



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

NEWS RELEASE

NFHS Launches Free National Book Study Supporting DEI Initiatives

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mautrice Meriweather

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (August 17, 2022) — A four-week national book study discussing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) will be conducted via a virtual webinar series by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) from October 19 to November 9. Registration for this first-ever free national initiative is open now through September 15 at meetings.nfhs.org/NFHSNationalBookStudy/.

All members of the high school sports and performing arts community – students, parents, coaches, officials, athletic directors, school administrators and others – are encouraged to participate in the NFHS National Book Study, featuring the book entitled, ***“From Athletics to Engineering: 8 Ways to Support Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for All,”*** co-authored by **Johnnie Johnson** and **Dr. Michael E. Webber**.

“This book study will allow readers to gather a collection of diverse perspectives from other readers and participants,” said Mautrice Meriweather, NFHS chief talent officer, who led the development of the national book study. “Each of the four sessions is intended to stimulate thinking, encourage self-reflection and move readers toward

intentional action steps that demonstrate support for work in the diversity, equity and inclusion space.”

The webinar-based virtual discussions will take place October 19, October 26, November 2 and November 9. At that time, book study participants will have the opportunity to join the NFHS, members of its 51-member state associations, and national DEI experts to gain a better understanding of DEI-related issues.

“The NFHS is a learning organization. In that light, the book study represents a solid educational initiative that has the infrastructure of the NFHS to extend to those who champion education-based sports and performing arts participation at the grassroots level,” Meriweather said. “It’s important to engage in collaborative learning around concepts that drive effective diversity, equity and inclusion practices to broaden one’s overall intellectual perspective.”

Throughout each of the book study’s four weeks, master facilitators, equipped with experience in athletic administration, coaching, school administration, teaching and DEI consulting, will rotate in leading the discussion on all eight chapters of the book. Links to the webinars will be distributed to participants prior to the first discussion on October 19.

Master facilitators include **Natalie Iwamoto**, director of information at the Hawaii High School Athletic Association (HHSAA), who as a student-athlete at Kaimuki High School in Honolulu earned varsity letters in basketball, volleyball, softball and soccer, and later served as assistant coach for the school’s varsity and junior varsity girls basketball teams; **Dr. Tamika Pollins**, who for 23 years has held positions as a teacher, principal and school administrator, in addition to serving as the director of diversity, equity, access and inclusion at West Orange Public Schools in New Jersey and as a consultant for Pollins and Associates, providing educational services on social justice,

strategic planning, diversity, equity, inclusion, communication and “think tanks;” **Mark Robinson**, an educator of 30 years, who currently teaches and coaches at St. Georges Technical High School in Middletown, Delaware, and has experienced a diverse educational journey as an educator, connecting with students from varied backgrounds, including at-risk youth in alternative settings; and **Janet Mauldin**, senior vice president of relocation for Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Georgia Properties, who has served on the Metro Atlanta Relocation Council Board of Directors, its advisory council and as a member of other distinguished national relocation councils, in addition to supporting her three children in football, baseball, wrestling, competitive and sideline cheer as a mom and booster club member.

Authors of the book are entrepreneur **Johnnie Johnson**, a former high school, collegiate and professional athlete, and **Dr. Michael E. Webber**, an educator and engineer. They use decades of experience in education, coaching, mentoring and leadership to suggest eight concepts to help in forward moving and sustaining programs that support diversity, equity and inclusion with an attitude that promotes harmony and prosperity for all in education-based activities, the workplace, community, and for everyday living.

The NFHS first engaged Johnson and Webber early last year, ahead of adopting “From Athletics to Engineering” in April 2021 when its internal DEI team began studying the book. The entire NFHS staff followed with a study of its own from August to October, featuring discussion led by the internal NFHS DEI team. This past spring, several of the NFHS member state association staffs and boards participated in the initiative.

“Diversity, Equity and Inclusion” was one of five strategic priorities developed in 2021 by the NFHS Strategic Planning Committee, which was composed of 17 state

association executive directors/assistant directors representing all eight NFHS sections, and is included in the 2021-2025 NFHS Strategic Plan.

“We believe the opportunity to involve thousands of individuals in our nation’s schools in the study of this book dealing with diversity, equity and inclusion is exactly what our membership envisioned in formulating the Strategic Plan,” said Dr. Karissa Niehoff, NFHS chief executive officer.

The NFHS’ efforts in leading this study have since received support from the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA), which is recommending participation in the book study to its network of more than 13,000 interscholastic athletic administrators. Similarly, the National Organization of Minority Athletic Directors (NOMAD) is encouraging participation in the book study to its membership.

At the conclusion of the National Book Study on November 9, participants will have an opportunity to register to facilitate a book study with their own groups.

To register and to learn more about the NFHS National Book Study, its authors and master facilitators, please visit meetings.nfhs.org/NFHSNationalBookStudy/. Questions regarding the book study may also be directed via email to nfhsbookstudy@nfhs.org or by phone to (317) 822-5715.

This press release was written by Cody Porter, manager of media relations for the National Federation of State High School Associations.

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About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and

support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.9 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, speech and debate coaches, and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Bruce Howard, 317-972-6900
Director of Publications and Communications
National Federation of State High School Associations
bhoward@nfhs.org

Chris Boone, 317-972-6900
Assistant Director of Publications and Communications
National Federation of State High School Associations
cboone@nfhs.org

Cody Porter, 317-972-6900
Manager of Media Relations
National Federation of State High School Associations
cporter@nfhs.org

Nate Perry, 317-972-6900
Coordinator of Media Relations
National Federation of State High School Associations
nperry@nfhs.org