

NORTH DAKOTA HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MINUTES
JANUARY 22, 2026 – VALLEY CITY - NDHSAA OFFICE

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Aanenson call the meeting to order at 10:00 am CST.

Members present: Aanenson, Lunde, Bakke, Berger, Berseth, Christensen, Derr, Hanson, Jung, Martin, Simpfenderfer, Tescher.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Aanenson called for a motion to approve the agenda.

Motion by Simpfenderfer to approve the agenda.

Seconded by Tescher.

Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. December 4, 2025

FINANCIAL REPORTS

1. Balance Sheets
 - a. November 2025
 - b. December 2025
2. Budget
 - a. November 2025
 - b. December 2025
3. Savings/Investments
 - a. November 2025
 - b. December 2025

COOP DISSOLUTIONS

1. Milnor and Enderlin in baseball, 7-12, 2025-26
2. Oakes and Sargent Central in baseball, 7-12, 2025-26
3. Oakes and North Sargent in baseball, 7-12, 2025-26
4. Nedrose and Sawyer in boys basketball, 7-12, 2026-27
5. Nedrose and Sawyer in girls basketball, 7-12, 2026-27

COOP APPLICATIONS

1. Maple Valley and Griggs County Central in baseball, 7-12, 2025-26, late fee
2. LaMoure, Litchville-Marion, and Edgeley in softball, 7-12, 2025-26, no fee

3. Milnor, Sargent Central, and North Sargent in baseball, 7-12, 2025-26, late fee
4. Minnewaukan and Warwick in boys cross country, 7-12, 2026-27, late fee
5. Minnewaukan and Warwick in girls cross country 7-12, 2026-27, late fee
6. Minnewaukan and Warwick in volleyball, 7-12, 2026-27, no fee
7. Minnewaukan and Warwick in boys basketball, 7-12, 2026-27, no fee
8. Minnewaukan and Warwick in girls basketball, 7-12, 2026-27, no fee
9. Shanley and Capstone Classical Academy in baseball, 7-12, 2025-26, no fee
10. Mott-Regent and New England in boys golf, 7-12, 2025-26, no fee
11. Mott-Regent and New England in girls golf, 7-12, 2026-27, no fee
12. Mott-Regent and New England in boys cross country, 7-12, 2026-27, late fee
13. Mott-Regent and New England in girls cross country, 7-12, 2026-27, late fee
14. Sargent Central and North Sargent in softball, 7-12, 2025-26, no fee
15. Wahpeton and Richland in baseball, 7-12, 2025-26, no fee

Motion by Hanson to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Seconded by Berger.

Motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Fetsch presented his Executive Director report to the Board of Directors.

The Betty Engstad Souix Center in Grand Forks will not be available for any state basketball tournaments for the foreseeable future due to NCHC tournament scheduling conflicts.

Fetsch collected data from 12 other state associations regarding their budget carry-over. A majority of other states carry-over at least 100% their annual budget, while the others have a foundation.

Fetsch stated that NDHSAA may need to consider developing a fireworks policy soon.

Fetsch recapped details from the NFHS Winter Meeting including transfer rules in other states.

Registration for the 2026 NFHS Summer Meeting will open on March 25.

Five finalists for the new Assistant Director position were selected. Interviews will be conducted on Wednesday, January 28.

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT

Aanenson presented the Executive Board report.

The Executive Board met on Thursday, January 22, 2026, at 9:00 am CST.

West Fargo United girls wrestling self-reported use of an ineligible participant. The prescribed penalty was enforced..

Minnewaukan High School requested a waiver for the late coop fee for boys and girls cross country. The Executive Board recommended waiving the fee.

New England and Bowman County filed a late coop application for softball for grades 7-12 for the 2025-26 school year. The Executive Board recommended approving the application as well as endorsed the Constitution & By-Laws Committee's new Coop Guidelines proposal.

Motion by Simpfenderfer to approve the Executive Board report.

Seconded by Christensen.

Motion carried unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS

Christensen presented the Constitution & By-Laws Committee report.

The Committee reviewed their minimal feedback regarding a potential by-law amendment proposal to reinstitute the "Retransfer Rule." The Committee recommended the Board of Directors approve a second reading of the draft, which would initiate a by-law amendment vote of the membership. An electronic voting option would be sent to all member schools on February 27, 2026, with an in person voting option at the NDHSAA General Assembly on March 30, 2026.

Motion by Martin to approve a second reading of the "Retransfer Rule" draft.

Seconded by Simpfenderfer.

Motion carried unanimously.

The Committee continued discussion on the format of the current NDHSAA "Coop Guidelines." The Committee recommended the Board of Directors consider a second reading of the draft with immediate implementation, including any coop applications on the January 22, 2026, agenda.

Motion by Hanson to approve a second reading and immediate implementation.

Seconded by Berseth.

Motion carried unanimously.

The Committee discussed the current "Out of Season Coaching Rules" and drafted attachment (Out of Season Coaching Draft #3 1.14.26). The Committee recommended approval of the attached language with immediate implementation. As a reminder, the major changes in the 1.14.26 draft compared to current Board policy are:

- a. Out of season coaching rule would apply to 9-12 grade students only, not 7-8 grade students
- b. Ability for 9-12 grade coaches to coach their players in a setting other than a team camp or contest during June and July.
- c. Addition of a Dead Period (one week that includes July 4th) where out of season coaching is prohibited.
- d. Elimination of the prohibition on individual camps for fall sports in August prior to the start of the season.

Motion by Simpfenderfer to approve the "Out of Season Coaching Rules" draft for immediate implementation.

Seconded by Martin.

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Bakke to approve the Dead Period calendar as presented.

Seconded by Martin.

Motion carried unanimously.

The Committee directed NDHSAA Staff to develop a recommendation for the exact dates of the one-week “Dead Period” for 2026 to be shared at the January 22, 2026, meeting for consideration. The belief is a defined annual dead period can be added to the approved 7-year calendar moving forward.

The Committee directed NDHSAA Staff to discuss current enrollments of programs for sports that are exempt from the requirement of competing as Class A schools for future Committee discussion.

Motion by Berger to approve the Constitution & By-Laws Committee report as presented.

Seconded by Hanson.

Motion carried unanimously.

FINANCE

Tescher presented the Finance Committee report.

The Finance Committee met on Thursday, January 22, 2026, at 9:00 am CST.

The Committee discussed a potential athletic director mentoring program for the 2026-27 school year. The Committee recommended NDHSAA staff in conjunction with NDIAAA leadership move forward with a proposal and finalize details for March 2026 Board consideration.

Motion by Hanson to approve NDHSAA staff work in conjunction with NDIAAA leadership to finalize details for the March 2026 board meeting.

Seconded by Martin.

Motion carried unanimously.

The Committee continued discussion on the development of the 2026-27 NDHSAA budget. The Committee recommended Executive Director Fetsch develop a budget format that includes a separate general fund and capital projects fund to discuss further in March 2026. The 2026-27 NDHSAA budget will be approved at the June 2026 meeting.

Motion by Lunde to direct Executive Director Fetsch to develop a budget format to include a separate general fund and capital projects fund to be presented in March 2026.

Seconded by Hanson.

Motion carried unanimously.

The Committee recommended a 3-year extension with RWP for the printing of NDHSAA wall calendars through the 2028-29 school year.

Motion by Simpfinderfer to approve a 3-year extension with RWP for printing NDHSAA wall calendars through 2028-29 school year.

Seconded by Bakke.

Motion carried unanimously.

FINE ARTS

Hanson presented the Fine Arts Committee report.

The Fine Arts Committee met on Wednesday, January 14, 2026, at 10:00 am CST.

The Committee discussed music and tech sounds used in plays. Due to licensing and timeline variables for member schools and the Association, the committee's discussion centered on limiting all music and tech sounds to royalty-free, self-generated, and/or AI-generated content (which is not under copyright). Published music and or licensed sounds under royalty/copyright would be disallowed through disqualification at events.

Upon NDHSAA Board adoption of this report, the Fine Arts Committee has directed Associate Director Bubach to communicate with the C STAND board of directors regarding this potential change and notice high school directors of this consideration as some begin selecting next year's plays this winter and spring.

The Fine Arts Committee will meet again to review C STAND board input and potential regulation development.

Motion by Tescher to approve the Fine Arts Committee report as presented.

Seconded by Christensen.

Motion carried unanimously.

REALIGNMENT

Lunde presented the Realignment Committee report.

The Realignment Committee met on Wednesday, January 21, 2026, at 4:00 pm CST.

The Committee reviewed teams who will be starting a program this school year and recommended the following 2025-26 region placements:

- LaMoure/Litchville-Marion/Edgeley softball – Class B, Region 1
- Sargent County baseball – Class B, Region 1
- Capstone Classical Academy boys golf – Class B, Region 1
- Pingree-Buchanan boys golf – Class B, Region 3

Motion by Berseth to approve the proposed region placements as presented.

Seconded by Martin.

Motion carried unanimously.

The Committee reviewed teams who will be starting a program next school year and recommended the following 2026-27 region placements:

- *Capstone Classical Academy girls golf – Class B, Region 1
- *Pingree-Buchanan girls golf – Class B, Region 3
- *Capstone Classical Academy girls basketball – Division B, District 1 and Region 1
- *Capstone Classical Academy boys basketball – Division B, District 1 and Region 1

Motion by Bakke to approve the proposed region placements for 2026-27 as presented.

Seconded by Berseth.

Motion carried unanimously.

The Committee reviewed four programs who petitioned to move down a division in basketball beginning with the 2026-27 season. Based on the approved criteria, the Committee unanimously recommended the following:

- *Carrington boys basketball – NO
- *Dunseith girls basketball – NO
- *Lisbon girls basketball – NO
- *Grand Forks Central girls basketball – NO

Motion by Tescher to deny all four petitions to move down as presented.

Seconded by Simpfenderfer.

Motion carried 11 yes, Berseth no.

The Committee reviewed the current number of girls wrestling teams who can field a dual team. Currently there are 13 Class B teams who could potentially field a dual team, which is above the threshold of 12 set by a previous Board that would trigger the creation of a separate Class B girls wrestling division. The Committee also discussed the number of potential teams in each region if there were separate classifications of girls wrestling next year, with the biggest concern being the number of Class A East programs, which could be as low as four in 2026-27.

Motion by Martin to approve a separate Class B girls wrestling division for the 2026-27 postseason, for both the individual and dual tournaments including separate East and West Regions in 2026-27 that match the current boys regions for qualifying purposes.

Seconded by Bakke.

Motion carried 11 yes. Berger abstained.

Harvey/Wells County requested the Committee to be moved to Region 3A in volleyball and boys and girls basketball in future years. The Committee reviewed the number of teams in each Division A region, as well as the teams who will be moving between the A and B divisions over the next two years. The Committee did not recommend moving Harvey-Wells County in 2026-27, but as a Committee will re-evaluate the request for the 2027-28 school year at a later time.

The Committee reviewed current Class B baseball and softball regions. Currently the number of teams fielding varsity teams varies from 4-9 teams per region due to geographic footprints. The Committee recommends moving forward without any changes to Class B baseball regions for the 2026 season and reviewing all regions prior to the 2027-28 school year.

Currently there are 44 Class B softball teams. The Committee recommends proposing eight Class B softball regions prior to the 2027-28 school year.

Motion by Berseth to direct the Realignment Committee to develop a rubric, matrix, or other system for teams to move down as well as move back up.

Seconded by Christensen.

Berger, yes; Berseth, yes; Jung, yes; Martin, yes; Tescher, no; Christensen, yes; Simpfenderfer, no; Bakke, yes; Lunde, no; Hanson, no; Derr, no; Aanenson, yes.

Motion carried 7 yes to 5 no.

Motion by Christensen to approve the Realignment Committee report as presented.

Seconded by Bakke.

Motion carried unanimously.

MEDIA

Simpfenderfer presented the Media Committee report.

The Media Committee met on Thursday, January 22, 2026, at 8:45 am CST.

The Committee reviewed the bids that were submitted for 2026 Winter Tournaments. The window to bid on exclusive events closed January 21, 2026, at noon CST. All 17 2026 winter tournaments have been picked up for production.

The Committee reviewed correspondence from the NFHS Network's Holdings Company regarding simulcasts. The topic will be discussed further prior to the March 2026 Board of Directors meeting.

Motion by Hanson to approve the Media Committee report as presented.

Seconded by Lunde.

Motion carried unanimously.

HARDSHIP APPEALS

The Hardship Appeals Committee met on Tuesday, January 13, 2026, at 10:00 am CST to hear a hardship appeal from Minot High School. The Committee unanimously recommended to uphold the original decision denying the application.

Motion by Simpfenderfer to approve the Hardship Appeals Committee report.

Seconded by Christensen.

Motion carried unanimously.

MEMBER SCHOOL REQUESTS

The Class B, District 4 volleyball schools requested allowing the teams in their district to add one additional match for the 2026-27 volleyball season to accommodate the addition of the Warwick/Minnewauken cooperative, which was added after schedules were created.

Motion by Tescher to allow the Division B, District 4 volleyball teams to schedule one additional game against Minnewaukan-Warwick volleyball for the 2026-27 volleyball season.

Seconded by Simpfenderfer.

Motion carried 11 yes, Hanson no.

Davies High School requested an exemption allowing a girls soccer student-athlete to participate in the Jefferson Cup sponsored by Richmond United Tournament Series. Previously, the NDHSAA girls soccer did not conflict with this event.

Sheyenne High School requested an exemption allowing a girls soccer student-athlete to participate in the Jefferson Cup sponsored by Richmond United Tournament Series. Previously, the NDHSAA girls soccer did not conflict with this event.

Motion by Bakke to deny both Davies and Sheyenne High School's request to allow a girls soccer student-athlete to participating in the Jefferson Cup.

Seconded by Martin.

Motion carried unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS

ATHLETIC REVIEW

Boys and Girls Golf	Review	Board
Class A & B		
Add two more regular season state qualifier meets.	YES (10-0)	YES (9-3)
Boys and Girls Tennis		
Add the following coaching regulation to Play #2: Changeovers in a super tiebreaker may be up to 30 seconds and coaching is allowed. Players are not allowed to sit during these changeovers.	YES (10-0)	YES (12-0)
Add the following coaching regulation to Play #2ai: The first changeover in a short set can be up to 30 seconds and coaching is allowed. Players are not allowed to sit during this changeover.	YES (10-0)	YES (12-0)
Add the following language to the beginning of Regional and State Tournaments 11b: Region and state team competitions consist of an 8-team bracket. If more than 8 teams in a region, play-in matches determine the regional qualifying teams and will be played prior to Thursday of the regional tournament with #8 hosting #9, #7 hosting #10, etc.	YES (10-0)	YES (12-0)
Replace Regional and State Tournaments 12a with the following two-part language: a. The regional and state individuals tournament consist of one singles tournament and one doubles tournament where individual players can only play in one or the other. Tournaments are double elimination. Winners of the quarterfinals will play for 1st through 4th place. Winners of the consolation quarterfinals will play for 5th through 8th place. b. All teams may enter three singles players and two doubles teams into the regional individuals tournament. Finishing in the top 8 at regionals qualifies the singles player or doubles team for the state individuals tournament.	YES (10-0)	NO (0-12)

Boys and Girls Cross Country		
Class A & B		
Lower the state meet minimum standards to 23:00 for boys and 26:00 for girls.	YES (10-0)	YES (12-0)
Use double start line at state meet.	YES (9-1)	YES (12-0)
Boys and Girls Soccer		
Increase the number of allowable halves for an individual per week from 8 to 9	YES (10-0)	YES (12-0)

2026-27 MEETING DATES

July 14	New Board Member Orientation – Valley City
August 11	Board Retreat – Devils Lake
August 13	New Administrator Orientation – Valley City
September 9	Spring Sports Athletic Review – Virtual
September 17	Board of Directors Meeting – Valley City
December 2	Combined Tournament Committee – Virtual
December 3	Board of Directors Meeting – Valley City
January 13	Fall Sports Athletic Review – Virtual
January 21	Board of Directors Meeting – Valley City
April 5	General Assembly Meeting – Fargo
April 5	Combined Tournament Committee – Fargo
April 6	Board of Directors Meeting – Valley City
April 28	Distinguished Student Interviews – Jamestown
May 12	Division AA/A Review/Class B District Chairs – Virtual
May 19	Fine Arts Review – Virtual
May 26	Winter Sports Athletic Review – Virtual
June 9	Board of Directors Meeting – Valley City
June 26-29	NFHS Summer Meeting – New York City, NY
Region Administrator Meetings	
September 21	Bismarck – Events Center – Prairie Rose Room 105
September 22	Virtual

DISCUSSION ITEMS

NDHSAA staff recommended utilizing the new textured volleyball in the 2027-28 postseason events.

Motion by Tescher to utilize the new textured volleyball for postseason events beginning in the 2027-28 season.

Seconded by Martin.

Motion carried unanimously.

Aanenson requested volunteers from the Board to establish a new Programing Committee to review new Presenting Partner agreements.

Berger, Christensen, Simpfenderfer, and Tescher volunteered.

The North Dakota State High School Clay Target League requested a presenting partnership alliance with NDHSAA.

Motion by Hanson to refer the North Dakota State High School Clay Target League request to the Programming Committee.

Seconded by Bakke.

Motion carried unanimously.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Fetsch distributed informational items to the Board of Directors.

NEXT MEETINGS – LOCATION, DATE & TIME

1. Monday, March 30, 2026 – General Assembly – 11:00 am CDT – Fargo – Holiday Inn
2. Tuesday, March 31, 2026 – Board of Directors Meeting – 10:00 am CDT – Valley City – NDHSAA Office

ADJOURN

Aanenson adjourned the meeting at 1:01 pm CST.

SIGNATURE

Respectfully submitted,
Nickolas Walton
Assistant Director

Signed: _____ Date: _____