Effective Start Date:
Spring ~~2026~~ 2027

Rationale:
Due to concerns from umpires, coaches, and the state committee, it is necessary to set a timeline and rules to ensure warmups and games start on time in addition to sportsmanship being demonstrated.

The committee unanimously recommends implementing a MAX OF **30-minute pregame clock** for the visiting team beginning upon the visiting team's arrival at the field. This period would allow time for personal preparation and adequate on-field warm-up. In alignment with existing state tournament procedures, the **home team is expected to complete its warm-up activities prior to the visiting team's arrival** to prevent delays and reduce gamesmanship.

Recognizing that some facilities require additional walking time from the parking area to the playing field, reasonable accommodations may be made when those circumstances exist.

The overarching goal of this proposal is to **ensure games begin promptly**, respecting the time commitments of umpires, coaches, student-athletes, and spectators while maintaining fairness and consistency across all programs.

The 30-minute clock will be monitored by game officials.

Proposal Originated:
NYSPHSAA Softball Committee on December 3, 2025

Budgetary Impact:
None

Notes:
The NYSPHSAA Softball State Committee voted 11-0 in favor of this proposal at its December 3rd meeting.

DATE REVISED: January 13, 2026

New York State Public High School Athletic Association

Executive Committee Meeting – February 4, 2026

Modified Committee – Revision to the NYSPHSAA Promotion Rule

Approved

X Action Item
____ Discussion Item
____ Informational Item

Presenter:
Jim Rose, Co-Chairmen of NYSPHSAA Modified Committee

Proposal:
The NYSPHSAA Modified Committee is recommending revising the NYSPHSAA Promotion Rule in the NYSPHSAA Handbook with the following language:

*"**With Section approval**, contestants **may be** promoted to a higher classification within the modified program or to a junior varsity or varsity team at any time."*

Effective Start Date:
2026-2027 school year

Rationale:
Several Sections have indicated that many 7th and 8th graders do have the ability to move up to the high school level but are kept down on the modified level to support the numbers at the modified level. This revision would allow the 7th and 8th graders the ability to complete the modified season and then be brought up to the high school level as long as they have completed the APP process.

Proposal Originated:
NYSPHSAA Modified Committee

Budgetary Impact:
None

Notes:
None

Attachments:
None

* How Are We As A Section Going To Handle This?

DATE REVISED: October 21, 2025

APPENDIX E

Schools Without Boundaries Committee Meeting Report
Date: March 11, 2026 at 9:00am
@ Embassy Suites, Saratoga

Attendees: Joe Sigillo (I), Richard Calkins, (I), Mike Robbins (2), Daniel Ward (2), Scott Sugar (III), Joseph DeBarbieri (III), Jeff Ferrara (IV), Jamie Harter (IV), Patrick Irving (V), Merritt Holly (V), Marisa Fallacaro-Dougherty (VI), Jeff Sortisio (VI), Justin Gardner (VII), Michael Graney (VII), Patrick Pizzarelli (VIII), John McNamara (VIII), Dennis Burkett (IX), Brian Monahan (IX), Mark Wilson (X), James Cruikshank (X), Todd Gulluscio (XI), James Cummings (XI), Alphonse Lambert (Non-Public, East), Buddy Wleklinski (Non-Public, West), Stephen France (Charter, East), Mark LaMorticella (Charter, West), Dawn Cerrone (Non-Public, At-Large), Angelina Maloney (NYSCOSS), Gemma Rinefierd (NYSED), Jeff Matteson (NYSED), James Cultrara (NYS Council of Catholic Schools), Anna Hall (Charter Schools Association), NYSPHSAA – Adam Stoltman (Chair), Tim Mullins, Debra Ferry, Russell Bartlett, Renee James, Dr. Robert Zayas, Kristen Jadin, Todd Nelson, Jill Gregorius, Lisa Hand, Lexi Swatt-Sheerin, Zach Betkowski. Guests - Mark Uyl, Heath Harmon, Eddie Bonine, Colleen McGuire

Status Updates/Items Discussion/Action Taken:

1. **Welcome & Introductions:** Committee Chair Adam Stoltman called the meeting to order and welcomed members of the Schools Without Boundaries Ad Hoc Committee. Adam thanked attendees for their participation and acknowledged the range of perspectives represented across sections, public schools, non-public schools, charter schools, and partner organizations. Adam invited members of the committee and guests to introduce themselves and their affiliations.

2. **Purpose of Meeting & Desired Outcome:** Adam reviewed the purpose of the Schools Without Boundaries Ad Hoc Committee and outlined the goals for the meeting. He explained that the committee's work is intended to examine current policies and practices related to Schools Without Boundaries and to consider whether adjustments or new approaches may be necessary moving forward.

   Dr. Robert Zayas opened the discussion by noting that the NYSPHSAA membership consists of the 11 sections, all of which are represented and have an equal vote. He emphasized that the Association's responsibility is to enforce the policies, rules, and regulations established by the membership, and that the direction of the membership guides this initiative as well as all other Association initiatives. Dr. Zayas noted that July 2025 marked the final meeting of the previous ad hoc committee and that superintendent representation has since been added to the committee. He also acknowledged the privilege of having representatives from NYSED present, noting that there have been misconceptions and hearsay surrounding various aspects of the topic as ideas continue to circulate. Dr. Zayas then posed the question of identifying a solution and reviewed the proposals that were submitted during the previous year.

3. **Current Landscape & Policies:** The committee reviewed the background information and existing policies related to the classification and participation of non-public and charter schools in NYSPHSAA. Materials provided for review included:
   1. A summary of prior committee discussions and recommendations from the July 2025 meeting.
   2. Proposals reviewed throughout the 2024–2025 school year.
   3. The current approved NYSPHSAA classification process for non-public and charter schools.

4. Data analysis from 2017–2025 including sectional and state championship results and overall participation trends.

   Todd N. reviewed the data included in the meeting packet. He further explained that from 2017-2025, public schools have won approximately 92.5% of NYSPHSAA team championships, while nonpublic/charter schools have won about 7.42%. Todd also reviewed Sectional Championship data, by which the nonpublic/charter schools won approximately 5% of Section titles during that time period.

   Discussion:
   Jeff S. asked many nonpublic schools were eligible in a certain sport, like baseball? Todd did not have that information at that time, but can gather it. He knows the total number of teams in each sport, but would have to breakout the nonpublic/charter schools from each.

   Pat P. asked how many nonpublic/charter schools are in the state. Todd noted that public schools represent approximately 88.67% of NYSPHSAA membership, while nonpublic/charter schools account for about 11.23%

   Jamie C. asked whether there are public schools that consistently appear as sectional champions and suggested that the committee should examine trends across both public and non-public schools.

   Dr. Zayas responded that success tends to ebb and flow over time and occurs among both groups. Todd N. also stated that some sections do not have many teams in certain classes. He referenced Chapel Field in Section IX is often the winner in baseball in Section IX due to the low number of teams in the class, in that section.

   Joe S. added that many AAA classifications do not include non-public schools and noted that competitive success occurs on both sides.

5. **Information and perspectives from other state athletic associations**
   Dr. Zayas explained there are only three (3) states in the entire country that truly separate with a different association for their non-public schools, which are Texas, Maryland and Virginia. Georgia separates in team sports in the middle classifications, Louisiana separates schools by select enrollment and non-select enrollment for some sports, Tennessee has been separating all individual and team championships since the early 1990s, New Jersey separates in team sports, and Alabama recently approved a complete separation model for individual and team sports.

   Heath Harmon, Executive Director from Alabama explained Alabama's new classification system for private schools, which now includes separate pathways for team and individual championships. The state moved from seven to six public classifications and two private classifications, removing multipliers for private schools and making classifications based solely on enrollment. While this change adds more championship opportunities overall, it presents challenges particularly regarding travel for some schools, especially in smaller classifications and rural areas. The system will be evaluated after about a year and a half to determine its effectiveness.

Discussion:
Buddy asked whether the determination was made by sport rather than by individual program. Heath confirmed that it was determined by sport.

Jamie asked whether the state had experienced a higher percentage of private schools winning championships. Heath responded that, in Alabama, a number of private schools had been winning championships particularly at the lower classifications.

Richard asked whether the changes implemented in that state resulted in greater or fewer opportunities for students overall. Heath responded that, from a championship standpoint, additional championships had been added. He noted that the state will continue to evaluate the overall experience, including factors such as travel.

James Cummings asked whether all private schools had originally been part of the state tournament structure. Heath responded that every private school had the opportunity to declare participation in state championships.

Marc asked how charter schools were categorized within the system and how many fell into the private school category. Heath clarified that in Alabama, charter schools are considered public schools.

Adam noted that Alabama reduced one championship while adding another. Heath explained that the state previously had seven classifications but will move to six classifications for both boys and girls next year, with enrollment adjustments made to reflect the change.

Eddie Bonine, Executive Director of Louisiana explained the state's current public-private school classification system, which separates schools into "select" and "non-select" categories primarily for football, boys and girls basketball, baseball, and softball. He noted that while private schools dominate in certain sports like wrestling and track, the 50-50 balance between select and non-select schools has helped address competitive balance concerns.

Definition of “select” and “non-select” are below.

- “Select shall mean private or public schools that have a state or parish approved designation as a lab school, magnet school(s) with one or more magnet component(s), approved charter schools, parish wide approved open enrollment, state recovery district (RSD) application-based parish schools, tuition-based schools and/or any established academic and/or retention days based criterion schools.”
- “Non-select are traditional public schools with set, geographic attendance zones.”

Discussion: Tim Mullins raised a question regarding whether a week-long basketball tournament could result in missed instructional time for student-athletes.

Eddie responded that the concern had previously been discussed and noted that decisions related to missed school time are determined by superintendents.

Colleen McGuire, Executive Director from New Jersey described their approach of separating public and non-public schools in team tournaments but maintaining combined individual tournaments, though a previous proposal to fully separate individual tournaments was vetoed by the commissioner in 2017. New Jersey has hosted separted team championships for private and public schools since the late 1980s.

Mark Uyl, Executive Director from Michigan shared that their single classification system with all 755 schools competing together has resulted in 71% of state championships being won by traditional public schools over the past five years, emphasizing that the real issue may be about successful schools rather than public versus private schools. Private schools make up 24% of the MHSAA membership and private schools are winning approximately 29% of state championships.

4. **Identification of Core Issues & Concerns**

Section representatives will provide brief perspectives regarding the current landscape and potential concerns within their sections. Each section will have an opportunity to highlight key issues, observations, or considerations related to Schools Without Boundaries and competitive balance.

Adam noted that the number of districts enrolling tuition-paying students across the state is not fully known. During the process of bringing the group together and examining the issue, he was surprised by the complexity involved and the number of factors connected to the topic.

He acknowledged that both public and private/ charter schools are part of the association and emphasized the shared goal of identifying solutions that are in the best interest of students and member districts. He also noted there are some nonpublic/public mergers within the association. Adam concluded by inviting each group five minutes to present concerns and feedback.

Todd N. provided some additional data, that across all team sports, approximately one-third of the championships were won by nonpublic/charter at the highest classification, while the second-highest total occurred at the lowest classification. When examining sports with six classifications specifically, about one-third of championships were again won by nonpublic/charter schools at the highest classification, with the next highest number occurring in the lowest classification.

Section I – Richard expressed appreciation for the opportunity to discuss the issue and for the respectful dialogue. It was noted that the topic is not unique to Section I and has been discussed for many years, but attention to the issue has increased recently across the state. Superintendents in Section I indicated that more than 50 superintendents have raised similar concerns regarding competitive balance and equitable opportunities for student-athletes. While there may be differing perspectives on potential solutions, there is a shared concern about maintaining an equitable playing field while preserving strong partnerships within communities. Section I representatives also referenced a perceived disconnect between what section executive directors and superintendents are communicating and what is being heard at the state level. Appreciation was expressed for Dr. Zayas' willingness to listen and for his commitment to working toward an equitable solution. It was emphasized that addressing the issue at the state level is important. Without a statewide solution, individual sections may feel

compelled to take action within their own jurisdictions and constitutions, which could have unintended negative impacts on student-athletes. Superintendents from multiple sections have reportedly raised similar concerns, indicating the issue extends beyond Section I. Feedback has also suggested that continued progress and a more expedited approach may be necessary.

Section 2 – Dan reported that outreach was conducted to all Section 2 superintendents and heads of school regarding the Schools Without Boundaries topic. He acknowledged and thanked the committee for the work that has been done to develop the current proposal and noted that Section 2 includes two member districts representing nonpublic schools, which provides perspectives from both sides of the issue. The survey data conducted indicated that approximately 97% of Section 2 districts were aware of the NYSPHSAA rules governing Schools Without Boundaries. When asked whether the topic is a concern, approximately 84.5% responded yes, while 14.5% indicated it was not a concern. Respondents who indicated concern generally cited a perceived competitive advantage for SWB schools due to the ability to draw students from a wider geographic area. Additional concerns raised included potential recruiting and the ability to reclassify students more easily. While statistical data has been presented on the frequency of these situations, some respondents noted that concern often centers on the impact when such situations do occur. Potential considerations raised included adjusting classification movement criteria for nonpublic schools and exploring separate brackets or statewide criteria rather than leaving decisions solely at the sectional level. Dan also shared survey results related to engagement with previous proposal materials. Approximately 51% of districts reported reviewing proposals prior to July 2025, 48% reviewed materials after July 2025, and about 50% indicated they had reviewed information more recently, including in December 2025. Responses were submitted jointly by athletic directors and superintendents.

Section III – Scott noted that the issue is viewed from two perspectives within Section III. One concern relates to the impact on teams that may encounter a Schools Without Boundaries (SWB) opponent in a single postseason matchup. The second concern involves programs that experience sustained success in a particular sport and the perception of competitive imbalance that may arise over time. Joe D. shared survey data from Section III indicating approximately 54% of respondents feel disadvantaged in regular season competition involving nonpublic schools and 74% feel disadvantaged for post-season play. Joe D. shared survey data from Section III indicating that approximately 54% of respondents feel disadvantaged in competition involving nonpublic schools. Additionally, when asked about maintaining fairness in competition, approximately 91% of respondents indicated that they believe public schools should not be placed at a competitive disadvantage when competing against nonpublic programs. It was also noted that rural school districts sometimes view the issue through the lens of broader access to opportunities, including disparities that may exist between communities with differing resources. Superintendents in the section were reported to be well aware of the issue and ongoing advocacy efforts related to the topic.

Section IV – Jeff indicated that feedback from Section IV largely reflects concerns similar to those expressed by other sections. A primary focus is on issues of fairness and equity in interscholastic competition. One concern raised involves open tuition schools and the perception that these schools are winning championships at a higher rate than public schools. Members also noted the importance of clearly defining what constitutes a “School Without

Boundaries," as there remains some uncertainty about whether discussions are focused specifically on nonpublic schools or a broader group that may include other school types. The discussion also included a socioeconomic component, particularly regarding how private and public schools interact within the current system. Public school representatives expressed concern about how these dynamics could impact competitive opportunities and potentially reduce opportunities for public school student-athletes.

Section V – Patrick I. reported that Section V has taken a transparent approach in discussing the issue. During ad hoc meetings, proposals and related materials have been reviewed and discussed, and both superintendents and athletic directors within the section have been kept informed of the ongoing discussions. Most recently, superintendents in the section reviewed the current concerns related to Schools Without Boundaries. At this time, Section V has not taken a formal position and indicated that any potential action should follow the established NYSPHSAA governance and proposal process. Patrick also noted that some public school representatives have expressed concern regarding the existing 30% threshold for open enrollment, particularly as it relates to smaller Class D schools. Additionally, among the section's nine leagues, approximately 23 superintendents have indicated support for the direction being sought by Section I on this issue.

Section VI – Jeff reported that private schools in Section VI are not part of league play, meaning the issue typically does not arise until regional or championship-level competition. As a result, the topic becomes more visible during postseason play rather than during the regular season. Section VI representatives expressed concern that potential changes to Schools Without Boundaries policies could require structural changes within the section. Additional concern was raised regarding schools that receive more than 30% tuition-paying students. Jeff also shared that 27 districts that represent Erie 2 Boces, about 24 accept tuition paying students. For clarification, Eries 2 Boces is just one of four BOCES that make up Section VI. Concerns were also expressed regarding perceived recruiting advantages for private schools and whether this creates an uneven playing field when compared to public schools. Jeff also referenced the work of the Combined Teams Committee and Charter School Committee, which review competitive balance and program dominance following each season and may recommend classification changes if a program demonstrates sustained dominance. He concluded by saying the Section agrees with the problem, but not with the Section 1 proposal to address the problem.

Section VII – Michael G. reported that perspectives from Section VII have been shared previously and noted that, at the sectional level, there are generally no significant concerns with the current structure. The issue tends to arise during regional competition, as Section VII does not encounter these situations regularly during regular season play. He provided examples indicating that competitive outcomes can vary regardless of school type, noting instances where Section VII teams have both lost to public schools and to nonpublic schools in regional competition. As a result, some members feel the issue may not always reflect a consistent competitive imbalance. Concerns were also raised regarding the percentage of tuition-paying students, particularly given the small size of many Section VII schools. In smaller districts, even a few tuition-paying students can significantly impact enrollment numbers or course offerings. Michael noted that Section VII supports continuing to follow the established NYSPHSAA governance and proposal process when addressing the issue.

Section VIII – John M. reported that within Section VIII the issue generally does not arise during the regular season and tends to become a concern only during regional or state-level competition. He indicated that the matter has historically been managed effectively within the section and emphasized the importance of continuing to follow the established NYSPHSAA governance and proposal process when addressing potential changes. Pat P. added that the current policy should be given additional time to be evaluated. He noted that NYSPHSAA is a membership-driven association and referenced the prior process in which sections met, developed proposals, and ultimately adopted a policy through the established governance structure. Pat expressed the view that concerns should continue to be addressed through the same formal process and suggested that sections experiencing challenges related to nonpublic schools may also consider reviewing the issue within their own section. Pat concluded by reminding the group that non-public schools are part of NYSPHSAA because the Sections provided them with membership status many years ago.

Section IX – Brian M. shared that Section IX represents four counties of superintendents and has historically managed issues related to nonpublic schools internally. The section has worked to maintain consistency in classification placement for private schools relative to comparable public schools. While there may occasionally be challenges in a given year when a team is particularly strong, Section IX has generally addressed those situations within its existing structure. He indicated Section IX would prefer to review formal proposals before determining a position and emphasized the importance of following the established NYSPHSAA governance process. Brian also noted that certain public school districts in the section have a significant number of tuition-paying students, including one district with approximately 40% due to its connection with West Point. The 30% threshold of the Section 1 proposal was a noted concern. Dennis added that while he respects the work of the ad hoc committee and the established process, the issue has not been a major concern within Section IX until it was raised more recently at the Lower Hudson Council of Superintendents. He suggested allowing the process to continue and encouraged consideration of potential impacts, including possible litigation costs to districts if structural changes were implemented.

Section X – Jamie C. expressed appreciation for the time dedicated to the discussion and noted that the issue has been ongoing. He referenced the work of the ad hoc committee and the membership vote that approved a process by a 10–1 margin. Jamie C. acknowledged the recent efforts to survey superintendents and indicated that the feedback suggests there is a perception that a problem exists. He also noted that large school mergers can present similar concerns in some areas. Jamie C. emphasized the importance of relying on established protocols and governance processes when addressing the issue and cautioned against allowing individual perceptions to override the adopted process. He also noted that the matter is a statewide issue and raised questions about the level of state involvement that local districts may want in addressing it. Mark added that in Section X, the smaller size of the section allows for regular meetings with superintendents, typically twice per year. He indicated that the topic has been discussed within the section for approximately a year and that superintendents are aware of the concerns. While acknowledging the perspectives being shared, Mark stated that Section X is generally comfortable with the outcome that has resulted from the existing governance process. He also noted that some individual conversations may not fully reflect the positions that superintendents have expressed during formal meetings.

Section XI – Todd G. reported that the issue has not been a significant concern within Section XI. The section includes a small number of private and charter schools, as well as some public schools that accept tuition-paying students. Todd noted that the recently approved process has not yet been in place long enough to be fully evaluated and, in their view, should be given additional time to determine its effectiveness and allow for adjustments if needed.
James C. added that the topic is not a regular issue within Section XI and generally arises only in isolated situations. He acknowledged that while competitive inequities can occur, it may not be possible to eliminate every disparity across all circumstances, though the impact on individual student-athletes remains an important consideration. James stated that he is interested in what the associated costs could be from a litigation perspective if the association decides to completely separate non-public/ charter schools for the post season.

Nonpublic/charter – Buddy spoke on behalf of the nonpublic and charter school representatives in attendance. He noted that nonpublic schools have been members of the association since the 1970s and that the NYSPHSAA membership includes public, private, and nonpublic schools as outlined in the association's constitution. He emphasized that nonpublic schools participate as full members of the association and operate under the same rules and governance structure. Buddy also referenced several policy changes that have occurred over the years to address competitive balance across all member schools. These include adjustments to classification procedures that allow programs to move up or down based on competitive success, as well as modifications to transfer and recruitment rules. He noted that these rules and policies apply to both public and nonpublic schools and are enforced through the association. He also addressed the terminology of "Schools Without Boundaries," suggesting that the term can be misleading, as some public schools also accept tuition-paying students. Buddy emphasized that policies adopted by the association have been developed through review and discussion of available information. In closing, he noted that while perceptions about competitive balance may exist, he believes the available data does not demonstrate consistent dominance by nonpublic schools. He encouraged continued discussion that is informed by data and the established governance process when considering potential adjustments.

5. **Potential Policy Options for Consideration:** The committee will review proposals submitted for consideration regarding the classification and postseason participation of Schools Without Boundaries.
    1. **Section I -** Richard noted that the leadership being sought on the issue is at the NYSPHSAA level rather than through the New York State Education Department (NYSED). He referenced the Section I proposal, which was included in the meeting packet, and outlined the concept of two separate state championships as a potential approach, with traditional public schools being in Category A and non-public, charter schools, along with any public school receiving more than 30% of enrollment from tuition paying students being placed in Category B. He acknowledged that several sections have identified the 30% threshold as a concern and noted that those details could be addressed as part of further discussion. The proposal, if adopted, would take effect beginning in Fall 2027.

        Joe added that the proposal should not be viewed as a complaint from Section I but rather as an effort to address broader statewide concerns. He noted that while some sections may not experience the issue as frequently, others encounter it more regularly. Joe also referenced structural differences between public and nonpublic schools, including certain

regulations that apply to public schools but not to nonpublic schools. He emphasized that the discussion should consider long-term competitive balance and future impacts across classifications. He stated the overall goal is to ensure equitable opportunities for student-athletes across New York State.

Discussion:
Buddy asked whether the 30% threshold referenced in the proposal was an arbitrary number. Richard responded that the 30% figure is open for review and discussion by the committee. Adam asked whether any sections had surveyed their membership specifically about the 30% threshold; no responses were offered at that time. Scott noted that the percentage was intended as a starting point for discussion and that the interpretation of data can vary depending on context. He added that if tuition-paying students were not participating in athletics, it would not necessarily constitute a Schools Without Boundaries issue.

Dan raised a concern that smaller schools could exceed a 30% threshold simply by enrolling the children of staff members. He noted that some Class D schools could reach that level due to provisions in collective bargaining agreements. Scott responded that contractual obligations should not be negatively impacted by any proposal under consideration.

Adam asked whether cross-border situations, where students attend schools from neighboring states on a tuition basis, were intended to be part of the discussion or simply a starting point for conversation. Joe S. indicated that similar concerns had been raised during earlier discussions of the issue.

Dawn asked at what point a public school accepting tuition-paying students would be considered similar to a nonpublic school under the proposed framework. No specific response was provided. Richard noted that nonpublic schools operate under different requirements in some areas, such as graduation standards and other academic regulations. He emphasized that the goal is for nonpublic schools to continue participating in the association while exploring additional opportunities at the state level.

Dawn questioned how graduation requirements relate to athletic participation and reiterated that all schools participating in NYSPHSAA are expected to follow the association's rules and regulations. Richard referenced the perception that schools may be able to select students, while Dawn responded that families are choosing the schools rather than the schools selecting students.

Jamie C. stated that many participants acknowledge that there are concerns to be discussed, but that identifying and defining inequities can be difficult. He suggested that thresholds such as the proposed 30/70 split could be adjusted if necessary and that discussions should focus on determining where competitive advantages may exist.

Jamie C. also referenced other factors that may contribute to perceived competitive imbalance, including disparities in district resources and local tax capacity. He noted that broader measures of equity, such as combined wealth ratios, can impact school programs and opportunities across districts.

Joe S. added that enrollment figures alone may not fully capture differences in school environments, particularly given that public schools do not control family enrollment choices. Jamie C. noted that students may also attend other public schools on a tuition basis, which could raise similar questions about competitive balance.

Concerns were also raised about the potential impact of adding additional state championship classifications. Jamie C. referenced prior efforts by the association during periods of financial constraint to control costs and noted that demographic shifts could also influence future decisions.

Graney raised a concern on behalf of smaller Class D schools, particularly in Section VII, noting that the wording of the proposal could affect merged programs differently from season to season depending on enrollment percentages.

Todd asked how schools would be identified or placed into a separate category under the proposal and whether that determination would occur at the sectional or state level. Joe responded that the process would likely need to align with the existing BEDS enrollment reporting process to ensure that data is finalized and standardized.

Buddy concluded by noting that Catholic schools do follow state education requirements applicable to their institutions.

2. **Section III –** Scott presented a proposal originating from the NYSPHSAA Football Committee. He clarified that the proposal was not formally submitted by Section III, but rather directly from the Football Committee (beginning with the Section III Football Committee). The proposal outlines a method that could potentially be applied to any sport and is based on criteria adopted the previous year, allowing teams to move up in classification based on competitive success. Scott noted that depending on the sport, it may take time for programs to reach the highest classifications, such as AA or AAA.

   Discussion: Brian M. commented that the concept may have potential for use in other sports and expressed interest in hearing feedback regarding its applicability beyond football.

   Scott noted that under this approach, competitive concerns may shift to higher classifications as successful teams move up. Buddy added that athletic programs often experience cycles of success and decline and expressed concern that moving teams to higher classifications could result in situations where they may have limited competition before eventually moving back down.

   Marisa asked about the number of schools that would be placed in a AAA classification. Todd N. responded that there is potential for enough schools to support that level. Joe S. asked whether the number of teams in certain classifications could be adjusted if necessary. Todd indicated that any proposal could be revised during the process. He noted that in the current football structure, classifications A and AA include seven private/ charter schools. Buddy stated that the proposal may conflict with the existing classification process. Todd added that under the current structure.

Dr. Zayas asked whether a hybrid approach combining elements of the different proposals could be considered, potentially starting with football and other sports that have multiple classifications (i.e., six classification sports). Joe S. responded that adjustments could be made to any proposal and that the concept is similar to earlier discussions about modifying classifications.

Dr. Zayas noted that very small groupings of teams may not provide meaningful competition and suggested that groupings of four to eight teams tend to be more sustainable. Buddy reiterated concerns about separating nonpublic schools solely based on competitive success.

Adam observed that a recurring theme throughout the discussion was that information may not be reaching all sections consistently. He suggested that continued conversation within each section may help ensure members fully understand the proposals before any decisions are made.

Jamie C. expressed a different perspective, stating that in his view the information has reached the sections. He noted that the issue may not be viewed as significant in Section XI unless it directly impacts local programs. Jamie also raised concerns about potential unintended consequences of major structural changes and noted that other factors, including participation levels and program sustainability, may also warrant attention.

Richard responded that experiences vary across sections and that the issue may present differently depending on the region.

Mike G. asked why the issue had not advanced further through previous processes.

Dr. Zayas concluded by noting that the discussion reflects differing perspectives and suggested that the group consider whether there may be an approach that could address concerns and provide a workable solution that could be supported by the membership.

6. **Next Steps:** *Dr. Robert Zayas reviewed key questions for the committee's consideration, including whether the currently approved process should be allowed to play out for one to two years and whether sections are interested in modifying the existing proposal.*
    1. Stay with approved process and evaluate effectiveness for two years
    2. Continue to examine potential revisions
    3. Consider complete separation of non-public/ charter schools for post season competition; recognizing additional costs and litigation.

    Discussion:
    Pat P. stated that the membership has not yet evaluated the proposal that was passed in October 2025. While acknowledging concerns at the superintendent level, he suggested that the Association should follow the established process that has traditionally been used.

Dr. Zayas responded that it cannot be assumed that all sections currently share that perspective.
Joe S. stated that the oversight committee should not be eliminated, noting that it continues to serve an important purpose. He also questioned how sport-specific proposals, such as football, might be handled if brought forward independently.

Adam commented that proposals should not originate from individual sports.

Mark Wilson raised financial concerns, emphasizing that the group should understand the financial ramifications of any changes before alterations are considered. Mark Wilson also raised concerns regarding the potential for litigation associated with any changes.

Adam referenced other states, including Alabama, noting that they operate with fewer classifications.

Renee discussed possible approaches to classification adjustments, noting that simply moving private/ charter schools individually had previously been rejected by the Commissioner. She explained that removing all nonpublic schools presents challenges and could result in litigation. She suggested that addressing concerns on a sport-by-sport basis may provide a stronger legal rationale focused on equitable competition.

James C. noted that financial considerations remain a significant factor, particularly when discussing potential classification adjustments that could compress public school groupings.

Pat P. stated that the financial implications of any changes are difficult to predict, but reviewing experiences from states such as Alabama and Louisiana could provide insight into litigation costs and impacts at both the state and section levels.

Jamie C. questioned why there has been confusion surrounding the Section III proposal. He stated that the confusion stems from the perception that this committee has not followed the Association's established procedures. He added that concerns about a football proposal may have been addressed differently if they had been discussed by the original committee.

Richard noted that the issue reflects the democratic process and emphasized the importance of dialogue and discourse. He added that several sections have indicated that concerns exist and acknowledged that the current system is not perfect.

Further discussion ensued among committee members.

Angelina stated that the Commissioner and legislators are actively engaged in the issue and emphasized that the level of urgency surrounding the topic should not be overlooked. She encouraged the group to continue examining the issue so that decisions remain within the Association rather than being made externally.

Dr. Zayas noted that this issue has reached a level of attention not previously experienced. He stated that President Mullins has been listening to concerns and encouraging continued discussion consistent with the established process.

Jamie C. commented that some concerns raised appear to be personal to individual teams rather than systemic issues.

Joe D. noted that major adjustments are typically decided by the Central Committee and stated that many superintendents feel they are not currently part of the conversation.

Dr. Zayas/Todd N. outlined three potential paths for consideration:

- *Maintain the currently approved proposal and evaluate its effectiveness over a two-year period.*
- *Continue examining potential revisions, including a possible hybrid approach, while recognizing that litigation could occur.*
- *Consider complete separation of nonpublic and charter schools for postseason competition, acknowledging potential costs and legal implications.*

Renee noted that litigation would likely involve significant costs and could potentially occur in federal court if a challenge were successful. He also noted that cases involving the Commissioner may not include attorney fee awards.

Dan W. asked what specific questions he should bring back to his membership for feedback.

Dr. Zayas suggested reconvening via Zoom in approximately four to six weeks, with an update potentially provided at the May Executive Committee meeting. Brian M. supported a six-week timeline.

Joe S. stated that litigation concerns had previously been presented as a fear tactic by NYSPHSAA and cautioned against allowing that to influence decision-making.

Adam noted that any potential changes would likely involve financial costs.
Renee reiterated that a hybrid approach may be easier to defend legally, while a complete separation based on past litigation may be more difficult to defend.

Dr. Zayas noted that NYSPHSAA carries a $100,000 insurance deductible related to litigation.

Pat P. referenced case law suggesting that separate systems may not be considered equal and noted that any model other than the current structure could potentially result in litigation. He also asked for clarity on whether a hybrid model would involve sport-specific separation or other factors such as open enrollment.

Jamie C. asked whether the purpose of the three questions was to gather input from sections or whether the approved process was being reconsidered.

Dr. Zayas clarified that any changes would ultimately require action by the Executive Committee and Central Committee.

Ultimately, it was determined the Schools Without Boundaries representatives will go back to their Sections, ask for feedback on the following three options and be prepared to provide which ONE option their Section supports at this time.

1. **Stay with approved process and evaluate effectiveness for two years.**
2. **Continue to examine potential revision (hybrid model, additional classifications, separation in select sports, separation in only team, etc.).**
3. **Consider complete separation of non-public/ charter schools for post-season competition; recognizing additional costs and litigation.**

****Note: Section representatives should be prepared to provide which option above their Section supports.***

Future Items/Meeting:

1. **Next meeting: Friday, April 24 at 10:00 AM via ZOOM**

APPENDIX F

NYSPHSAA FIELD HOCKEY State Committee

January 9, 2026 at 10:00 am via Zoom

MEETING MINUTES

Attendance
NYSPHSAA Staff: Joe Altieri, Todd Nelson, Kristen Jadin, Chris Joyce
Committee: Bev Hooper (State Coordinator), Rebecca Disisto-Leslie/Sue Hughes (1), Michelle Venditto (2), Monica Tooley (3), Nicky Huston (4), Caitlyn Angelidis (5), Jeffrey Costello (6)**,** Barb Sellers (8), Nanette Simione/Emma Katz (9), Deb Ferry/Katie Mitchell (11), Terri Welcher. Katie Mitchell is also the Modified Rep.

1. Attendance and Introductions

Meeting called to order at 10:04 am by State Coordinator, Bev Hooper. She welcomed Emma Katz and Nanette Simione as co-coordinators for Section IX. Section XI clarified Katie Mitchell is co-coordinator with Deb Ferry. Joe Altieri will ensure the changes are reflected on the website.

2. Bid for Field Hockey State Championship 2027-29

Joe indicated there were two bids submitted by Arlington (Section I) and Baldwinsville (Section III) and confirmed everyone received the bids via email. He noted each bid met all the required elements to be considered. He added the Baldwinsville bid was confirmed to have onsite concessions for both fields. The checkbox was not checked in the bid for concessions, and he confirmed with the Athletic Director Chris Campolieta it should be. Committee members asked for clarity on "threat detection" listed as an expense for Baldwinsville and the cost of each venue. Monica noted "threat detection" is for metal detectors. Joe reported snow removal both days at Baldwinsville is $2,500 per day which would bring the total cost to $13,767 for both days. There is no snow removal at Arlington (staff/committee would need to shovel). Bev reported the math was not accurate with the Arlington bid and the cost is $15,000 (bid stated $14,000). The committee discussed the pros and cons of each bid.
A roll call was taken by section. It was decided by a 5-4 vote to recommend Baldwinsville for 2027-29.

Joe stated the staff felt both bids were outstanding and had planned to go along with the committee's recommendation after sound discussion of all the elements of each bid. Therefore, the **staff is also recommending Baldwinsville for 2027-29**. Next steps: bidders will be notified, a bid comparison document will be compiled, and both recommendations will be forwarded to the Championship Advisory Committee on January 14th and to the Executive Committee on February 4th for a vote. It emphasized that due to the close vote and quality of both bids, both recommendations are not guaranteed and CAC and Executive Committee will discuss and could decide differently.

3. NYSPHSAA Staff Reports

Joe Altieri, Assistant Director

a. Thanked Section 1, Rebecca, Sue, Mike Cring, Bev and this committee for their work on the state tournament. It was another success at Arlington HS. The host hotel will continue to be Holiday Inn Poughkeepsie with a minimal increase in rates for 2026.
b. NYSPHSAA Hall of Fame - Deadline is Jan. 29th for the Class of 2026. Nominations must be submitted online and stay on file for consideration for three years.
c. Staff update – He noted Lexi Swatt (Director of Sports Information) is on maternity leave until mid-February and Zach Betkowski (TPG Sales) has replaced Joe Deguzman handling sales/sponsorships.

Todd Nelson, Assistant Director

a. Classification - Reported school enrollment #'s for 2026-27 were approved at the October Executive Committee meeting and on our website. Classification breakdown for 2027 was also approved.
MOTION by Deb to balance the classification numbers for fall of 2026.
SECOND by Monica. Carried 9-0.
b. Safety goggles – He reported a group of ophthalmologists reached out about concerns with goggles and he and Robert will be meeting with these doctors to discuss and share NFHS data with them.
c. Modified – Handbook game time – Can it be switched to quarters. Katie confirmed it was not discussed at the Modified meeting. The committee is recommending 12 mins. Todd indicated it will go to the next Modified Committee meeting in the spring for a vote/recommendation.
d. Proposal for additional official – The committee is asking for a 10th official from a ranked pool of officials statewide. This is to alleviate the burden of assigning and turning around officials to work state tournament games. Joe/Kristen/Bev will work on a proposal for CAC/Executive Committee.
MOTION by Katie to adopt 10th official. SECOND by Barb . Carried 9-0.

Kristen Jadin, Assistant Director

a. Game balls are from Penn Monto will go to each host coordinator for regional and state coordinator for state championships.
b. Operations Packets – Always posted on the NYSPHSAA website. Digital participation certificates for athletes are in the Operations Packets on our website under SPORTS (not CHAMPIONSHIPS). A suggestion to add language on rosters (Monica) to this would be helpful. Bev also suggested adding noise makers to the packet, but Todd reported one sport committee proposed a rule removing them and got defeated. The membership is interested more in considering a rule across the board in all sports. The current NFHS rule is that noisemakers cannot be a disruption to the game.
c. Coaches Meeting at State Tournament – This will be moved to a zoom meeting earlier in the week.

Chris Joyce, Director of Marketing & Foundation

a. Reported we had a great year of fundraising in 2024-25 for the foundation. We raised over $12,000 from our inaugural golf tournament this past summer. Grants are now available for schools. They can apply on the NYSPHSAA website. He noted it can be used for equipment and uniforms for programs. GRANT APPLICATIONS: https://form.jotform.com/NYSPHSAA/SchoolGrantApplication

4. Committee Business

a. 2026 State Championship - Rotation for the State Tournament schedule will be C, A, B
b. Regional Rotation for 2026 **sub-regional**: 9 @ 1, 11 @ 8
Regional Final: 6 @ 5, AL @ 4, 3 @ 2, winner of 11/8 vs winner of 9/1 @ either 9 or 1. Regionals need to be played by Nov. 8th.
State Semi: 6/5 vs 3/2, AL/4 vs 11/8/9/1
c. 2026 AT LARGE Teams:
    - A – Section VIII
    - B – Section I
    - C – Section IX
d. Overtime procedures:
    - Misconduct when in 7 v 7/ last minute of regulation play is going into OT (red card): Question: if you go to a 1 v 1 do you play an athlete short? Or is the athlete who got red carded not eligible
    - If a player is red carded the team plays down a player during OT; including 1 v 1
    - **MOTION by Monica to keep it at 5 athletes starting 1 v 1; regardless of if the card was given prior to the 1 v 1 SECOND by Sue. Motion carried 9-0**

e. Modified Field Hockey
    - Discussion of Section V who plays in the spring, moving to Fall season.
    - Asked if districts teach FH in PE at the elementary/middle school level - varies by sections and districts
    - Sections are mixed on how many officials are assigned modified games. Either 2 or just 1.
    - Youth programs: mixed among sections

f. NFHS rules were discussed

5. Section Concerns

All sections had the same concern about officials; lack there of and ability. Also added, they would like to see more consistency in game rules called across the state. Other concerns listed below by section.

Section 1 – loss of JV programs, though modified numbers are high; 3 region regional: in a sub-regional to regional with not a lot of time between nor did the section teams know where they were playing, so trouble with bussing and possible cost of overnight stay
Section 2 – sub-regional/regional in split location; Positive: JV teams nope having varsity programs
Section 3 – loss of programs; modifying rules for low numbers
Section 4 – loss of programs; concerned it will be a statewide loss
Section 5 –ability of officials differs across the state; teams wanting to play up in class in hopes to have a more successful post season
Section 6 – modified programs are lacking
Section 8 – would prefer to see an official travel to the AL game from the visiting section
Section 9 – loss of programs; location of sub-regional/regional games; Positive: have been keeping programs by playing down on JV/modified for teams that cannot field a full squad
Section 11 – would like to see another letter sent to AD's encouraging districts to keep programs regardless of numbers inclusive of JV

6. Next Meeting Dates

2026 State Committee Tournament Meeting – Friday, Nov. 13th @ 6:30 pm (Officials 5:00 pm at the hotel)
2027 State Committee Annual Meeting – Friday, January 8, 2027 @ 9:00 am via Zoom

Adjournment at 1:09 pm

--minutes respectfully submitted on January 12, 2026 by Bev Hooper and Joe Altieri

NYSPHSAA FOOTBALL
STATE COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY, February 9, 2026 @ 1:00 pm
MEETING MINUTES

ATTENDANCE: Dr. Robert Zayas, Todd Nelson, Joe Altieri, Kristin Jadin-NYSPHSAA Staff; Gary Vanderzee-Chairman; Ken Stoldt-Asst. Chairman; Ric Hamblin, Tim Arden, Patrick English-Officials; Steve Nolan-Modified; Mike Cring-Section 1; Sean Colfer-Section 2; Keith Kempney, Joe Corley-Section 3; Jeff Paske, Matt Haferele-Section 4; Ty Winter-Section 5; Ken Stoldt-Section 6; Pat Keleher-Section 7; Joe Martillotti-Section 8; Jason Semo-Section 9; Matt Tessmer-Section 10; Tim Horan-Section 11

NYSPHSAA STAFF REPORTS: Dr. Zayas noted the staff is in preparations for Winter State Championships and later would like to spend time on the classification proposal.

2026 SCHEDULE: Section chairmen were reminded to enter any schedule openings onto the spreadsheet that Keith Kempney has created.

CLASSIFICATIONS: Keith Kempney has prepared a breakdown of classifications for the 2027 & 2028 seasons. Please review this document for discussion at our March meeting.

8-MAN UPDATE: We are currently at 33 teams for the upcoming season. There are 4 sections with at least 4 teams at this time which is the championship philosophy criteria that has to be met o continue with an 8-man regional championship. Numbers must be final by the next meeting (spring is the deadline for meeting the championship philosophy criteria). The 2026 game will be played at Vestal along with the 11-man semifinals.

OFFICIALS: Tim Arden reported consistency across the state is a point of emphasis for their group as well as the schools. He noted that this would be most effective with administrative support from the schools and sections. Tim noted that the NFL “Crew of the Month” program has been a success and informed the group that one of our crews has been nominated for national Recognition. Tim added that Suffolk County did a documentary on an official called” Under The Lights”. This has been submitted to the NFHS and should help with recruiting as well.

MODIFIED: A question was asked about the length of quarters. Todd Nelson noted that modified can play 10-minute quarters. In addition, 12-minute quarters may be played as long as both teams have a minimum of 19 players. No 5th quarter should be played if using 12-minute quarters. There should be no additional cost for officials if you were already paying for a 5th quarter.

NYSHSFCA: No report.

CLASS AAA PROPOSAL: Section 3 is submitting a proposal to add a 6th classification (Class AAA) and would be comprised of private and charter schools, if sections choose to move these schools into the AAA Class. The committee and NYSPHSAA Staff had a lengthy discussion as to some of the obstacles this proposal could create if approved. Dr. Zayas provided us with insight that he has encountered through discussion with superintendents, sections, and ad hoc committees. The idea was to increase the ceiling for placement of private/charter schools. This has been an ongoing concern for years. Some of the concerns brought up were the number of teams that would qualify for this class. Would there be enough teams to have semi-final and state final? If Class AAA was established for private/charter schools, there would be an extended dead period (two weeks) that these schools would have before the state tournament so they would likely have to go out of state for games. Travel would be a major concern. A suggestion was brought up for

them to play their semi and final during the sectional playoffs but Dr. Zayas noted that the atmosphere would not be the same for them if they were not afforded the opportunity to play a the Dome. Dr. Zayas noted there are 8 states that now separate private and public schools (Alabama is the most recent).

Dr. Zayas reported on the Oversight Committee which was established to step in to move teams up a class if needed. There is current discussion as to whether this should start small, such as football and basketball or include all sports. Chairmen were encouraged to discuss with their own sections.

Dr. Zayas also reported on the Schools Without Boundaries Committee which is meeting on March 11th in person to discuss placement of private/charter schools. He suggested to our committee we wait to see what this committee discusses and if they make a recommendation before moving our proposal forward. Our committee will resume discussions on March 16th.

ROUND TABLE: Section 4 asked how many sections allow dual participation. =Sections 1 & 10 do not allow. Section 11 only allows for kickers.

NEXT MEETING: Monday March 16th @ 1:00 PM

Respectfully submitted by,
Gary Vanderzee, NYSPHSAA FB Chairman
Ken Stoldt, Asst. Chairman **2/9/26**

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Committee Meeting Report

Date: January 12, 2026 @ 1pm

ATTENDEES:

Alton Hicks (III), Samantha Little (IV), Aubrey Lloyd (VI), Kru Patel (VIII), Greg Ransom (IX), Joe Mercado (XI), NYSPHSAA – Dr. Robert Zayas, Kristen Jadin, Adam Stoltman, Renee James, Joe Altieri, Tim Mullins, Russell Bartlett, Todd Nelson, Kylie Tyo (SAAC)

Not present: Kim Saxton (I), Dr. Carlos Cotto (2 & Chair), Camaron Johnson (V), Justin Gardner (VII), Reginald McDonald (X) Jennifer Pyle, Conference of Big 5 School Districts (Consultant)

Status Updates/Items Discussion/ Action Taken:

1. **Welcome & Opening Remarks**
   Meeting called to order by Dr. Robert Zayas. He welcomed the committee and conveyed Dr. Cotto's regrets due to an urgent district matter. He also welcomed Kylie Tyo (Section X, Parishville-Hopkinton).

2. **Executive Committee Agenda Review**
   The February 4, 2026 Executive Committee agenda was reviewed. No DEI-related items were identified.

3. **Nonpublic/Charter Schools**
   Dr. Robert Zayas provided additional context regarding emerging concerns, primarily raised by downstate sections, related to the participation of non-public and charter schools within the NYSPHSAA structure, particularly in postseason tournament play. He explained that the concerns center on issues of competitive equity, noting that non-public and charter schools do not have defined geographic enrollment boundaries in the same way traditional public schools do. As a result, some member schools have expressed concern about competitive balance when these schools participate in the same postseason tournaments. Dr. Zayas emphasized that no formal proposal or recommendation has been submitted by any section at this time, and that Section IX has indicated it is not currently pursuing action. While the issue has not been formally characterized as a DEI matter, he noted that it could fall within the committee's scope from an equity and inclusivity perspective should a formal request be brought forward.

4. **Cheerleading – Choreography Out of Season**

   10. Choreography of a routine is prohibited prior to the official NYSPHSAA Official start for GameDay. (Oct. 2024) Competitive Cheer choreography is permitted during the Fall season, in accordance with the NYSPHSAA Practice Rule #22. (July 2025)

   The committee engaged in an extensive discussion regarding the current NYSPHSAA policy restricting competitive cheer choreography to the start of the fall season. Todd Nelson provided background on the rationale for the restriction, explaining that it was implemented to address concerns that some schools were utilizing professional choreographers during the summer, resulting in a competitive advantage at the state level and potential violations of existing NYSPHSAA rules requiring offseason activities to be open and non-mandatory.

Adam Stoltman questioned whether the policy results in cheerleading being treated differently than other sports and noted that enforcement of existing rules should be addressed at the sectional level rather than through additional restrictions. Joe M. echoed this concern, stating that inequities and competitive advantages already exist across many sports during the offseason and questioned whether cheerleading should be uniquely regulated. Aubrey Lloyd shared the perspective of urban school districts, noting that while offseason restrictions may promote equity for schools with limited resources, similar disparities exist in football, basketball, and other sports where offseason development is common and largely unregulated. Kylie Tyo, serving as the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee representative, asked whether similar restrictions exist in sports such as gymnastics, where athletes also perform choreographed routines; Todd Nelson responded that no such restrictions apply to gymnastics, reinforcing that cheerleading is currently the only sport with a choreography-specific limitation. Sam Little raised concerns about fairness and consistency in monitoring and enforcement, noting that cheerleading is being more closely regulated than other sports.

The committee agreed that no action would be taken at this time and that section representatives would bring the issue back to their sections for further discussion and provide feedback at the April meeting.

5. **Legislative Update**
   Dr. Zayas provided a legislative update regarding efforts by the Big Five Conference to pursue state legislation that would provide the Conference with two seats on the Executive Committee and four seats on the Central Committee. He noted that the legislative session has recently begun.

6. **DEI Representative on Sport Committees** – Dr. Robert Zayas
   The committee discussed the potential addition of a DEI representative to NYSPHSAA sport committees as an initial step toward increasing diversity and inclusivity within the Association's governance structure. Dr. Zayas emphasized the importance of being intentional in creating pathways for individuals from underrepresented groups to gain experience through committee service, with the long-term goal of strengthening leadership pipelines within NYSPHSAA. Kristen Jadin raised the question of how diversity would be defined in this context, noting the need for clarity regarding whether representation would be based on race, ethnicity, gender, geography, underserved districts, or other underrepresented groups. Samanatha presented concerns regarding terminology and emphasized the importance of using inclusive and respectful language when framing such roles. Adam Stoltman suggested that the committee first examine areas where sport committees may be overrepresented in order to better understand gaps in representation, noting that diversity considerations may vary by sport and region, including rural versus urban perspectives.

   The committee agreed that additional discussion and feedback from sections is necessary before advancing the concept and asked section representatives to solicit input and return with recommendations at the April meeting.

7. **Google Drive**
   Kristen Jadin shared that a DEI Committee Google Drive has been created to support communication and the sharing of resources among committee members. Members were encouraged to upload materials and information for future discussion.

8. **New Business/Section Concerns**
   No Sectional Concerns were presented.

   NYSPHSAA Officer Vacancy
   Dr. Zayas informed the committee that applications are being accepted for the NYSPHSAA Principal Representative Officer position due to the upcoming conclusion of the current representative's term. He noted that eligible candidates must currently be serving on their section's executive committee and encouraged members to identify and recommend qualified individuals to send the application to, particularly from diverse backgrounds. Applications are due by Friday, January 16, 2026.

Future Items/Meeting:

1. Tuesday, April 14, 2026 @ 1pm
2. Tuesday, June 23, 2026 @ 1pm

CHAMPIONSHIP ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)
Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, January 14, 2026

CAC Members Attending: Greg Ransom (Chair), Mike Andrew (Team Sports), Jen Keane (At-Large), Josh Harrica (At-Large), Eileen Troy (At-Large), Kristin Frazer (Individual Sports), Matt Ronca (At-Large), Kathy Hoyt (Executive Director) Dave Lileck (Superintendent), ABSENT with notice: Mark Ward (At-Large), Stephen Luciana (At-Large)

Staff/Officers Attending: Dr. Robert Zayas (Executive Director), Joe Altieri (CAC Liaison/Assistant Director), Todd Nelson (Assistant Director), Kristen Jadin (Assistant Director), Tim Mullins (President), Adam Stoltman (Vice President), Deb Ferry (2nd Vice President), Russell Bartlett (Immediate Past President), Renee James (Counsel)

SAAC Members Attending: Julia DiMichele (Section I – Putnam Valley)

Coordinators Attending: Bev Hooper (Field Hockey)

Call to Order by Chair Greg Ransom at 10:03 am. Greg welcomed everyone. Joe introduced Student Athlete Advisory Committee member Julia DiMichele (Putnam Valley HS) on the call. He stated two members will be absent (with notice) today so there will be nine votes cast for proposals. Dr. Zayas and President Mullins had no updates and thanked the committee for their work and dedication.

Greg asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 8, 2025 CAC meeting.
MOTION by Josh. SECOND by Kristin F. CARRIED 9-0.

PROPOSALS
(*These items will be presented as discussion or action at the next Executive/Central Committee Mtg)*
Following proposal presentations by Sport Coordinators, Greg announced Sport Coordinators may depart the call so the CAC can discuss and vote on proposals.

OFFICIALS FEES & POLICIES 2026-27, 2027-28, 2028-29 – Todd Nelson reported this will expire at the end of this year so this committee will need to discuss and decide on fees for the next three-year term. He explained the Fees & Policies document is set forth by NYSPHSAA with no negotiating. Officials are offered to work state tournaments but are not required to accept officiating if selected. Todd compiles a list of fees across the state for each sport and shares it with CAC before it moves forward. Greg added CAC has the sole responsibility of making changes to this document then it goes to Executive Committee. Prior to the April CAC meeting, Todd will convene a sub-committee to review fees, polices and other language then present to the full CAC, and ultimately forwarding to Executive Committee in May for a vote. Eileen, Kathy and Greg volunteered to serve on the sub-committee but others are welcome to join. Email Greg. Kathy asked if Todd anticipated any major changes. He did not than a potential added official for field hockey, to be discussed later in the meeting.

FIELD HOCKEY Additional Official for State Tournament – Coordinator Bev Hooper explained the proposal. Greg asked what the added cost is. Bev reported the only cost is travel for that official as games will not be adding an official, simply increasing the pool to choose from. Mike asked for clarity on selection of officials. Bev said it

would come from the host if they are ranked high. Joe/Kristen stated the proposal needs to be revised in numerous areas and will be done so before the Executive Committee meeting. Todd indicated this proposal can go to the CAC sub-committee when officials fees & policies are discussed.
MOTION by Matt. SECOND by Kathy. CARRIED 9-0.

NEEDS REVIEW/INPUT:
Greg reminded committee members when reviewing site selections, their task is to identify concerns of site selections for the Executive Committee if they were not during the committee and staff bid discussions.

Baseball Site Selection 2027-29 – Joe A. explained the lone bid submitted by Binghamton (various sites). He indicated both staff and committee agreed on the bid as the recommendation.
CAC expressed no concerns with the recommendation.

Field Hockey Site Selection 2027-29 – Joe A. explained the two bids submitted by Arlington High School and Baldwinsville High School. He indicated both staff and committee agreed on Baldwinsville as recommendation.
CAC expressed no concerns with the recommendation.

Flag Football Site Selection 2027-29 – Joe A. explained the three bids submitted by Section 2 (Union College), Section III (Cortland) and Section V (Greece CSD, Pittsford Sutherland, St. John Fisher). Joe asked Julia her opinion on college sites vs high school sites from an athlete perspective. She stated when it comes to the state championship, it doesn't matter. He indicated both staff and committee agreed on Section V as recommendation.
CAC expressed no concerns with the recommendation.

Game Day Cheer Site Selection 2027-29 – Joe A. explained the lone bid submitted by Hudson Valley Community College in Troy. He indicated both staff and committee agreed on the bid as the recommendation.
CAC expressed no concerns with the recommendation.

INFORMATIONAL:
2025-30 Championship Dates & Sites – Joe noted the updated championship documents in the packet.

Adam asked it was a good time for Robert to share the latest from Section 1 regarding private schools in the postseason. Robert reported that Section 1 continues to make efforts to separate private and public schools and they will be bringing forward a sectional concern on this topic at the February 4th Executive Committee meeting. He explained the Equitable Classification Framework proposal that separate schools in Category A (public schools) and Category B (private, charter schools) for postseason competition.

ADJOURNMENT:
MOTION by Josh. SECOND by Mike CARRIED 9-0. The meeting adjourned at 10:31 am.

NEXT MEETINGS: Wednesday, April 15, 2026 @ 10:00 am
Wednesday, June 24, 2026 @ 10:00 am

Minutes respectfully submitted by NYSPHSAA liaison Joe Altieri; reviewed/approved on 1/15/2026 by CAC Chair, CAC members and the NYSPHSAA Executive Director prior to distribution.

NEW YORK STATE PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION INC.
WRESTLING COMMITTEE
STATE WRESTLING COMMITTEE



MINUTES: WINTER MEETING- CONFERENCE CALL 01/15/26

In Attendance:

NYS Chairman	Marty Sherman	
Section 1 Chair	Jamie Block	Horace Greeley HS
Section 2 Chair	John Vishneowski	Ravena/Coe/Sel.School
Section 3 Chair	Brad Hamer	
S3 Asst. Chair	Bill Kays	
Section 4 Chair	Jeff Nolan	Windsor High School
S4 Asst. Chair	Rick Armstrong	
Section 5 Chair	Bill Hadsell	
S5 Asst. Chair	Craig Kaper	Victor High School
Section 6 Chair	Mike DeBarbieri	
S6 Asst. Chair	Ryan Jordan	Franklinville
S6 Consultant	Israel Martinez	Niagara Falls HS
S7 Chair	Rob Witkiewicz	
Section 8 Chair	Josh Friedman	Clarke High School
S8 Consultant	Ed Ramirez	Garden City
Section 9 Chair	Jeff Cuilty	Cape Cod
S9 Asst Chair	Eric Hartmann	Warwick Valley
Section 10 Chair	Randy Morrison	Gouverneur HS
Section 11 Chair	Matt DeVincenzo	Comsewogue
CHS Chair	Tom Straehle	Iona Prep
CHS Asst Chair	Steve Hart	St Francis
PSLA Ast Chair	Hany Morsi	

Guests:

NYS Exec Dir	Robert Zayas
NYS Asst Dir	Joe Altieri
NYS Asst Dir	Todd Nelson
NYS Asst Dir	Kristen Jadin
Dir Foundation/Mkt	Chris Joyce
NYSPHSAA Interns	
NYSWOA	Frank Marotta
NYSWOA	Matt Smith

Absent:

S1 Asst. Chair	**Bob Bernarducci**	Pleasantville HS
S2 Asst. Chair	**Chad Languish**	Schenectady HS
S11 Asst Chair	**Bob Panariello**	S11 Asst Chair
PSAL Chair	**Ken Bigley**	PSAL Chair
AIS Asst	**Jason Edwards**	Hackley
AIS Asst	**Gregg Quilty**	Horace Mann
Dir Sports Info/Digital	**Lexi Swatt**	
NYSWOA	**Gene Tracy**	

AGENDA: (Blue highlighted items= new information for 2025-26)
(Red highlighted items= action needed between now and next meeting)

I. Introductions

Welcome: Ryan Jordan- Section 6 Asst Chair- Franklinville HS

II. Joe Altieri:

a. Chairmen MUST contact their respective hotel for NYS Duals immediately to inform them on your teams attending and nights you will be staying.
b. Individual State Tournament: Welcome reception will be hosted on Thursday night. Details forthcoming. Only contact hotels you are assigned.
c. NYSPHSAA Hall Of Fame 2026 deadline Jan 29 for nominations. Nominations must be done on-line (link on NYSPHSAA website)
d. Tickets for both tournaments will go on sale on Jan 20th-go thru the NYSPHSAA website

III. Robert Zayas:

a. Section 1 has expressed concerns about allowing CHSAA and AIS schools to be competing with NYPHSAA schools
b. Track wrestling has not signed a legal agreement that they are in compliance with NYS laws. Legal council is working on this and should be coming soon.

IV. Todd Nelson

a. Reminder: Sportsmanship T-Shirts: Names, School, Grade, wt class and sizes need to be reported to Marty on or before the day of the State seeding meeting on 2/21. Shirts are also given out at the NYS Duals and those winners need to be reported to Marty Sherman as soon as each section determines the teams representing them.
b. Photos of Section Dual Champ teams need to be sent to Todd ASAP.
c. Discussion on future of Inbody Scales- will be discussed in spring after meeting with Mike Moyer and Dan Weaver
d. Discussion of InBody procedures/problems/concerns below (as well as any additional concerns) will be done at Spring meeting.
e. Marty-Sub committee in the spring to evaluate criteria for possible re-certs in January.
f. Representation rule for Transfers- Must meet the representation requirements for the NEW school you transferred to, Waivers may be needed for those who don't meet the requirements. Waivers could be denied as they must be for legitimate reasons (just the fact that they transferred is not a legitimate reason).
g. The bill for using Track will be split between all sections/schools using Track

V. Kristen Jadin / Lexi Swatt / Chris Joyce-

a. Operations packet for NYS Duals is on the website.
b. Digital certificates are available via a link in operations packets for printing for all state participants
c. Tickets for NYS Duals are available on GoFan.
d. For Individual Championship only pay for tickets from MVP Arena or Ticketmaster (fees are included in posted prices) use NYSPHSAA website

VI. Frank Marotta / Matt Smith - (NYS Officials)

a. At our December meeting, 2 representatives from the State Wrestling Committee, Mike DeBarbieri-6 and Brad Hamer-3 observed the process when we screened applicants for the January and February Tournaments.
b. For the Dual Meet Tournament, 12 officials were recommended and all sections except Section 7 and 11 are represented.
The slate was sent to Marty so he could get approval from the committee by email
c. For the Individual tournament, there were **50** nominations for the Individual Tournament and **32** with prior NYS tournament experience, were recommended to the State Wrestling Committee.
All sections are represented.
The goal was to have at least 2 officials from each section provided a qualified nominee was submitted, and most sections have 3 officials. Additional officials were distributed based on a rank order.
We have succeeded in getting more people involved and 4 of the officials are new. The slate was sent to Marty so he could get approval from the committee by email and officials could be notified earlier than in the past. There are no alternates, but we do have a rank order of replacements in the event an official has to drop out. Slate was previously approved by committee via email.

d. Sectional chairmen are reminded to send Frank Marotta their section's officials ratings at the end of each season. It is important that the screening committee has that information.
e. The optional rating form: **NYSPHSAA-OfficialsEvaluationForm** that any head coach at the state tournament can complete and turned in to their sectional Chairmen who will in turn submit to Frank Marotta for input for next season is available. If a coach would like to attach a video of the incident when they submit the evaluation form they may do so. Forms will be available at the head table.
f. NYSWC strongly feels ALL sections should be nominating 2 quality officials for BOTH the NYS Duals and NYS Tournament.

VII. TrackWrestling Reporting Updates: (Jeff Cuilty)

a. Reminder: Team records can now be accessed by clicking on:
My Account-My Extras-Dual Records
VIEW OTHER TEAMS WEIGH IN's
Open an opponent's team **schedule page**.
Click on the **Roster tab**.
Click on the **View Weigh In's** button at the top
Select a wrestler to view
c. Brandy Lindsley (Brandy.Lindsley@flosports.tv) can assist with any specific questions. She will need to be contacted by Jeff Cuilty-9 and Marty Sherman to make sure the post-season forms will be able to be printed for NYS seeding meeting.
d. Remind coaches that results need to be entered within a week of each event.
e. **When a wrestler transfers schools:** Track cannot transfer the new wrestlers wins and losses. You must do that manually. They suggest you as the new coach, go to your schedule and Add an event: individual tournament/matches (You might name it: XYZ-Transfer) and use the date of the new wrestlers last competition.
All matches from the previous team should be entered there, along with the last actual weight.

VIII. Handbook Committee Report: (Marty Sherman / Jeff Cuilty-9, Frank Marotta)

As situations not currently addressed in the handbook arise throughout the season they are being collected and written up for inclusion in next year's handbook. Please forward any items for consideration to Marty Sherman or Jeff Cuilty as they come up.

a. An addition to handbook in Additional Pounds Section:
Situation : Tournament Saturday moved to Monday (due to weather)
Saturday: Original day of tournament (which is then postponed to Monday due to weather)
Sunday: A school in the tournament cannot practice due to weather.
Monday: All teams in the Monday tournament are at +1.
b. An addition to handbook in Additional Pounds Section:
Situation : Monday dual meet is scheduled
Sunday: A school in the dual meet cannot practice on Sunday because their building is not open on Sundays. (not related to weather, just normal school policy)
Monday: There is NO EXTRA POUND granted.

c. Todd Nelson- To be added to our handbook and Assessor Handbook for 2026-27:
The appeal process is: If the wrestler is dissatisfied with the In-Body results of the minimum weight determination, the wrestler is retested by the assessor appointed by the Section Consultant. Retests must be within 3 days of the original date of measurement. The urinalysis must be repeated and passed. **A wrestler who does not pass hydration for the appeal, may come back to redo the appeal so long as the appeal remains within the original 3-day period**.
Or
The hydration test is considered part of the appeal process so if they fail hydration on the appeal day, that counts as the appeal, and they must accept their original certification.
These choices will be brought to the Safey Committee for consideration in the Spring.
When conducting an appeal, the assessor will use the **actual weight of the wrestler on the day of the appeal if the wrestler passes the hydration test**.

IX. Seeding/Forfeit Committee: Jeff Cuilty, Ed Ramirez, Bill Kays, JohnVishneowski

a. Chairmen have **the Seeding Mechanics document for 2025-26** (changes in red)
b. Seeding meeting will be: Saturday, February 21, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. at Albany office. (2026: Even year-D2 at 10:00, D1 at Noon)

X. 2025 Tournament Auto Qualifiers (Jeff Cuilty)

Auto-Qualifiers Sub-Committee: Marty Sherman, John Vishneowski-2, Bill Kays-3, Izzy Martinez-6 and Jeff Cuilty-9,

a. Chairmen have the: **Sectional Tournament Dates2025-26** document **(previously attached)**.
b. Chairmen have the: **AutoQualifiers-25-26** document (changes in red) and were discussed at the Fall meeting. Document was previously sent for statewide distribution.
c. Please remind coaches of the procedures for recording forfeits.
d. **NYSResults24-25-AllSections spreadsheet** has been sent out for statewide distribution. It has been reconciled to the TrackWrestling data base and includes new schools of wrestlers who transferred (as they are reported).
e. NYS-**ReturningPlacewinners**From-2024-25 **(previously attached)**
On this spreadsheet:
NYS Seeding Competition Points have been allocated to returning wrestlers: Column T
NYS Seeding Placement Points have been allocated to returning wrestlers as follows:
Same Weight or 1 weight class up in Column U
Up 2 Weight Classes in Column W
Up 3 or more Weight Classes in Column Y
These point values will be forwarded to Trackwrestling for calculations needed for printing out the Post-Season roster sheets seeding meetings for entry into all post-season tournaments.
f. **DueDatesForChairmen-26 document (previously attached).**
Data are due to Jeff Cuilty by Sunday Feb 15, 2026.
(ASAP Monday AM 2/16: for S#'s: 1,8,9,11,AIS, and P who are competing on Sun 2/15)
Full list of qualifiers will be announced to Chairman just after noon on: Wed 2/18
g. Chairmen will receive their Sectional PlaceWinners-QualifierMaster spreadsheet for each division the week following the NYS Duals in a separate email. The same procedure as used last year will be used for 2025-26 and was reviewed at the meeting.
h. **Form 11-NYSPointsForm-25-26 spreadsheet** was distributed previously.
Some sections mandate that this form is completed and turned in prior to post-season seeding meetings to verify that no wrestler exceeded the 20-point limit.

XI. State Dual Meet Championship: (Brad Hamer-3, Bill Kays-3)

The NYS State Dual Meet Tournament will take place on Saturday January 31, 2026. at the SRC Arena in Syracuse. This tournament is the state sponsored tournament to determine an official NYS team dual meet champion. This is considered a post-season event, so that it would not count for points. Individual wins and losses will count on individual records and for seeding.

a. NYSPHSAA will host a **zoom meeting** for all chairmen and coaches who will be attending the tournament on **Wednesday, January 28 at 7 pm Link:** https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84496820546?pwd=jAIzA83KNQ4rBp533FeK0rd8GMbXkD.1
NYSPHSAA now has a document for all state sponsored tournaments, for coaches and participants Kristen Jayden will forward to Chairmen, to forward to all schools participating.

b. Finalized document: **2026WrestlingDualCOP is now updated and will appear on the state website. Link:**
https://nysphsaa.org/documents/2025/1/8/2025_Wrestling_Dual_COP.pdf
At-Large selection process and seeding procedure require each section to complete the **NYSDualMeetTournament-Seeding-AtLargeBidForm-2025-26** (sent previously) for their D1 and D2 championship teams. The form is also required for all D1 and D2 runner-up teams for any section that held a dual meet tournament.
Completed forms must be sent to Jeff Cuilty by Sunday 1/25 by 10:00 am.
A conference call to determine At-Large teams and seeding will be held on Sunday 1/25/26 at 11:00 am

c. **Program: Instructions for submitting Rosters and team photos**: are outlined **on page 6** of the 2026WrestlingDualCOP document.
Todd Nelson will add 2 columns to team rosters in the program to enter NYS place and Sectional place from previous season.
Deadline for submission (Sunday prior): Jan 25, 2026

d. **Credentials for athletes and bench personnel**: are outlined **on page 8** of the 2026WrestlingDualCOP document.
Credential will be at motels on Friday night. **Maximum 30 athletes and 6 bench personal** Coaches, manager, trainer, stat people)
Team/Bench Personnel List (end of COP packet) must be emailed to kjadin@nysphsaa.org by Monday January 26 by noon. Adults will have a credential lanyard to wear as well as a wrist band. It will be recommended that wrestlers not anticipated to be used in a dual meet sit up in the stands.

e. **School gate list**-(last page of COP packet) Max 8 per school (for school administration and appropriate school personnel) will be allowed free entry but have no floor access.
This list should be faxed to the NYSPHSAA office (518-690-0775) or sent via email to Kristen Jadin at **kjadin@nysphsaa.org by Wednesday Jan 28th at noon**.

g. Team photographers and videographers do not need to be listed on the School Gate List. They should contact Lexi Swatt for media credentials prior to the event at: **lswatt@nysphsaa.org**.

h. Workouts are available at the arena this year on Friday-Contact Brad if your section needs to set up a practice time. 90 min starting at 2:30-4, 4-5:30, 5:30-7

i. Request 2 people per school to work a table in round when their team is not wrestling. They would be on the bench list

i. Formats used by Sections for Sectional qualifiers for NYS Duals:
Section selects participant: Sections:
One-Day Bracketed-Sections:2,3,4,6,7,10
Two-Day Bracketed-Sections: 5,8,9,11
Greater than 2 Days Bracketed-Section: 1

j. Hotel Assigns Requests: for the Dual Meet Wrestling Championships on January 31st (rooms are for Friday January 30th).

DOUBLETREE $104 ***Linda Benn*** ***315-431-2203*** ***Linda.Benn@hilton.com***		**EMBASSY SUITES** **CARRIER CIRCLE $174** ***Gabriella Evans*** ***716-222-1029*** ***GabriellaEvans@VisionsHotels.com***	
Section 2	20 rooms	Section 1	20 rooms
Section 6	28 rooms	Section 4	16 rooms
Section 7	8 rooms	Section 5	18 rooms
Section 8	26 rooms	Section 9	22 rooms
Section 11	19 rooms	Section 10	9 rooms
Staff/Committee	4-6 rooms	Staff/Committee	6-8 rooms

k. **NWCA will donate 10 certified scales for use at the tournament.**

l. The NFHS Network has exclusive rights to stream NYSPHSAA Regional and Championship events. No other streamed broadcast of a NYSPHSAA Regional and/or Championship event will be permitted. The cost to view the championships on the network is $11.99 for one month of service.

m. **Times:**

7:00-8:00am	Weigh Ins
7:30 am	Doors Open
8:45 am	Opening Ceremonies
9:00 am	First Round (8 mats)
10:30 am	Second Round (8 mats)
12:00 pm	Third Round (8 mats)
2:30 pm	Semifinals (4 mats) – Awards to follow
4:45 pm	Finals Ceremonies Begin
5:00 pm	Finals (2 mats) – Awards to follow

XII. Girls Wrestling: Girls Wrestling:

a. x.

XIII. 2026 Tournament: MVP Arena

a. 2026 Tournament will be: **Fri/Sat: Feb 27 & Feb 28, 2026**
Sectional Tournaments should be completed the weekend of Fri/Sat//Sun 2/13,14,15
Seeding Meeting will be Saturday 2/21/26

b. Setup crew will be able to setup on the Wednesday (mats delivered Tuesday).
Due to Girls tournament: Practice Times for Thursday 2/26 at the MVP Arena MVP will only be available from 2:00 pm-4:00 pm while the girls are on break before their finals.
Boys with credentials will meet at an assigned location to be admitted to the girls finals if they wish to view them.

c. The 10-mat format of 21-D1 and 22-D2 entries per weight will be used again.
If facing the scorer's table, Mats 1-5 will be on the left and Mats 6-10 will be on the right.
Tables and clocks will be in the rows of press tables in between press seating.

d. **NYSTournament-Times-10 Mats-OneDivisionOnEachEnd-2026**
(odd year-D1 closest to Head table)
Head Table Mat 1-D2 2-D2 3-D2 4-D1 5-D1
Head Table Mat 10-D2 9-D2 8-D1 7-D1 6 D1
All 10 mats will be used all day on Friday.

e. Weigh-ins remain 7:30-8:30 on both days.
NWCA will donate 10 certified scales for use at the tournament.

f. Friday and Saturday start time is 9:30 am. -Estimated completion time on Friday is 7:30 pm. (12 wrestlers per weight return for Day 2).
-The Blood Round is Saturday morning and will be run concurrently with the Semi's.
Even Year:
-D2 Semis on Mats 2&3 with Blood round on Mats 1,9 &10
-D1 Semis on Mats 7&8 with Blood round on Mats 4,5 & 6.
-At the conclusion of the round tournament will go back to 8 mats.

g. -Break is estimated at 3:15-5:00 with **Ceremonies at 5:50 and Finals at 6:05**

h. Awards ceremony will again be at the end of the finals.

i. Tickets are now on sale for NYS Tournament. at the MVP Arena **either online at** www.ticketmaster.com **or at the boxofficeWALK-UPS** which **WILL** be available this year)
Tournament tickets: Packages that will include combinations with boys and girls tournament are currently being worked out.
In Person at box office **$14.00 single session, $TBA all sessions, $TBA premium**
Ticketmaster **$TBA single session, $TBA all sessions, $TBA premium**

j. Tournament sponsors update: Dollamur/Coaches Corner will be the mat supplier for NYSPHSAA events for 2026). **CP Sportswear is the Official Merchandiser for event merchandise**. NYSPHSAA is currently soliciting bids from vendors/sponsors for non-event equipment booth at NYS Tournament. Bids will be accepted up thru January 31, 2026.

k. NFHS Network will now be broadcasting the NYS tournament in its entirety this year for a minimal subscription fee $10.95 per month (either for full year or by event). Track Wrestling will assist with camera operation and set up on all eight mats for the individual tournament and the NYS Duals. DVDs of finals should be available for purchase from NFHS website.

l. **Chairmen should make initial contacts with motels within next week.**
(numbers following sections were # rooms used in 2024-25)
Hilton Downtown: $148 patricia.bishop2@hilton.com
S# 1-40, 2-30, 4-16, 5-47, 8—10, 11-50, Marty Sherman-1
Request will be made that individual Sections be housed on the same floor and that a more timely check-in procedure be available.
Hilton Garden Inn Albany Med: $119 dorene.westcott@hilton.com
S# 3-60
Comfort Inn-Glenmont: $134 ashish.t@ti-cityhotels.com
S# 7-15, 10-17, 11-10
Marriott (Wolf Road): $118 heather.hough@marriottsales.com
S# 9-98
Renaissance (Wolf Road): $139 laura.petrovic@marriott.com
S# 6-50, 8-40, PSAL-20
The Sheraton: $122 amethyst.williams@marriott.com
S# AIS-15 CHSAA-25
Hampton Inn/Albany Downtown $133 Tara.Rhoads@hilton.com
Officials-50

m. **Sections not staying in downtown Albany should submit to Joe Altieri the number of parking passes needed for the Thursday and Friday prior to the tournament.**
n. Press Releases: Website: **nysphsaa.org** has all tournament info as well as directions to all motels as does: http://www.albany.org/nysphsaa.aspx
o. Sportsmanship Awards: will take place at the start of wrestling on Friday.
Officials awards: will take place at the start of wrestling on Saturday.
Hall of Fame Ceremony: will take place prior to the finals with a short video presentation and reading for each inductee
p. Sectional Team Scoring-for the Auto-Qualifier changes in 2025-26 to: **the wrestler who earns Sectional Team Points at each weight class shall be: The Section Champ only for all future tournaments.**

XIV. Modified Committee:

a. No items discussed

XV. Old Business-(Marty Sherman)-

a. x.

XVI. New Business:

a. Before we went to Track weigh in forms, we used to have just one weigh-in sheet with all wrestles listed by weight. The coaches would match JV wrestlers and JV bouts may have been contested prior to the Varsity event.
Was the procedure that if a wrestler was on the weigh-in sheet but was not used in the JV event, they were eligible for Varsity?
We had prior discussions and went back and forth about a coach using a JV kid at the last minute to take a Varsity forfeit when he wasn't technically in the Varsity scorebook when the coaches did the pre-match lineups.
We currently have nothing officially written down anymore to address this.
Some teams now print two separate weigh-in sheets, from Track, one for Varsity and one for JV (some teams have all the wrestlers on one form)
After discussion:
A wrestler on the JV weigh in sheet or any wrestler on a single weigh in sheet is eligible to be entered in the Varsity match at the last minute (so long as they did not wrestle in a JV bout prior to the Varsity event)

AJOURNMENT

-Today's Meeting: Start time: 10:00 a.m. End Time: 11:30 p.m. (1 hr 30 minutes)

Next meeting(s):

Spring Meeting: Wednesday, May 13, 10:00 am

WINTER MEETING 01/17/24

Summary of (Red) Action Items that need to be taken care of before Spring meeting:

Chairmen need to:

Chairmen should touch base with motels for NYS Duals to inform update them on your teams attending and nights you will be staying.

Sportsmanship T-Shirts: Names, School, Grade and sizes need to be reported to Marty on or before the day of the State seeding meeting on 2/21. Shirts are also given out at the NYS Duals and those winners need to be reported to Marty Sherman as soon as each section determines the teams representing them.

Remind coaches that results need to be entered into Track within a week of each event.

Remind coaches of the procedures for recording forfeits.

For NYS DUALS:

NYSPHSAA will host a **zoom meeting** for all chairmen and coaches who will be attending the tournament on **Wednesday, January 28 at 7 pm** **Link:**
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84496820546?pwd=jAIzA83KNQ4rBp533FeK0rd8GMbXkD.1
NYSPHSAA now has a document for all state sponsored tournaments, for coaches and participants Kristen Jayden will forward to Chairmen, to forward to all schools participating

NYSDualMeetTournament-Seeding-AtLargeBidForm-2025-265 (sent previously) for their D1 and D2 championship teams. The form is also required for all D1 and D2 runner-up teams for any section that held a dual meet tournament.
Completed forms must be sent to Jeff Cuilty by Sunday 1/25 by 10:00 am. A conference call to determine At-Large teams and seeding will be held on Sunday 1/25/26 at 11:00 am

Team rosters: Deadline for submission (Sunday prior): Jan 25, 2026

Credentials for athletes and bench personnel: are outlined on page 8 of the 2026WrestlingDualCOP document.
Credential will be at motels on Friday night. Maximum 30 athletes and 6 bench personal Coaches, manager, trainer, stat people)
Team/Bench Personnel List (end of COP packet) must be emailed to kjadin@nysphsaa.org by Monday January 26 by noon. Adults will have a credential lanyard to wear as well as a wrist band. It will be recommended that wrestlers not anticipated to be used in a dual meet sit up in the stands.
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Team photographers and videographers do not need to be listed on the School Gate List. They should contact Lexi Swatt for media credentials prior to the event at: lswatt@nysphsaa.org.
Workouts are available at the arena this year on Friday-Contact Brad if your section needs to set up a practice time..

For NYS Tournament:

Sections not staying in downtown Albany should submit to Joe Altieri the number of parking passes needed for the Thursday and Friday prior to the tournament

Chairmen should make initial contacts with hotels within next week

Due to Girls tournament: Practice Times for Thursday 2/26 at the MVP Arena MVP will only be available from 2:00 pm-4:00 pm while the girls are on break before their finals.
Boys with credentials will meet at an assigned location to be admitted to the girls finals if they wish to view them.

Jeff Cuilty needs to:

Handbook update:

a. An addition to handbook in Additional Pounds Section:
Situation : Tournament Saturday moved to Monday (due to weather)
Saturday: Original day of tournament (which is then postponed to Monday due to weather)
Sunday: A school in the tournament cannot practice due to weather.
Monday: All teams in the Monday tournament are at +1.

b. An addition to handbook in Additional Pounds Section:
Situation : Monday dual meet is scheduled
Sunday: A school in the dual meet cannot practice on Sunday because their building is not open on Sundays. (not related to weather, just normal school policy)
Monday: There is NO EXTRA POUND granted

A wrestler on the JV weigh in sheet or any wrestler on a single weigh in sheet is eligible to be entered in the Varsity match at the last minute (so long as they did not wrestle in a JV bout prior to the Varsity event)

Brandy Lindsley (Brandy.Lindsley@flosports.tv) can assist with any specific questions. She will need to be contacted by Jeff Cuilty-9 and Marty Sherman to make sure the post-season forms will be able to be printed for NYS seeding meeting

Chairmen will receive their Sectional PlaceWinners-QualifierMaster spreadsheet for each division the week following the NYS Duals in a separate email.

Marty Sherman needs to:

Marty-Sub committee in the spring to evaluate criteria for possible re-certs in January.

Tabled to Spring meeting:

NYSPHSAA office needs to:

Todd Nelson:

A wrestler who does not pass hydration for the appeal, may come back to redo the appeal so long as the appeal remains within the original 3-day period.
Or
The hydration test is considered part of the appeal process so if they fail hydration on the appeal day, that counts as the appeal, and they must accept their original certification.
These choices will be brought to the Safey Committee for consideration in the Spring.

Handbook Committee Meeting Report
Date: January 13, 2026 @ 9:00am - ZOOM

Attendees:
Pat Pizzarelli (Chair), Tim Mullins, Todd Nelson, Erika Backus, Paul Gasparini, Todd Gulluscio, Debra Ferry, Taylor Gifford (SAAC Rep), Dr. Robert Zayas, Kristen Jadin, Renee James, Marisa Fallacaro-Dougherty, Matt Walentuk
Not present: Adam Stoltman, Russell Bartlett

Status Updates/Items Discussion/ Action Taken:

1. **Assumed Name Discussion**
   The committee reviewed the long-standing rule prohibiting student-athletes from participating under an assumed name. Dr. Zayas explained that recent cases in Nassau County involved student-athletes playing club soccer where academy rules prohibit participation in high school soccer. To circumvent those restrictions, students registered for their high school teams using a combination of their middle name and mother's maiden name, thereby competing under assumed names. Although the schools self-reported once the prescribed penalty of ineligibility for the remainder of the season for both the student-athlete and coach was administered. Appeals were filed but ultimately denied.

   Pat P. noted that in one case a student used a maiden name and in another a completely different name and expressed strong concern that district leadership and boards appeared to support deception. He stated he was firmly opposed to any rule change. Paul G. agreed that the rule should remain unchanged. Dr. Zayas added that he contacted MLS leadership and was advised that the club involved has no jurisdiction over NYSPHSAA rules, noting the MLS policy is intended to prevent elite athletes from being overloaded with practices and competitions. He suggested that allowing a defined period for high school participation could better support students' connection to their school communities, while also noting that this issue does not impact girls' soccer due to the MLS season occurring in the spring. Renee recommended reinforcing the rationale behind the rule, particularly the impact on opposing teams and competitive integrity. ***The committee expressed no support for changing the rule and agreed it should be emphasized as a point of focus during Fall Athletic Director workshops.***

2. **Cheerleading – Choreography – Out of Season restrictions**
   Todd N. reviewed the rule limiting competitive cheerleading choreography to the start of the fall season, noting it was recommended by the Cheerleading Committee to address competitive imbalance created by schools hiring professional choreographers and concerns with out-of-season rule compliance. He reported that the issue was also discussed at length by the DEI Committee, which acknowledged that cheerleading is being treated differently than other sports, raising equity concerns. Concerns from DEI also referenced financial implications of schools that cannot afford choreographers. The DEI committee decided to bring it back to their sections for discussion. Todd G. and Tim echoed those concerns, comparing choreography to running plays or routines in other sports. Patrick P. acknowledged the equity discussion but emphasized that access to paid professional choreographers creates financial disparities not present in most sports. Renee raised potential legal exposure related to treating one sport differently. Marisa cautioned that the issue had already been extensively debated and approved by the membership, advising against revisiting the policy too quickly and allow the season to

conclude before revisiting. Matt supported allowing the season to conclude and gathering membership feedback before reconsideration. ***The committee agreed to take no immediate action and revisit the issue after the season.***

3. **Sport Specific Rule Pages:**
   Dr. Zayas reported that NYSPHSAA-specific rules have now been added to each sport's rules page in the handbook, clearly distinguishing them from NFHS rules. He noted this change was made following legal recommendations from Renee James related to prior litigation. It will be updated on the website after the NYSPHSAA Executive Committee on February 4th.

4. **Forfeit Rule**
   Dr. Zayas presented a request from boys lacrosse to adopt a forfeit rule similar to football's, noting that no other sports have made similar requests. Pat expressed concern that expanding the rule could create expectations across all sports and felt forfeits are less impactful in sports with longer seasons. Tim explained that Section XI already addresses forfeits at the sectional level through its own policies. Matt raised questions about whether there are standards governing when forfeits are permissible, prompting discussion that such decisions are largely discretionary at present. ***The committee did not support expanding the rule at this time and agreed to continue monitoring forfeits as a broader issue.***

Future Meeting:

1. Next meetings:
   a. Tuesday, April 15, 2026 @ 9am
   b. Tuesday, June 23, 2026 @ 9am

Combining of Teams Meeting Report

Date: January 20, 2026 @ 1:00 PM via ZOOM

Attendees: Attendees: Austin Goldberg/Jesse Merchant (I), Dan Ward (2), Chris Doroshenko (III), Jeff Ferrara (IV), Jon Beardsley (V), Jeff Sortisio (VI), Mike Pelan (VIII), Tim Bult (IX), Eric Luther (X), Todd Gulluscio (XI), NYSPHSAA – Tim Mullins, Adam Stoltman, Debra Ferry, Russell Bartlett, Renee James, Dr. Robert Zayas, Kristen Jadin, Todd Nelson, Joe Altieri
Not present: Matt Walentuk (VII)

Status Updates/Items Discussion/Action Taken:

1. **Welcome & Previous Meeting Reports**
   Dr. Zayas welcomed the committee and explained that the Combining of Teams Committee meets on an as-needed basis at the direction of the NYSPHSAA President. He reviewed the committee's historical role, emphasizing that the guiding purpose of combining teams has always been to increase student-athlete participation opportunities. Meeting reports from February 6, 2023 and June 12, 2023 were reviewed and included in the meeting packet.

2. **Graduated Scale Feedback**
   Todd N. reviewed the most recent changes to the graduated scale that were approved in 2024. These included increasing the percentage of enrollment used for mergers in Class D from 30% to 40%, in Class C from 40% to 50%, and in Class B from 50% to 100%, while maintaining 100% for Class A and above. He indicated that, in his view, these adjustments made only minor differences statewide and did not significantly impact the majority of merger situations.

   Dan W. echoed this assessment, stating that the changes functioned more as tweaks and had minimal effect, either positively or negatively. Dr. Zayas added that while there have been periodic discussions about returning to a 100% model across all classifications, such a move would not reflect the wishes of the membership. He emphasized that the purpose of the graduated scale is to support smaller schools and maintain participation opportunities, while league and sectional approval processes remain the primary safeguard against the formation of so-called super teams.

3. **Combining of Teams for Individual Sports (Sectional Concern)**
   Concerns raised by Section III at the October Executive Committee Meeting regarding the impact of mergers in individual sports, particularly in swimming and diving relays. It was noted that all boys relay champions at the 2025 NYSPHSAA Swimming and Diving Championships were merged teams, raising questions about whether this aligns with the original intent of merger policies.

   Tim B. described Section IX's approach, which differentiates between team and individual sports by using sport-specific participation thresholds. For example, in wrestling, both schools must fall below a minimum number of athletes before a merger is approved; otherwise, shadowing is required. Jesse and Austin explained that Section I adopted a different model, where merged teams in individual or combination sports are not permitted

to win league, conference, or sectional championships. They reported that this approach has generally improved competitive balance while maintaining participation levels.

Jeff S. shared that Section VI actively reviews combined teams multiple times per year and, when necessary, moves dominant merged teams to higher classifications. While acknowledging that such decisions are not always well received and may result in appeals, he indicated that the approach has been largely effective.

Several members cautioned against unintended consequences, particularly for emerging sports such as girls wrestling. Todd G. stressed that mergers are currently essential to sustaining girls wrestling programs statewide. Todd N. suggested that a possible compromise could involve allowing mergers during the regular season for practice and competition purposes, while requiring student-athletes to represent their home schools during postseason individual competitions.

Kristen clarified NYSPHSAA's current sport classifications, noting that wrestling is considered a team/individual sport, while swimming, indoor track, and outdoor track are classified as individual-only sports. This distinction prompted discussion about whether different merger rules could reasonably apply to these categories.

Dr. Zayas concluded that there was no clear consensus and recommended that committee members seek formal feedback from their respective sections related to whether individual sport mergers should be treated differently than team sport mergers before advancing any proposal.

4. **Competitive Advantages of Combined Teams**
The committee next discussed competitive balance concerns related to mergers in traditional team sports. Austin shared that Section I has seen cases where established teams add only a small number of athletes from other schools yet receive a classification benefit, prompting discussion about whether minimum participation thresholds should exist for mergers in team sports.

Ice hockey was identified as the sport generating the most frequent concerns, particularly due to large multi-school mergers. Adam asked whether there had ever been discussion about limiting the number of schools permitted in a merger. Dr. Zayas responded that while the issue has been discussed historically, the association has relied on league and sectional approval authority rather than statewide caps, given the wide variation among sports and geographic regions.

Dan raised a recurring concern from Section 2 regarding whether the graduated scale should be indefinite. He questioned whether an "off-ramp" should exist after a certain number of years, requiring programs either to sustain themselves independently or to move to a full 100% classification. Dr. Zayas acknowledged that this topic has surfaced previously and noted the administrative challenges of tracking merger timelines and preventing manipulation of the system.

Dr. Zayas asked that committee members discuss this topic with their Section and determine if a merger should be permitted to continue indefinitely or if there should be an "off-ramp."

5. **Sectional Concerns/New Business**
   None.

6. **Next Steps/Follow-Up**
   - ***Committee members will return to their respective sections to gather feedback on whether individual-only sports should be permitted to merge under NYSPHSAA policy.***
   - ***Sections will be asked whether a formal distinction should exist between individual-only sports and team/individual sports when applying merger rules.***
   - ***Members will solicit sectional input on whether the graduated scale should expire after a set number of years or whether existing league and sectional approval authority sufficiently addresses competitive concerns.***
   - ***NYSPHSAA staff will distribute a scheduling poll to determine the date of the next Combining of Teams Committee meeting.***
   - ***NYSPHSAA staff will attach the Section III relay data reference to the official meeting record for future review.***

Future Items/Meeting:

1. TBD