

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

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES
February 19, 2025

Roll Call - The meeting of the Executive Committee, held on Wednesday, February 19, 2025, via the Microsoft Teams virtual platform, was called to order by the President, Russell Petrocelli, at 11:02 am.

The following members were present: Michael Baldwin, Dr. Carol Birnbohm, Jeremy Braverman, Anthony Browning, Carl Buffalino, Mark Cantagallo, Kevin Carroll, Tony Cattani, Jason Corley, Jorge Diaz, Judy Finch-Johnson, Barry Fitzgerald, John Fraraccio, Michael Gallo, Natalie Gorman, Steven Jenkins, Kurt Karcich, Howard Krieger, Greg Lasher, Brendan McGovern, Jason Miller, Dr. Anne Mucci, Dr. Jeff Pierro, Dr. Danny Robertozzi, Dr. Michael Rossi, Senator Paul Sarlo, Steve Shohfi, Sheryl Smith, Jeffrey Steele, Dr. Gregory Troxell, Joseph Ursino, Paul Vizzuso, Tammy Wagner, Barry Walker, Tripp Welborne, Cynthia Wilks, Senator Benjie Wimberly, and Sjoquelyn Winstead. Also present: Colleen Maguire, Executive Director; Paul Popadiuk, Chief Compliance Officer; Tony Maselli, Chief Operating Officer; Al Stumpf, Derryk Sellers and Sandy Mamary, Assistant Directors; Steven Goodell, Esq., NJSIAA Counsel. The following sportswriters were in attendance: Jake Aferiat, *NJ Advance Media* and Darren Cooper, *NorthJersey.com*.

Approval of Minutes - A motion was made by Kurt Karcich, seconded by Judy Finch-Johnson, to accept the minutes of January 15, 2025 Executive Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Before turning over the meeting to Colleen Maguire, Mr. Petrocelli congratulated Assemblyman Wimberly on his newly elected position as NJ Senator, 35th District. Executive Committee member, Al Abdelaziz, was elected to take over Mr. Wimberly's seat as the new Assemblyman for the 35th Legislative District.

Legislative Update (Colleen Maguire for Paul Anzano) – Mr. Anzano was unable to attend today's meeting but distributed a legislative tracking report to committee members. Senator Sarlo had no updates to add.

Executive Director Update – Colleen Maguire

NJSIAA Student Ambassador Meeting – 12 student ambassadors attended Ms. Maguire's first in-person meeting of the year. The meeting lasted two hours, full of lots of questions and great feedback. One interesting discussion was about weeknight games at 7:00pm in the winter season (many times multiple games per week at this hour). Many ambassadors felt having games so late contradicts the messaging they receive that they should get more sleep and would prefer the games during the week be earlier. Ms. Maguire encouraged those at the meeting to share that feedback with their school principals. Ms. Maguire also reviewed the competitive balance proposal that will be placed on this year's annual meeting ballot. There was understanding and overwhelming support for this proposal from the group.

Wrestling Update – The team tournament wrapped up Sunday at Rutgers University. Ms. Maguire enjoyed seeing Executive Committee members at the event. The boys district tournament will take place on Saturday, February 22 at 32 sites, while the girls region tournament will take place the next day at four sites. Ms. Maguire thanked Vernon HS, Union HS, East Brunswick HS, and Absegami HS for hosting the girls. There are approximately 2,200 girls participating in wrestling this year, an increase of 25+% from the prior year. The NJSIAA wrestling committee is working towards a girls team tournament

and expansion options for the individual tournament. The NCAA recently announced girls wrestling as an official sanctioned sport and anticipate holding a championship tournament for it in 2026-2027. Lastly, Ms. Maguire encouraged anyone who wanted to attend the state championships in Atlantic City to let her know.

Six-month Polling Results – Every six months, NJSIAA Bylaws require the association to poll member schools of all Bylaw and Rules and Regulations proposals approved by the Executive Committee. Last month the membership was polled on seven proposals that were approved by this committee between January and June 2024, varying from Bylaw updates to sport specific rules and regulations updates. Ms. Maguire was pleased to report that all proposals were overwhelmingly supported with 90+% voting in favor of each proposal. She then thanked the Executive Committee for their efforts as member schools continue to support their decisions.

DAANJ Conference – General Session – March 12, 2025 – NJSIAA staff looks forward to attending the annual DAANJ Conference the week of March 10th. Ms. Maguire thanked Executive Committee member Carl Buffalino, and the DAANJ Board of Trustees for their hospitality and opportunity to present at the conference. Staff and Mr. Goodell will host a general session workshop on Wednesday, March 12th to provide a financial and legal recap of the past year, as well as important updates from the association.

NJSIAA Hall of Fame/Awards Luncheon – March 23, 2025 – On Sunday, March 23, NJSIAA will host its annual Hall of Fame program. There the association will induct 5 former student athletes and 2 coaches into the Hall of Fame. celebrate four service award honorees and present Executive Committee member, Senator Sarlo with the Award of Honor for his continued support of NJ student-athletes and his advocacy for NJSIAA.

Chief Compliance Officer Update (Paul Popadiuk)

Eligibility Updates – With the marking period ending, there may be spring athletes who are ineligible because they failed classes and didn't earn enough credits. The good news is there's an additional opportunity for students to become eligible – if students get their grades up by 5/1, they become eligible, and if a student is a senior, they can be eligible after the third marking.

Cooperative Sports Committee Update– The committee met yesterday to review all fall cooperative sports applications. The Executive Committee will receive a list of approved fall cooperative sport programs next meeting.

International Student Committee Update – In March, the International Student Committee will convene to discuss the international student rule passed last year by the Executive Committee, including feedback received from schools since its implementation.

Chief Operating Officer Update (Tony Maselli)

Ice Hockey Update – The tournament seeded yesterday. Mr. Maselli met with the Prudential Center yesterday to finalize plans for the state finals. New to this year, the Prudential Center will award a Johnny and Matt Gaudreau MVP award at each of the 4 NJSIAA championship games, in honor of the two NJ ice hockey players killed by a drunk driver earlier this year.

Arbiter Sports Update – The association is moving to Arbiter Sports for assigning officials. Mr. Maselli traveled to Salt Lake City to meet with Arbiter last week. The transition is progressing well and NJSIAA will host training workshops for this in mid-March for Athletic Directors and officials.

Al Stumpf, Assistant Director Update

Basketball Update – The tournament was seeded yesterday. As a result of the Camden-Manasquan basketball controversy last year, backboard lights were installed at every semifinal site to help officials see better. Also, beginning with the sectional final round, all games will have four officials (prior to this round, it'll still be three). The 4th official will be at the table. A protocol sheet on how to use the 4th official will be sent to schools.

Fencing Update – The team tournament begins today. District 5&6 tournaments were postponed due to weather, but the new date created a conflict for some fencers because they were already entered in the Jr Olympic trials. NJSIAA is allowing these affected fencers to petition to participate in the individual championships. Fencers advance to the individual championships through the district tournament, but since they won't have that opportunity through no fault of their own, NJSIAA will make special accommodations for this year. It will make the day longer by over an hour.

Unified Basketball Update – 21 teams are entered in the state tournament. There will be two brackets playing down to a champion– one bracket with 12 teams, the other with 9. The two championship games will be played on 3/15 and 3/16 at Rutgers, one each day.

Unified Bowling Update – 18 teams entered the tournament. The finals will be on 2/27 at Bowlero in North Brunswick.

Derryk Sellers, Assistant Director Update

Bowling Update – Sectional finals will take place at four different sites this Saturday, 2/22, followed by the state semifinals and finals on Tuesday, 2/25 at Bowlero in North Brunswick. Then on 2/27, Bowlero will host the Boys & Girls State Individual Championships.

Winter Track Update – The Group Championships will take place this upcoming weekend at the Bennett Center. Non-Public schools will compete on Friday, 2/21; Groups 2&3 on Saturday, 2/22, and Groups 1&4 on Sunday, 2/23.

Sandy Mamary, Assistant Director Update

Swimming and Diving Update – The team finals will take place this Sunday, 2/23 at Rutgers. The individual championships will begin on 3/1 and culminate with the finals on 3/2 at GCIT. The Girls and Boys Diving Championships will take place on 2/25 and 2/26 respectively, both at Montgomery HS.

Finance Committee Update – Russell Petrocelli

Approval of Monthly Checks – The January 14, 2025 through February 17, 2025 checkbook was approved by the finance committee and all checks were approved per policy before they were disbursed. Kurt Karcich made a motion, seconded by Jeff Steele, to approve the January 14, 2025 through February 17, 2025 check registers. Motion carried unanimously.

Report of Counsel (Steven Goodell)

Mr. Goodell shared the following three updates:

1. Mr. Goodell and Ms. Smith defended the association in court because a female ice hockey player wanted to play on the boys team, which is against the NJSIAA's Boy/Girl Competition Rule. The judge in Essex County hearing the case decided in favor of the NJSIAA.

2. Mr. Goodell and Ms. Smith were back in court for a second case when a male wrestler challenged NJSIAA's transfer rule. He transferred after the Competition Start Date, therefore was ineligible for post season competition. The Bergen County judge hearing the case ruled in favor of the NJSIAA. Mr. Goodell shared that after this case, all three aspects of our new transfer rule (1-no post-season competition if the transfer takes place after the competition start date, 2-senior sit rules, and 3-rules involved with a second transfer) have been challenged and all three have been upheld by the courts.

3. Mr. Goodell addressed the transgender rule in relation to President Trump's new Executive Order. The NJSIAA transgender policy was first adopted in 2009. The policy allows a student to participate in sports consistent with their birth sex or gender identity, but not both, and allows a school to challenge a transgender student's participation if that participation would adversely affect safety or competition. NJSIAA does not keep records of transgender students' participation in sports. To date there have been no hearings, and no controversies about transgender participation have been brought to our attention. The policy is consistent with state law and provides a way for schools to meet their obligations under state law; however, NJSIAA does not take enforcement action against a school that fails to follow the transgender policy. That would be an issue between the school, the student, and the State of New Jersey.

Old Business / New Business – none.

Adjournment - There being no further business, a motion was made by Steve Shohfi, seconded by Judy Finch Johnson at 11:28 am, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Maguire
Executive Director

CEM: In