

NEW JERSEY STATE INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

1161 Route 130 North

Robbinsville, NJ 08691

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

September 16, 2026

Roll Call - The meeting of the Executive Committee, held on Wednesday, September 16, 2026, at the NJSIAA Administration Building in Robbinsville, New Jersey, was called to order by the President, Kurt Karcich, at 11:04 am.

The following members were present: Jeff Baldino, Michael Baldwin, Mike Bartram, Tom Berrios, Brian Bosworth, Anthony Browning, Tony Cattani, Christopher Chiera, Heather Crisci, Judy Finch-Johnson, Dr. Robert Fisicaro, Barry Fitzgerald, John Fraraccio, Michael Gallo, John Germano, Natalie Gorman, Ahmad Hamdeh, Dr. Brack Healy, Brian Henry, Steven Jenkins, Dr. Elizabeth Jewett, Jennifer Killough-Herrera, Dr. Michael Kuchar, Greg Lasher, Michael Manning, Dr. Matthew Mazzoni, Irv McFarland, Brendan McGovern, Jason Miller, Dr. Anne Mucci, John Niesz, Michael Raimondi, Senator Paul Sarlo, Steve Shohfi, Dr. Gregory Troxell, Joseph Ursino, Michael Vinella, Paul Vizzuso, Tripp Welborne, Dr. Clifford Williams, and Sjocquelyn 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 P. Goodell, Esq., NJSIAA Counsel. The following sportswriters were in attendance: Darren Cooper, *NorthJersey.com*; and Mike McGarry, *Press of Atlantic City*. Also present: Paul Anzano of Pringle Quinn Anzano, P.C. and Peter Lanigan, President - New Jersey High School Hockey Officials Association.

Approval of Minutes - A motion was made by Judy Finch-Johnson, seconded by Anthony Browning, to accept the minutes of the June 10, 2026 Executive Committee meeting and the minutes of the June 10, 2026 Reorganization meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Legislative Update (Paul Anzano) – In the summer, with the help of Executive Committee member Jennifer Killough-Herrera, Mr. Anzano and Ms. Maguire, met with the Commissioner of Education for a productive meeting. On the legislative front, it's been a quiet fall session, but Mr. Anzano is following the Department of Labor law regarding independent contractors being considered employees – not independent contractors. This new law will go into effect on October 1 (though it may be delayed) and has tax implications. The association, including Senator Sarlo (who put out his own statement yesterday), have registered support for high school officials to be excluded from this change of designation, which as of now they are, but officials who work in amateur sports, solely for a youth organization and only work games at those complexes may be impacted. Senator Sarlo shared that everyone should work with the Department of Labor directly on the proposal, instead of carving out multiple bills to exclude a group. Mike Bartram, who is the executive committee's officials representative, appreciates the updates since there is a lot of uncertainty and miscommunication out there.

NJ HS Hockey Officials Association Proposal - NJSIAA currently recognizes two officials' associations in the sport of ice hockey – the National Ice Hockey Officials Association (NIHOA) Metro and NIHOA South. The NIHOA Bylaws require that all officials be members of the national ice hockey officials association. This means that an NJSIAA official that is a member of this chapter has dual membership in the NJSIAA affiliated association as well as the national association.

A year ago, Mr. Maselli was approached by officials that wanted to start a new ice hockey chapter. To receive the association's support, there must be concrete reasons for the request. After discussions and reviewing the proposal sent to the Executive Committee, NJSIAA does support the addition a third chapter – the NJ HS Hockey Officials Association. Ice hockey is unique, first because of the skillset needed to officiate the sport since not everyone can ice skate, and second – since both current chapters

require dual membership with NJSIAA and the national association, that can serve as a barrier since some officials don't want to pay dues and follow the requirements of two different associations. The need for quality officials is greater than ever now that 1-we have women's ice hockey therefore more games, especially in afternoon; 2-schools want three-man crews over two-man; and 3- it is a such a specialized field, since not everyone can ice skate. The goal is not to diminish or destroy the current officials' chapter, just offer a flexible option to increase the number of officials. Peter Lanigan spoke to the committee. He shared that this new chapter should increase the number of quality officials and serve the schools better.

It is important to note that it is common for officials' associations to have their own requirements; however, NJSIAA staff feel it is important that interested officials have options available based on their personal interest. For instance, in the sport of boys and girls basketball, there are NJSIAA approved officials' associations that are members of the International Association of Approved Basketball Officials (IAABO) and other officials' associations that are not IAABO members.

Dr. Healy, ice hockey official/member of the NIHOA Metro Chapter, reviewed and supports the proposal, even though he will abstain due to his affiliations. He feels the sport deserves good officials.

Mr. Goodell shared the following:

Article VIII of the NJSIAA Bylaws give the Executive Committee the power to approve the certification of officials' associations, or chapters, in all sports. In addition, NJSIAA Policies provide that "Certification of an officials' chapter or association is at the discretion of the Executive Committee, which may consider, among other things, the need for a new chapter or association, the number of new officials in the membership of the new chapter or association, and whether the new chapter or association was created as a result of a conflict with an existing chapter or association."

A motion was made by Dr. Gregory Troxell, seconded by Michael Gallo, to approve a new ice hockey officials chapter – the NJ HS Hockey Officials Association. A roll call vote was taken. Final Vote: Yes: 40; No-0; Abstain-1. Motion carried.

Executive Director Update – Colleen Maguire

First, Ms. Maguire thanked Parker McCay for sponsoring the association's Handbook, which was distributed to each committee member. She also congratulated new Executive Committee member, John Niesz, and his district (Bayonne) for representing New Jersey proudly in the Little League World Series.

September Newsletter – Ms. Maguire distributed the September newsletter which was also shared on the Athletic Director alert system. It contains important updates, reminders and deadlines.

Sports Participation Report – NFHS's 2025-2026 sports participation survey and summary of participation for the past two years was distributed. Nationally, NFHS reported a record 8.4 million students playing high school sports last year. Locally, NJ reported a little over 275,000 students – which is a slight decrease from the prior year. New Jersey continues to rank in the top ten state associations for total participation at #9 and offers state championships in 34 sanctioned sports, which is still one of the largest in the country.

Girls wrestling and girls flag football continue to see annual growth that is commiserate with the national trend. Nationally, girls flag football cracked the top 10 list for most populous girls sports. During the past year, most sports experienced some decline in participation – the percentages are noted in the report. It is important to note that annual variability is to be expected as the data is only as good as the schools submitting accurate data. However, over the past four years, total participation across all sports is flat.

Student Ambassador Update – A list of the current NJSIAA Student Ambassadors was distributed. Ms. Maguire hosted the first meeting of the 2026-2027 school year on Sunday, September 13th. It was a great meeting with a lot of good discussions, questions and feedback.

Administrative Assistants Workshop – NJSIAA is hosting its third annual Admin Assistants Workshop on Tuesday, September 29th for administrative assistants. It's a good opportunity for administrative assistants to meet NJSIAA staff, network with others, and learn more about NJSIAA's operations, hopefully, making their daily responsibilities more efficient. This workshop is free and registration is already full.

Football Update – The season is underway. New to this season, NJSIAA is no longer using Gridiron NJ for its stats and record keeping. Instead, the association has transitioned to the NJ.com platform which is consistent with all other NJSIAA sports. Ms. Maguire thanked Chris Faytok and his development team for a smooth transition as the football powerpoint data is a complex formula. She was also very pleased to announce that MetLife Stadium will be hosting all seven state championship games this year on Saturday, November 28, and Sunday, November 29. Four games will take place on Saturday and three on Sunday. Both the Jets and Giants are away over the Black Friday weekend, which has not happened during Ms. Maguire's tenure, so there's a unique opportunity to let all teams experience MetLife Stadium. This schedule was unanimously supported by the officers representing all football leagues and conferences at the August meeting. This also means that if a team is playing in a Thanksgiving Day game, then they will be scheduled for the game on Sunday, November 29. Lastly, the non-public tournament will continue to be seeded by a committee. Ms. Maguire thanked President Kurt Karcich for serving on this committee, along with Dan Vivino from the Super Football Conference, Joe McColgan from the West Jersey Football League and Rich Shello from the Big Central Conference.

Basketball Classification Proposal – One Reading – Voice Vote – College Achieve Greater Asbury Park Charter School was a member of the Association during the 2023-2024 school year, during which they won the Group 1 state championship. The school has spent the last two school years hosting two boys basketball teams – a national team and a regional team; however, due to new charter school regulations taking effect with the 2026-2027 school year, College Achieve Greater Asbury Park is required to re-join the Association. Mr. Popadiuk has met with their athletic director to ensure they understand NJSIAA rules, which prohibit a member school from hosting two teams in any NJSIAA sanctioned sport. They acknowledge and agree that they will abide by our rules and regulations.

As a result, Ms. Maguire proposed that the competitive balance policy be retroactively applied to College Achieve Greater Asbury Park and that they be classified as a Group 2 school for the upcoming season. Their future classification will depend on the number of success points they earn during the season. This proposal has been shared with the school's athletic director, so they have been made aware of their Group 2 classification. This recommendation is based on this year's roster, which will include student-athletes that participated across two different teams in the prior season – one of which was successful on a national level – and on staff's interest in protecting the integrity of our state tournament.

A motion was made by Dr. Robert Fisicaro, seconded by Joseph Ursino, to retroactively apply the competitive balance policy to College Achieve Greater Asbury Park's boys basketball team, and classify them as a Group 2 school for the 2026-2027 season. The school's classification during the 2027-2028 season will depend on the number of success points earned during the 2026-2027 season. Motion carried unanimously.

Chief Compliance Officer Update (Paul Popadiuk)

Transfers Update – Mr. Popadiuk is happy to report that the number of transfers last year was consistent with the year prior, and even decreased slightly from 39% to 38%, which means the legislation in place is serving its purpose. From June 1, 2025 – May 31, 2026, there were 3,657 transfers, of which

1,394 (38%) were penalized. 32% of those penalized were senior transfers, the remaining 68% were due to multiple transfers.

Of those 3,657 transfers:

- 67% were males.
- 60% transferred from public school to public school.
- 13% transferred from public school to non-public school.
- 8% transferred from non-public school to non-public school.
- 19% transferred from non-public school to public school.

Eligibility Updates – This summer the association received 1/3 the number of age, credit, and semester waivers usually received in August for the Eligibility Committee to review.

Disqualification Report 2025-2026 – A summary of all disqualifications received during the 2025-2026 school year was distributed. Mr. Popadiuk is hoping the number of disqualifications is lower this year, especially in boys soccer. He also noted that though there were a high number of football ejections, most came from one game that got out of control vs many games with bad behavior.

Cooperative Sports Committee Approvals – One Reading – Voice Vote – Though not typical, the Cooperative Sports Committee met in August to review applications for this coming year, mainly because of the growth of girls wrestling and the legislation that passed in May allowing schools to tri-op in the sport. In the meeting, the committee reviewed two wrestling cooperative sports applications and five emergent relief applications, four of them being for a school that just joined NJSIAA this year. The committee approved and pushed forward the following applications for Executive Committee approval:

1. Belvidere / North Warren / Hackettstown - Girls Wrestling
2. Chatham / Mendham - Boys Wrestling
3. Academy of St. Elizabeth / Morris Catholic - Girls Soccer (Emergent)
4. Noor Ul Iman / Al Ghazaly - Boys Basketball (Emergent)
5. Noor Ul Iman / Al Ghazaly - Girls Basketball (Emergent)
6. Noor Ul Iman / Al Ghazaly - Boys Soccer (Emergent)
7. Noor Ul Iman / Al Ghazaly - Girls Soccer (Emergent)

A motion was made by Judy Finch-Johnson, seconded by Steve Shohfi, to approve the two wrestling cooperative sports programs and five emergent relief cooperative sports program requests, approved by the Cooperative Sports Committee in August 2026. The two wrestling programs will be in place for a four-year period starting with the 2026-2027 school year; the five emergent relief requests will be for the 2026-2027 school year only. Motion carried unanimously.

League & Conference Committee Hearing Update (Bernards HS – Skyland Conference) – Bernards HS was denied their requested to withdraw from the Skyland Conference next year so they could join a new conference. The school is now appealing the decision to the League and Conference Committee, a subcommittee of the Executive Committee. The hearing will take place later in the afternoon.

Chief Operating Officer Update (Tony Maselli)

FY 2025-2026 Steroid/Banned Substance Testing Update – Last school year, two athletes tested positive for taking NJSIAA's banned substances. Initially, there were more positive results, but testing the second sample yielded negative findings. Furthermore, there were several seniors that tested positive but refused retesting because their season was over already. Mr. Maselli visited the Drug Free Sport's testing facility in Utah over the summer and said it was outstanding. This is the same lab that tests athletes from the NFL, NBA, NCAA, and Olympics, so it's top of the line. There are only 2-3 facilities in the country like it.

Fall Sports Regulations/Modifications – All fall sport tournament regulations and modifications are posted. Winter sports dates are posted, and winter regulations will be posted soon. Spring dates are coming soon. They will be different this year due to a late Memorial Day.

Sports Medical Advisory Committee Update – A list of the 2026-2027 Sports Medical Advisory Committee was distributed, including Michael Raimondi who will serve as the Executive Committee representative. The committee is made up of an outstanding group of doctors and medical professionals. In the first meeting of the year, which will take place in October, the current heat policy will be reviewed. The committee feels that though NJSIAA sends schools information about the topic, they could be doing more to prepare districts. The other big topic of discussion will be the lightning policy. Athletic Trainers have reached out about the discrepancy of information. They use apps that show lightning ten miles away, but NJSIAA doesn't address distance in its current policy, and the NFHS and NCAA rules don't match. The NFHS is currently addressing this topic and has plans to issue guidelines soon.

NJSOA Awards Luncheon – September 13th – The NJSOA / NJSIAA event honoring this past year's outstanding officials was held at the Pines Manor in Edison on 9/13. Officials appreciated being recognized and NJSIAA appreciated honoring them. A list of all award recipients was distributed.

Al Stumpf Assistant Director Update

Girls Soccer and Cross Country Update – All tournament sites are confirmed and the link to submit entry forms for both sports will open on 10/1.

NCAA Basketball Evaluation Period – This year's evaluation period is September 9 – November 8th. Though not as frequent as in previous years, Mr. Stumpf and Mr. Popadiuk have still dealt with social media posts from schools advertising open gyms for college coaches and recruiters to come visit, which is not allowed by NJSIAA rules. This evaluation can only take place if requested by NCAA coach/staff. High school coaches cannot initiate the meeting.

Derryk Sellers Assistant Director Update

Gymnastics and Boys Soccer Update – Entry form links for both tournaments will open on 10/1.

NJSCA Clinics – The Bowling Coaches Clinic, scheduled for 10/7 at Howell Lanes, has 75 open spots, but fills up quickly. The Golf Coaches Clinic will take place on 10/16 at the Galloping Hills Golf Course.

Sandy Mamary Assistant Director Update

Field Hockey Update – The season going well – no controversies. The tournament entry form opens on 10/1.

Tennis Update – Today, 9/16, is the last day to enter the tournament. Seeding will take place next week. This will be the second year in a row that Princeton University will host all the Doubles/Singles Tournament quarterfinals, semifinals and finals.

NJPSA Workshop Series – Due to the increase in new Athletic Directors, Ms. Mamary added an extra workshop. The first one will take place on 9/30.

Report of Counsel (Steven P. Goodell) - Mr. Goodell shared the following three updates:

1-Every August, when football starts, there are students who transfer, then challenge the sitting penalty. This August, three different students filed complaints, challenging the transfer rule. After Alexis Smith and Paul Popadiuk defended the rule, two of the three filed appeals with the Commissioner of Education. The Commissioner dismissed both appeals.

2-Last year there was a student who submitted an eight-semester rule waiver, after she transferred from a public school to a private school and then reclassified. Her request was denied by both the Eligibility Committee and the Eligibility Appeals Committee. The student then filed an appeal with the NJ Superior Court where a judge agreed with NJSIAA's committees and denied the appeal. Next, the student filed an appeal with the Appellate Division. The student withdrew her appeal earlier this month, so the case is over.

3-The Anthony Knox controversy has been resolved. The following statement was released:

"In the matter of Anthony Knox v. NJSIAA, the Association can confirm that all claims have been dismissed with prejudice. Mr. Knox, through his attorney, has agreed that he will not appeal the procedures, factual findings, or decision of the NJSIAA's Controversies Committee revoking his title. Accordingly, the NJSIAA's Committee's findings and decision stand."

Mr. Goodell added, "This chapter is over, and we wish Anthony Knox the best of luck in his promising career."

Old Business / New Business – none

Closed Session - A motion was made by Barry Fitzgerald, seconded by John Germano, to adjourn the meeting at 12:06 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Maguire
Executive Director

CEM: In