

MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

East Lansing, January 13, 2016

Members Present:

Scott Grimes, Grand Haven
Fred Smith, Benton Harbor
Vic Michaels, Detroit
Peter Ryan, Saginaw
Al Unger, Kingsford

Staff Members Present:

Tom Rashid
Jack Roberts (Recorder)

Executive Committee Authority and Responsibility – The Executive Committee reviewed its authority under Article VII of the MHSAA Constitution and specifically its responsibility to consider each application for waiver of an eligibility requirement on its individual merits, determining if the regulation serves the purpose for which it was intended in each case or if the regulation works an undue hardship on any student who is the subject of a request for waiver. (These underlying criteria may not be restated for every subject of these minutes.)

The Executive Committee was reminded that it was the responsibility of each member school involved to provide sufficient information about the specific request for the Executive Committee to reach a decision without further investigation. If information is incomplete, contradictory or otherwise unclear or has been received too late to be studied completely, the Executive Committee may deny the request for waiver or delay action. Such requests may be resubmitted to the Executive Committee with additional information at a subsequent meeting or appealed to the full Representative Council.

It is possible that some of the information presented as facts to the Executive Committee by school personnel and others may be inaccurate. However, to avoid constant repetition in this report of phrases such as “it was alleged” or “it was reported,” no attempt is made in the introduction of each waiver request to distinguish between truth, allegation, hearsay, opinion, summary or conclusion. If any information provided to the Executive Committee is inaccurate, any decision of the Executive Committee to grant waiver of a regulation shall be null and void.

The Executive Committee is not authorized to approve waiver based on alleged or actual differences between schools based on “environment,” demographics, curriculum or extracurricular offerings. A determination of undue hardship is a matter addressed to the discretion of the Executive Committee within the educational philosophy and secondary role of voluntary extracurricular competitive athletics in the academic environment. The Executive Committee will avoid making exceptions that would create precedent that effectively changes a rule without Representative Council action or local board of education adoption, which would exceed Executive Committee authority. The contract the MHSAA has with member schools obligates the MHSAA to not change rules during the school year.

Students for whom waiver of a particular regulation is approved must be eligible in all other respects under all sections and interpretations of the regulations prior to their participation.

Adoption of these regulations, as well as policies, procedures and schedules of MHSAA tournaments, is a choice schools make locally when they consider their option of MHSAA membership. Consistent with rulings of the Attorney General and Michigan Supreme Court, schools are not bound by the decisions of the Executive Committee, but the association may limit participation in the postseason tournaments it sponsors to those schools which choose to apply rules and penalties as promulgated by the MHSAA and adopted by each member school's board of education. The MHSAA exercises no independent authority over schools or students.

Grand Rapids-West Michigan Aviation Academy and Wyoming-West Michigan Lutheran High Schools (Regulation I, Section 1[E]) – The Executive Committee approved a cooperative program in baseball between these two schools whose combined enrollment of 521 students will place a new team in the Division 2 tournament. West Michigan Lutheran and Tri-unity Christian were previously in a baseball cooperative agreement which dissolved when Tri-unity sponsored its own team. West Michigan Aviation will be the primary school. Support from four future opponents was submitted.

Allendale High School (Regulation I, Section 9[B] & [D]) – A request was made on behalf of a 9th-grade student to waive the transfer regulation to permit eligibility at the subvarsity level only on the student's 91st school day of enrollment at Allendale. The student began the 2015-16 school year at Jenison and participated in football. On Nov. 30, 2015, the student enrolled at Allendale, preferring its smaller size and to better accommodate his needs. Support for eligibility from the Jenison superintendent was submitted.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Bangor High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 10th-grade student who attended Bangor Schools since the 7th grade except for Tuesday, Nov. 24, 2015, when the father caused the student to attend South Haven. When the student returned to Bangor on Monday, Nov. 30, 2015, there was confusion over whether or not the student actually attended class at South Haven. The student wrestled in two meets for Bangor on Dec. 2 and 5, 2015, which have been forfeited to opponents. The student will have been withheld from three meets to this point.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Big Rapids High School (Regulation I, Section 9[D]) – A request to waive the transfer regulation to permit eligibility on the 91st school day of enrollment was made on behalf of a 12th-grade student who previously attended Reed City High School and enrolled at Big Rapids on Oct. 6, 2015, due to harassment at her former school.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver effective with the student's 91st school day of enrollment at Big Rapids High School beginning Oct. 6, 2015.

Brimley High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 10th-grade student who was asked to leave the home of her mother and mother's boyfriend in Munising on Dec. 12, 2015. The student's birth parents are divorced. The father lives with the student's grandmother but works out of state on a pipeline. The student was taken in by her grandmother who lives in Brimley. The student had attended Brimley Schools previously, reenrolled on Jan. 4, 2016, and has no history of high school sports participation.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

East Lansing High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 10th-grade student who previously attended Holt and enrolled at East Lansing on Sept. 8, 2015, to distance herself from a former boyfriend. In May 2015, the former school learned of a criminal investigation which the student had information about. Other family members of the boyfriend had conflicts with the student and her family during the 2014-15 school year.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Hart High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 12th-grade student who previously attended Shelby while residing with her family. The student has moved to the residence of her grandfather in Hart to assist him with medical issues. The student, who has also alleged some undocumented or substantiated bullying issues at the former school, enrolled at Hart on Jan. 5, 2016.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request for waiver.

Howell High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of an 11th-grade student who enrolled at Howell to begin the 2015-16 school year because it was uncertain if his former school, Livingston Christian, would reopen to begin the school year and where it would be located. The school did reopen at a new site in Whitmore Lake in Washtenaw County after municipal disputes in Federal court were decided in late August against the school's relocation to Brighton. The new school is not in Livingston County and is six miles further from the student's home in Howell than its original location in Pinckney.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Kentwood-East Kentwood High School (Regulation I, Section 9[F]) – A request was made on behalf of a 10th-grade student to set aside the decision of the executive director to permit eligibility in track & field on Jan. 18, 2016 (MLK). A review by the director confirmed a 180 school day period of ineligibility in track & field under the athletic-related section of the transfer regulation. The student is a resident of Middleville and attended Thornapple Kellogg for the 9th grade in 2014-15. The student enrolled at East Kentwood to begin the 2015-16 school year, preferring the number of advanced placement classes and medical field curriculum. The student has friends from her church who attend East Kentwood and prefers the larger school and diversity. The student is a thrower on the girls track & field team, and over the summer of 2015 she joined the East Kentwood Track Club whose throwing coaches also coach at East Kentwood High School. The student had no communication with the school coaches regarding enrollment at East Kentwood but made the decision to change schools based on academics and her friends from church and the track club members that attended East Kentwood High School.

The Executive Committee did not approve the request to overturn the decision of the executive director. The student is eligible in sports other than track & field on Jan. 18, 2016.

Parchment High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation and specifically Interpretation 62 (public school of residence) was made on behalf of a 10th-grade student who is moving between parents who never married: from his mother in New Jersey, who lost her home, to his father and stepmother who reside in the Comstock School District. Two step-siblings have attended Parchment Schools for the past three years. An otherwise completed Educational Transfer Form was submitted.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Romulus High School (Regulation I, Section 9[B] & [D]) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of an 11th-grade student whose family has been evicted from two residences in the past six months and who returned to Romulus to live with an uncle in November 2015. The student's family moved to Romulus from Colorado and the student attended Romulus High School for the 10th grade in 2014-15. In the summer of 2015, the family was evicted from their Romulus home and moved to Detroit where the student enrolled at Martin Luther King to begin the 11th grade in the 2015-16 school year and did not participate in athletics. The student moved to an uncle's home in Romulus and reenrolled at Romulus on Nov. 18, 2015.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Saginaw-Arthur Hill High School (Regulation I, Section 9[D]) – A request to waive the transfer regulation to permit eligibility on the 91st school day of enrollment was made on behalf of an 11th-grade student who previously attended Saginaw-Heritage before enrolling at Arthur Hill on Oct. 9, 2015. The coach had erroneously allowed the student to wrestle while ineligible in a meet on Dec. 12, 2015 which has been forfeited to opponents.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver effective with the student's 91st school day of enrollment at Arthur Hill High School beginning Oct. 9, 2015.

Saginaw-Swan Valley High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of a 10th-grade student whose mother has health issues which caused the student to be taken in by his grandparents in the 9th grade in October 2014. The student continued to commute to Swan Valley until March 2015 when the grandparents could no longer transport the student. The student enrolled at Merrill at the end of the second trimester. On March 26, 2015, the Executive Committee approved a request to waive the transfer regulation so the student could run track. Due to living conditions with the grandparents, the student sought a court appointed lawyer. On April 29, 2015, guardianship was transferred to a family in the Swan Valley School District whom the student has known for years. The student has been a Swan Valley student his entire career except for the third trimester of 2014-15 at Merrill and reenrolled at Swan Valley to begin the 2015-16 school year.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Watersmeet High School (Regulation I, Section 9) – A request to waive the transfer regulation was made on behalf of an 11th-grade student whose mother was asked to leave the family home on Nov. 27, 2015, due to the student's mother's substance abuse issues. The student was taken in by his uncle in Watersmeet on Dec. 6, 2015. The student previously attended Wyoming-Godwin Heights and lived with his mother, grandmother, great grandmother and younger brother. The mother's whereabouts are unknown and the younger brother lives with another family. The father has not been in the student's life for six years. The elderly grandparents were unable to care for the student.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver.

Subvarsity Waiver Requests Meeting All Conditions of Section 9(B) – The Executive Committee approved immediate eligibility at the subvarsity level for the following transferring 9th- or 10th-grade students (after entering 9th grade, before completing 10th grade) **who have not previously participated in an interscholastic scrimmage or contest in any MHSAA sport at the high school level** (whether MHSAA member schools or not) and who do not qualify for one of the 15 stated exceptions to the transfer regulation and have transferred for reasons having nothing to do with athletics, discipline or family finances and would not require Executive Committee evaluation or comparison of school demographics or curriculum:

Requesting High School	Grade	Former High School	Date of Enrollment	Length of Subvarsity Eligibility Status
Corunna	9	Denton, TX	Nov. 17, 2015	Remainder of 15-16 school year
Grand Rapids-West Catholic	10	Rockford	Nov. 23, 2015	Remainder of 15-16 school year
Lansing-Sexton	9	East Lansing	Nov. 30, 2015	Remainder of 15-16 school year
Mattawan	10	Brazil	Oct. 14, 2015	91 st school day of enrollment

Centreville High School (Regulation I, Section 12) – A request to waive the limited team membership regulation was made on behalf of a 9th-grade student who plays basketball for Centreville and has been involved with Special Olympics all his life. The student serves as a partner in Project Unity (a Unified Sports program of the Special Olympics) which brings special education students (athletes) and general education students (partners) together for once weekly practices culminating in a tournament at Western Michigan University on Feb. 27, 2016.

The Executive Committee approved the request for waiver and authorized staff to take this action on its behalf relative to similar requests involving Unified Sports.

Alpine Skiing (Regulation I, Section 12 and Regulation II, Section 15) – The unusually warm December weather has caused two concerns:

Limited Team Membership: The postponement from December 2015 to January 2016 of one large CUSSA meet at Nub's Nob. Students would normally participate as individuals in this meet prior to the beginning of the season so that it would not count as one of the two allowed non-school meets. Because this meet was postponed to January 9-10, 2016 after the start of competition, MHSAA staff has allowed students to ski in this meet without it being counted as one of the two allowed non-school meets.

Tournament Conditions: As a condition of entry into the MHSAA Alpine Ski Tournament, teams and individuals must have actually skied in a minimum of four competitions against school teams. It is possible that a small number of teams may be unable to ski in four meets. Therefore, the MHSAA staff requests Executive Committee authorization to waive the four-meet requirement on a case-by-case basis if necessary due to cancellations.

The Executive Committee approved the staff's decision regarding the Jan. 9-10 CUSSA meet and authorized staff to act on a case-by-case basis to schools' requests to waive the four-meet requirement.

Vermontville-Maple Valley Schools (Regulation III, Section 1[C]) – The Executive Committee approved a request to waive the enrollment regulation to permit 6th-grade girls to participate with and against 7th-graders in girls basketball, provided approval is given by the school's middle school league (GLAC).

Harper Woods-Chandler Park Academy (Regulation V, Section 3[A]) – On Dec. 30, 2015, the basketball coach from Chandler Park Academy removed his team from a contest in protest when a Chandler Park player was ejected by the officials. The school has taken the independent action of suspending the coach from the next two dates of competition and informing him that a similar incident will result in further discipline up to and including dismissal.

The Executive Committee was not satisfied with the remedies implemented by the school and requested that the school take more meaningful actions. If the school fails to take actions that the Executive Committee determines are adequate by its next meeting, this coach may not coach or be present at the MHSAA Boys Basketball Tournament at which Chandler Park Academy is participating.

Next Meetings – The next meetings of the Executive Committee are scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 17, 2016, at 9 am in East Lansing (Audit & Finance Committee follows); Wednesday, March 23, 2016, at 2:30 pm in East Lansing (Representative Council follows on March 24); Wednesday, April 20, 2016, at 9 am in East Lansing (Audit & Finance Committee follows); Sunday, May 1, 2016, at 11 am in Glen Arbor (Representative Council follows at 1 pm); and Wednesday, June 15, 2016, at 9 am in East Lansing.