

Minnesota State High School League
Board of Directors Meeting
January 23, 2014

Meeting Synopsis

Action Items

- Development of a plan to provide a structure that assists in the scheduling of regular-season football games statewide was approved. The plan calls for the Board to divide member schools into districts of 16 or more, using geographic proximity and like enrollments as the placement criteria. The member schools within each district will then establish their own protocol for scheduling eight regular season games. Associate Director Merkle presented the Board information, including the results of a survey of member schools who had a representative participate in one of four webinars that addressed the issue. Those webinars were attended by 275 schools/teams. There are about 375 schools that play football. Of those 275 that participated in the webinars, 227 completed the survey. Six questions were asked: 1) All students in Minnesota who play football should have the opportunity for a full eight-game schedule against teams from Minnesota. Ninety percent responded yes. 2) Does your school currently have challenges scheduling regular-season football games? Eighteen percent said yes. 3) Has your school had challenges with regular-season football scheduling at any time in the past 10 years? Forty-one percent respond affirmatively. 4) The fourth question extended Question 3 out to the past 20-to 25 years and 42 percent said yes. 5) Resolving regular-season football scheduling issues would help solve issues that often lead to conference dissatisfaction? Fifty-five percent agreed. 6) Resolving regular-season football scheduling would be of assistance to me as an athletics/activities director? Fifty-six respondents said they Strongly Agree and another 67 said they Agree. Fifty-two responded that they Disagree and 51 said they Strongly Disagree. That amounts to 54 percent who either Agree or Strongly Agree. A separate survey sent to all member schools asked a question similar to Question 2 and 42 schools replied that regular-season scheduling had been a problem. Of those 42 schools, the classification breakdown was: 9-Man, three schools; Class A, four; Class AA, nine, Class AAA, nine; Class AAAA, seven; Class AAAAA, five; Class AAAAAA, five. Prior to the Board discussion and vote, seven people spoke to the issue with all but one person urging passage.
- The 2015 schedule for football was approved. The season will start Aug. 10 and teams will be required to put in two full weeks of conditioning and practice, but will be able to schedule their first game immediately thereafter on Saturday, Aug. 22. The current bylaw requires one full week of conditioning and two weeks of practice, and the first games of the season may be scheduled on the Thursday of the third week. The League's Sports Medicine Advisory Committee weighed in on the reduction of one week less of preparation prior to the first game. Currently many teams conduct scrimmages after that first week of practice and the medical group felt it may be even safer for players to be involved in a regulated game than a less regulated scrimmage situation with greater exposure to safety risks.
- Modification of the 2015 football schedule is required because the season-concluding Prep Bowl will be played two weeks earlier than the normal post-Thanksgiving dates. These are the only November 2015 dates that the University of Minnesota football stadium is available. That is where the 2014 and 2015 Prep Bowls will be played. The two weeks will be gained at

the beginning of the season, although teams will play three games prior to the start of school. Eight teams will still qualify for the playoffs. This schedule modification also gained Board approval. The new multi-purpose stadium that will be home to the Vikings and League soccer and football tournaments is scheduled to become available for the 2016 season.

- The football advisory committee was the only fall sport to forward a proposal to the Board. It only affects the largest class — AAAAAA — and changes the structure of the section tournament. All 32 schools will be seeded within each of the four sections. Then the seeds would be placed into one of several pre-determined but unannounced brackets that would have 16 teams on each side playing two rounds down to eight teams that would qualify for the state tournament. Top seeds from one section would be paired with an 8th seed from another section, and so on. The proposal was tabled and will be shared with affected member schools and administrative region secretaries. It will be put on the Board's action agenda for April 3.
- Expansion of the state girls' fast-pitch softball tournament from three to four classes was approved. The proposal from the sport's advisory committee would still allow the state tournament to be conducted over just two days and still allow for consolation play. Concerns about treating individual four-class tournaments differently in terms of structure were raised by some Board members. Staff members also indicated that other sport advisory groups interested in adding a class are awaiting the Board's decision, including girls' volleyball and baseball.
- The Board voted to establish May 12 as the date for the Representative Assembly to meet. At its April 3 meeting the Board will be asked to forward several bylaw amendments to the Representative Assembly for adoption. Among the affected bylaws, as reviewed and recommended by the Board's Eligibility Committee, are 111-Transfer and Residence, 201-Amateur Status, 203-Athletic Camps and Clinics, 205-Chemical Eligibility, 208-Non-School Competition and Training, and 304-Ineligible Student.

Discussion Items

- Joyce Swenson, state director for Minnesota Academic Decathlon, appeared before the Board to request bringing the program beneath the umbrella of the League. She presented two options to accomplish that goal, either through a partnership with dual responsibilities or having the League assume all responsibility for the activity. Academic decathlon, as the name implies, involves competition in 10 areas; six relating to knowledge in the areas of economics, fine arts, history, language and literature, mathematics and science; three written and verbal communication tests; and the Super Quiz. The Board may act on the proposal at its April meeting.

Board Committee Reports

- *Executive Committee*
The committee discussed staffing levels in the League office, the Minnesota Academic Decathlon request, and the status of planning for the League's celebration of its first 100 years. The committee also reviewed a draft policy pertaining to transgender athletes.
- *Eligibility Committee*
The Board adopted nine separate eligibility recommendations for violations of various bylaws. The committee also reviewed the outcome of three separate fair hearing procedures,

and forwarded to the full Board several bylaw amendments for consideration by the Representative Assembly.

- *Audit/Finance Committee*

The committee recommended and the Board approved the financial statements for the months of November and December. The committee reviewed the annual financial report conducted by the state auditor's office and its management letter which revealed a clean financial bill of health. The committee recommended and the Board approved the audit. A request from Administrative Region 4A for \$20,000 in operating funds was reviewed and the committee recommended and the Board approved the request.

- *Communications and Marketing Committee*

The committee reviewed preliminary results of the Listening to Students survey. Staff also reviewed marketing initiatives for the upcoming winter tournaments and potential opportunities for marketing the League's 100th anniversary.

- *Technology/Coaches and Officials Education Committee*

Staff offered updates on the coaches education program and an annual Midwest Officials Summit. Associate Director Jody Redman has traveled to several parts of the state to talk about the Why We Play program and will continue to do so.

Extra Point

- The Board acknowledged the service of Roz Peterson, the Lakeville school board member who has represented the Minnesota School Boards Association. She is resigning from the MSBA board to seek election to the state legislature.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the League Board of Directors is Thursday, April 3, 2014, at the League office.