

**NORTH DAKOTA HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MINUTES  
MARCH 31, 2026 – VALLEY CITY - NDHSAA OFFICE**

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Aanenson call the meeting to order at 10:01 am CDT

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

Members absent: Bakke

Audience members: Jim Roaldson (Athletic Director, Jamestown High School), Levi Bachmeier (State Superintendent of Schools, North Dakota Dept. of Public Instruction)

Aanenson called for a motion to approve the agenda.

Motion by Martin to approve the agenda.

Seconded by Tescher.

Motion carried unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

***APPROVAL OF MINUTES***

1. January 2026
2. February 2026

***FINANCIAL REPORTS***

1. Balance Sheets
  - a. January 2026
  - b. February 2026
2. Budget
  - a. January 2026
  - b. February 2026
3. Savings/Investments
  - a. January 2026
  - b. February 2026
4. Fall Sports Financial reports

***COOP DISSOLUTIONS***

1. Hebron and Glen Ullin in boys cross country, 7-12, 2026-27
2. Hebron and Glen Ullin in girls cross country, 7-12, 2026-27
3. Hebron and Glen Ullin in volleyball, 7-12, 2026-27
4. Hebron and Glen Ullin in boys basketball, 7-12, 2026-27

5. Hebron and Glen Ullin in girls basketball, 7-12, 2026-27
6. Hebron and New Salem-Almont in boys cross country, 7-12, 2026-27
7. Hebron and New Salem-Almont in girls cross country, 7-12, 2026-27
8. Hebron and New Salem-Almont in girls golf, 7-12, 2026-27
9. Hebron and New Salem-Almont in boys wrestling, 7-12, 2026-27
10. Hebron and New Salem-Almont in girls wrestling, 7-12, 2026-27
11. Hebron and New Salem-Almont in boys golf, 7-12, 2026-27
12. Bishop Ryan and Nedrose in baseball, 7-12, 2026-27

#### *COOP APPLICATIONS*

1. Velva and TGU-Granville in girls wrestling, 7-12, 2026-27, no fee
2. Minot Public Schools and Surrey in girls tennis, 7-12, 2025-26, no fee
3. Richardton-Taylor and Hebron in boys cross country, 7-12, 2026-27, late fee
4. Richardton-Taylor and Hebron in girls cross country, 7-12, 2026-27, late fee
5. Richardton-Taylor and Hebron in volleyball, 7-12, 2026-27, late fee
6. Richardton-Taylor and Hebron in student congress, 7-12, 2026-27, no fee
7. Richardton-Taylor and Hebron in plays, 7-12, 2026-27, no fee
8. Richardton-Taylor and Hebron in boys basketball, 7-12, 2026-27, no fee
9. Richardton-Taylor and Hebron in girls basketball, 7-12, 2026-27, no fee
10. Richardton-Taylor and Hebron in boys track and field, 7-12, 2026-27, no fee
11. Richardton-Taylor and Hebron in girls track and field, 7-12, 2026-27, no fee
12. Hazen and Center-Stanton in boys basketball, 9-12, 2026-27, no fee
13. Minot and South Prairie in girls tennis, 7-12, 2025-26, no fee
14. New Salem-Almont and Sweet Briar in boys golf, 7-12, 2025-26, no fee

Motion by Berger to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Seconded by Simpfenderfer.

Motion carried unanimously.

#### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

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

Distinguished Student deadline is today.

Fetsch was invited to present to the Legislative Management Committee and reviewed what his presentation will consist of.

#### EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT

Aanenson presented the Executive Board report.

The NDHSAA Executive Board met virtually on February 24, 2026, at 9:00 am CST.

The NDHSAA Executive Board reviewed a situation involving an individual who was ejected from a high school hockey game on February 10, 2026, and subsequently suspended from attending any events through February 23, 2026. The individual used disguises to sneak into games on February 13, 2026 (as a fan wearing the opposing team's

gear) and February 20, 2026 (disguised as an African American wearing dark body paint) before being quickly identified and removed by event management in each instance.

The NDHSAA Spectator Ejection policy states the Executive Board may take additional penalty for any individual who does not adhere to their prescribed suspension. The Executive Board determined this individual will be suspended from all NDHSAA-sanctioned events through March 1, 2031. This penalty will be reviewed by NDHSAA Legal Counsel prior to the individual and member schools being notified.

Motion by Berseth to approve the suspension as presented.

Seconded by Derr.

Motion carried unanimously.

The Executive Board discussed exclusive broadcast policies, particularly in situations where multiple companies wish to hook up to the scoreboard for live video streams or audio only feeds broadcast on a video platform. The Executive Board determined that any exclusive video rights holder would have priority at postseason events and this language will be reflected in future correspondence from the NDHSAA.

The NDHSAA Executive Board met in person in Valley City at the NDHSAA Office on March 31, 2026, at 9:30 am CDT

The Executive Board discussed the likelihood of Watford City and Hazen-Beulah establishing varsity hockey programs for 2026-27 and recommended girls hockey move from a statewide schedule to an East and a West Region. The attached map would also be used for any new programs in the future. The creation of girls hockey regions would also include a reduction of the season game limit from 23 to 21 and the creation of an east and west region hockey tournament for state tournament qualification. Region sites would be approved by the June 2026 Board of Directors meeting.

Motion by Martin to approve moving from a statewide girls hockey schedule to an East and West Region.

Seconded by Derr

Motion carried unanimously.

The Executive Board recommended a deadline to declare a new varsity boys or girls hockey program be established as the final day of the state hockey tournament annually. It is also recommended that the Board establish a deadline of April 10, 2026, for any new hockey programs to be eligible for the 2026-27 season.

Motion by Simpfinderfer to approve the deadlines to declare new varsity boys and girls hockey programs as presented.

Seconded by Hanson.

Motion carried unanimously.

The Executive Board reviewed a request from Gerrells Sports Center to finalize ball bid prices for the 2026-27 school year.

Motion by Lunde to approve the 2026-27 ball-bid.

Seconded by Berger.

Motion carried unanimously.

The Executive Board reviewed a verbal self-report from Harvey AD Mike Prom that Harvey-Wells County's boys basketball team inadvertently played 22 varsity games in 2025-26. The Executive Board recommended a \$1,000 fine in accordance with previous penalties and establishing a Board regulation that any team who exceeds their number of allowable games will have their game limit reduced the following season plus any penalties determined by the Board of Directors.

Motion by Berseth to establish a Board regulation with a prescribed penalty for any team who exceeds their number of allowable games.

Seconded by Tescher.

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Berger to approve the Executive Board report as presented.

Seconded by Martin.

Motion carried unanimously.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

##### *CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS*

Christensen presented the Constitution & By-Laws Committee report.

The Committee met virtually on March 2, 2026, at 9:00 am CST.

The Committee discussed specifics of the newly approved "dead period" within the out-of-season coaching summer rule. The Committee recommended the language changes in the Out of Season Coaching Draft #4 3.2.26 to help clarify specifics of what is allowed in during the dead period.

Motion by Lunde to approve the language changes as presented in the Out of Season Coaching Draft #4 3.2.26.

Seconded by Jung.

Motion carried unanimously.

The Committee discussed the current coop by-law, particularly the sports that are currently exempt from moving to Class A when coops push total enrollment over 325. The Committee also discussed potential caps on total enrollments of coops. The Committee plans to continue studying the current by-law language in the future.

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

Seconded by Jung.

Motion carried unanimously.

##### *FINANCE*

Tescher presented the Finance Committee report.

The Committee met on March 31, 2026, at 8:45 am CDT in Valley City at the NDHSAA office.

The Committee reviewed the AD Compass program.

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

Seconded by Berseth.

Motion carried unanimously.

#### *REALIGNMENT*

Lunde presented the Realignment Committee report.

The Committee met virtually on March 2, 2026, at 9:00 am CST.

The Committee reviewed the current basketball and volleyball classification guidelines. The Committee reviewed feedback from recent AA, A, and B region and district meetings, where member schools were asked to discuss the current guidelines, particularly the “opt down” process.

Following the discussion, the Committee recommended the Board of Directors eliminate the following guideline from both the basketball and volleyball regulations:

2. Each school may submit a request to NDHSAA indicating the division in which the team wishes to compete by the established deadlines. A school failing to meet the designated deadline will not be permitted to request a classification other than the one assigned by the NDHSAA. The classification committee will consider the following factors:
  - a. Competitive history and balance
  - b. Geography
  - c. School’s enrollment trend
  - d. Student participation rate
  - e. Socioeconomic factors of the school’s population
  - f. Retention and mobility rate of school’s population
  - g. Additional information unique to school community

The Committee asked for this topic to be discussed at the General Assembly on March 30, 2026, to allow for feedback prior to the March Board of Directors meeting. If approved, the Committee also recommended grandfathering any previously approved “opt downs” into their current division.

Based on discussion the Board has elected to refer this back to the Committee for further refinement.

The Committee discussed a previously tabled request from Harvey-Wells County to be moved from Region 2A to Region 3A in basketball and volleyball in the future. The Committee reviewed the potential teams and region alignments in the A division of basketball and volleyball in 2027-28. The Committee believes there is a strong likelihood that if Harvey-Wells County were moved, Region 3A would have 10 basketball teams in 2027-28 and Region 2A would have 7 teams, therefore they recommended to deny Harvey-Wells County’s request and have them remain in Region 2A moving forward.

Motion by Christensen to deny Harvey-Well County’s request to be reassigned from Region 2A to 3A.

Seconded by Berger.

Motion carried unanimously.

The Committee reviewed a request from Class B wrestling coaches to move the following programs into different regions to help better balance the number of teams and wrestlers per region:

- Rugby boys and girls wrestling – move from Class B East to Class B West
- Northern Lights boys and girls wrestling – move from Class B East to Class B West
- Northern Cass boys wrestling – move from Southeast subregion to Northeast subregion

All three affected programs are in favor of the change, provided it is done for the 2027-28 season due to scheduling already being complete for 2026-27. The Committee recommended moving these three programs into new regions (or subregions) for the 2027-28 NDHSAA wrestling season.

Motion by Derr to approve the changes to Class B wrestling regions for the 2027-28 season as presented.

Seconded by Berseth.

Motion carried unanimously.

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

Seconded by Christensen.

Motion carried unanimously.

#### *FINE ARTS*

The Committee reviewed draft plays copyright regulation and registration form information. Staff will vet this draft information with legal counsel.

The Committee discussed debate's post season qualifying process and regulations. Staff will communicate with the state tournament manager and advisory representative regarding alternatives to the season-long qualifier process and postseason qualifier tournament.

Speech tournament formats (2-prelim/final vs. 3-round) were also discussed.

The Committee anticipates assigning regular season pre-qualification status to one tournament format for the 2026-27 school year.

The Committee also reviewed tournament tie-breaking practices for future consideration.

Post festival music medals were discussed due to low school interest. Pending future information, the Committee may make a recommendation if this award should be continued.

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

Seconded by Jung.

Motion carried unanimously.

#### *AUDIENCE – LEVI BACHMEIER*

State Superintendent of Schools Levi Bachmeier addressed the Board of Directors.

*COMBINED TOURNAMENT*

Berger presented the Combined Tournament Committee report.

The Committee met on March 30, 2026, in Fargo at the Holiday Inn at 1:00 pm CDT.

The Committee reviewed the notes from the December 2025 meeting.

The Committee reviewed future state golf sites and recommended no changes to the current sites.

The Committee discussed future state swimming and diving meets scheduled for Minot. The Committee will re-evaluate at the December meeting.

The Committee discussed the Bismarck State College's new basketball facility as a possible future state tournament host for the State Division A girls basketball tournament.

The Committee discussed hotel rooming blocks for the AA state basketball tournament.

The Committee discussed the potential of requiring future baseball state tournament sites to allow metal cleats on their fields.

The Committee reviewed proposed state tournament sites through and future state tournament sites through 2032-33. The following additions were recommended:

- State B Speech – April 21, 2029 – Mandan High School
- State B Plays – November 19-20, 2029 – University of Jamestown
- State Debate – February 2, 2030 – Fargo Public Schools
- State A Plays – April 8, 2030 – Bismarck State College
- State A Speech – April 13, 2030 – Jamestown High School
- State A Music – April 26, 2030 – University of Jamestown
- State B Speech – April 27, 2030 – Mandan High School
- State B Music – May 4, 2030 – Bismarck State College

Motion by Martin to approve the proposed state tournament sites through 2032-33 as presented and the 7-year calendar as presented.

Seconded by Tescher.

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Christensen to approve the Combined Tournament Committee report as presented.

Seconded by Jung.

Motion carried unanimously.

*TOURNAMENT*

Berger presented the Tournament Committee report.

The Committee met on March 30, 2026, in Fargo at the Holiday Inn at 2:00 pm CDT.

The committee reviewed winter 2027 region tournament sites and recommended approving the sites. Tentative sites for the 2028 winter region basketball tournaments are also pending approval.

Motion by Tescher to approve the site recommendations as presented.

Seconded by Martin.

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Simpfinderfer to approve the Tournament Committee report as presented.

Seconded by Hanson.

Motion carried unanimously.

#### *PROGRAMMING*

Berger presented the Programming Committee Report.

The Committee met on February 27, 2026, at 10:30 am CST in West Fargo at the Element Hotel.

The Committee appointed Berger the chair.

The Committee discussed at length goals and objectives of the Presenting Partner Agreements policy.

The Committee developed an initial series of questions to guide potential policy revision and future agreements:

- How does the Board of Directors define a mutual-benefit agreement?
- How does TPG factor into outside programs' partner and advertising agreements?
- What are the clear delineation lines for financial responsibility?
- What is the insurance liability and responsibility of third-party programs?
- What are the liabilities and public relation concerns of third-party program administration?
- Could developed Presenting Partners draw students away from fully sanctioned sports and activities?

The Committee intends to meet online prior to the March 31, 2026, Board of Directors meeting. To help address these initial questions, the Committee will invite a representative from the Minnesota State High School League to discuss how the League's policy works in practice. The Committee will also invite TPG to discuss current NDHSAA partner agreements and third-party Presenting Partner Agreement considerations.

The Committee met again virtually on March 23, 2026, at 1:00 pm CDT.

Committee members met with Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) Executive Director Erich Martens to hear about the MSHSL's relationship with their two current Presenting Partners, Robotics and Clay Target. The Committee also met with Teall Properties Group (TPG) Associate Regional Vice President Brent Tehven to discuss any impact that Presenting Partnerships may have on TPG.

There was consensus amongst the Committee that all aspects of any future state event with a Presenting Partner would be controlled exclusively by the NDHSAA. The Committee believes the current Presenting Partner application (<https://ndhsaa.com/presenting-partner-agreements>) needs to include more specific information prior to any potential partners applying.

The Committee would like to consider additional language in the application and possibly have something ready for the full Board of Directors to review in June 2026. At this time the belief is that it is unlikely any Presenting Partnership would be ready for implementation until the 2027-28 school year.

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

Seconded by Martin.

Motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Tournament Committee discussed the future sites of the Girls State Basketball tournaments. Bismarck State College (BSC) will be completing a new basketball arena that may be capable to host the Girls Division A tournament. Based on attendance numbers at the 2026 tournaments, the Division A girls basketball tournament would fit at BSC, the Division B girls basketball tournament would not.

Motion by Derr to move the 2026-27 Girls Division A State Basketball championship to Bismarck for a one-year trial.

Seconded by Christensen.

Aanenson called for a roll call vote.

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

Motion passed 8 to 3.

NEXT MEETINGS – LOCATION, DATE & TIME

- 1. Wednesday, June 10, 2026 - Board of Directors Meeting - 9:00 am CDT - NDHSAA Office

ADJOURN

Aanenson opened the floor for a motion to adjourn.

Motion by Berger to adjourn.

Seconded by Tescher.

Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:38 pm CDT.

SIGNATURE

Respectfully submitted,  
Nickolas Walton  
Assistant Director

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_