

**MINUTES OF THE CONFERENCE CALL OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD  
OF THE MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION  
JUNE 23, 2026  
(via Zoom)**

**ATTENDANCE**

Dan Mills, Bozeman  
Kara Triplett, Richey  
Joe McElroy, Missoula  
Dee Pretty On Top, Lodge Grass  
Travis Blome, Hamilton  
Dustin Gordon, Fairfield  
Allan Labbe, Superior  
Brian Michelotti, Helena  
Scott Wilson, Helena  
Kip Ryan, Helena  
Greta Buehler, Helena  
Amy Bartels, Helena  
Jenise Cockhill, Helena

*Delegations:*

*Mike Henneberg, Great Falls  
Andrew Torgerson, Laurel  
Adam White, Red Lodge*

**CALL TO ORDER**

Board President, Ms. Triplett, called the meeting to order at 10:06 am. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Ms. Triplett introduced herself to the Executive Board and MHSA staff. The Executive Board members and MHSA staff introduced themselves as well.

**FINAL ACTION ON TWO-WEEK NOTICE ITEMS**

Mr. Michelotti explained that many comments regarding Wrestling changes in the two-week action items from the April Executive Board Meeting have been received. Mr. Wilson summarized the comments received and explained the comments mostly centered on competitiveness and did not necessarily take into balance of participation and what is overall better for the growth of the sport. A motion was made by Mr. Mills and seconded by Mr. Pretty On Top, to approve final action on the following items from the April Board meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Baseball

Approval of a change to the tournament bracket language in baseball. The following Baseball Handbook change was approved regarding state tournament bracket language: The state tournament will be an eight-team single elimination with consolation bracket, three-day tournament.

Basketball

The Board approved a proposal to dissolve the Master Basketball Scheduling Committee and eliminate the Master Basketball Schedule. Each classification will form a committee and/or appoint individuals to develop the 2027-28 basketball schedule for the respective classifications.

Football

Approval of 8-player football bracket for 2026-2029.

#### Speech, Drama and Debate

Approval of all the 2026-27 MFEA proposal items. Visit the MHSA website to view all MFEA approved items.

Approval of the following Handbook addition for Medical Care at Postseason Tournaments was approved. This information will be updated in the MHSA Handbook and the MHSA Speech, Drama and Debate Handbook: Fine Arts events including Music, Speech, Debate, and Drama will be included in the requirement to have an updated EAP for all postseason events. All schools hosting a postseason event are required to submit an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) to the MHSA. All judges and event staff must be provided with a copy of the EAP to ensure that every room with participants has a clear understanding of procedures in the event of an emergency.

#### Tennis

The Board approved the proposed Class B/C Tennis Divisions. This is effective for the 2026 tennis season.

#### Wrestling

The following handbook changes were approved for the 2026-27 wrestling season:

1. A two-pound weight allowance is allowed for regular season matches held on Monday or Tuesday in December. The weight allowance cannot exceed +3 pounds over the original weight class.
2. Weigh-ins for the 2nd day of a regular season and/or postseason tournament cannot officially begin until the weight class is finished for the day. The weigh-in will close 1 hour after the last match of the day. It is recommended that tournament management have 2 or more scales available and enough volunteers to avoid long waiting times. Weigh-ins are not allowed after the 1-hour time limit has elapsed.
3. Each wrestler must certify his/her weight on or before the 3rd Wednesday of December (December 17, 2025) of his/her first wrestling practice. To be certified, a wrestler must have on file a completed WR#1 form with the school principal or his/her designee.

The following was approved regarding girls' wrestling classifications and state qualifiers: Starting in the 2026-27 wrestling season, girls' wrestling will have two classifications. The new classifications will be AA and A-B-C. In both classifications, 16 girls will qualify per weight class, and the top 6 place winners will be recognized. Girls' wrestling will continue with 6 divisional/seeding tournaments with tournaments taking place at the same time and location as the boys divisional/seeding tournaments.

Boys' weight classes will change to the 14 NFHS weight classes as listed in the NFHS wrestling rule book starting in the 2026-27 season. The new weight classes will be 106, 113, 120, 126, 132, 138, 144, 150, 157, 165, 175, 190, 215, 285.

New language regarding wrestling match limits will be as follows: Each individual wrestler may have no more than eighteen (18) contested events (where he/she weighs in and wrestles at the same physical location) with a maximum of fifty-five (55) total matches prior to the post season.

#### General

The Board approved the Sports Medicine Advisory Committee's recommendation to require a Pre-Event Medical Meeting which is a brief gathering held before every MHSA athletic contest to review the emergency action plan (EAP), confirm AED location, and clarify each participant's role.

Last year, the Board approved the removal of the 5-year requirement for the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching. New coaches now need to complete this course only once in their coaching career. Additionally, an annual online continuing education requirement will be added, and the Board approved the NFHS Course "Coaching Mental Wellness" as the new requirement for all coaches in the 2026-27 school year.

### **CLASS AA REQUESTED CHANGES**

Ms. Triplett introduced Mr. Henneberg to the Executive Board, and they introduced themselves as well. Mr. Henneberg presented the Class AA requested changes for 2026-27.

- A) Golf
  - 1) Allow up to three coaches on the course.
  - 2) Allow an earlier start date for golf to adjust for course availability.
- B) Volleyball
  - 1) Adjust the play-in game schedule to allow for officials' coverage prior to other classifications district tournaments.
- C) Basketball
  - 1) Change the AA quarter eligibility rule to 6 quarters for subvarsity while maintaining the limit of two different teams. The quarter rule would remain the same for varsity at 5.
- D) Track
  - 1) Change the eligible meet state qualifying standards to exclude individual out of state meets. If the whole team goes out of state, these standards could be considered qualifying.
  - 2) To distribute awards at divisional meets to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> place.

Mr. Blome motioned to table item A)2 and Mr. Gordon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Gordon made a motion to approve Class AA requested changes to A)1 through D)2 with AA paying for the medals in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> place. Mr. Mills seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **CLASS A REQUESTED CHANGES**

Ms. Triplett introduced Mr. Torgerson to the Executive Board, and they introduced themselves as well. Mr. Torgerson presented the Class A requested changes for 2026-27.

- A) Baseball
  - 1) Allowing for three umpires for each game in the state tournament.
- B) Football
  - 1) Presented new bracket for 2026-27.
  - 2) Changing MHSA handbook language to state that first round playoff games will start on Friday at 7pm unless mutually agreed upon for a different day and time.
- C) Soccer
  - 1) Allow 14 regular season games.
  - 2) Presented bracket for 2026-27.
- D) Softball
  - 1) Presented the bracket for 2026-27.
  - 2) Allowing for 3 umpires for the state tournament.
- E) Wrestling
  - 1) Tournament managers enter weigh ins.
- F) Track
  - 1) Change to 1/8 inch spikes only for regular season, postseason and state meets.
  - 2) Qualifying standards
- G) Summer Meeting
  - 1) Class A summer meeting will be in Helena June 13-15, 2027.

Mr. Gordon made a motion to deny item E)1 while allowing Class A to put in their own Handbook. Mr. Blome seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Mr. Gordon made a motion to table item F)1 for

further consideration with the Track & Field Committee. Mr. McElroy seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Mr. Gordon made a motion to approve Class A requested changes for items A)1, B)1, B)2, C)1, C)2, D)1, D)2 and F)2. Mr. Blome seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **CLASS B REQUESTED CHANGES**

Mr. Michelotti introduced Mr. White to the Executive Board. Mr. White presented the requests for Class B for the 2026-27 year.

#### **A) Football**

- 1) Postseason default to Friday nights at 7pm. The game may move the day or time only if mutually agreed upon by both teams.

#### **B) Basketball**

- 1) Requesting that the MHSA allow for a four day state tournament.

#### **C) Golf**

- 1) Team tie language for postseason
- 2) Division option of 18- or 36-hole format.

#### **D) Cross Country**

- 1) Move back to 25- and 30-minute qualifying standard to realign with all other classes.

#### **E) Speech & Debate and Drama**

- 1) For Class B and C allow for a top 8 placement.

Mr. McElroy made a motion to deny item B)1. Mr. Labbe seconded and the motion failed with a 5-2 vote. Mr. Blome made a motion to approve Class B requested changes for items A)1, B)1, C)1, C)2, D)1 and E)1. Mr. Mills seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

### **CLASS C REQUESTED CHANGES**

Ms. Triplett presented the Class C requests for the 2026-27 year.

#### **A) Speech & Debate and Drama**

- 1) Class B and C allow for a top 8 placement. This was approved during the Class B requests.

### **MHSA HANDBOOK CLARIFICATIONS, ADDITIONS OR DEFINITIONS**

Mr. Michelotti addressed Rules and Regulations changes for the following:

#### Golf Medals for Divisionals

Mr. Michelotti explained this. Mr. Gordon made a motion to approve a language change to reflect that Class B will pay for medals for 3<sup>rd</sup> through 20<sup>th</sup> place. Mr. Mills seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Girls Wrestling Handbook Language

Mr. Wilson explained that the Handbook needs to be updated to parallel the two-week notice item for Girl's classifications and divisional/qualifying tournaments. Mr. Mills made a motion to approve the Rules and Regulation change as written. Mr. Pretty On Top seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Baseball and Softball Ticket Price Change

Ms. Bartels explained the rationale behind increasing ticket prices for both baseball and softball. Mr. Blome made a motion to adopt the language as written. Mr. McElroy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **2025-26 BUDGET CLOSEOUT**

Budget Items:

- 1) Year End Purchases – Mr. Michelotti explained that there are no significant end of year purchases this year.
- 2) Reserve amounts – \$30,500.00 will be divided among the following accounts: general, severance, legal, technology. An additional \$175,000.00 will be going toward paying down the mortgage of the new building rather than building reserves.
- 3) Long Term Disability for MHSA employees. Mr. Michelotti explained that this was approved in April, but the cost of it has increased due to the change in our health insurance carrier.

Mr. McElroy motioned to approve the end-of-year purchases, reserve allocations and Long Term Disability for the employees. Mr. Labbe seconded the motion. The motion carried.

#### **BUILDING UPDATE**

Mr. Michelotti reported on the few remaining items for the finishing of the building. Landscaping and finishing the exterior painting are the two items remaining.

#### **2026-27 STATE TOURNAMENT BIDS**

Mr. Michelotti stated there is only one open bid for 2026-27 and that is state A/B Baseball.

#### **MHSA PROPOSALS AND INTERPRETATIONS**

Mr. Michelotti explained the following proposal and interpretation additions for the 2026-27 MHSA Handbook:

##### Eligibility Interpretations

Mr. Michelotti explained that there are 5 interpretations to add to the MHSA Handbook: 1) For the Transfer Rule and a parent to parent move, parents must be divorced or legally separated; 2) For the Transfer Rule with regard to Homeschool parent to parent applies only if divorced or legally separated; 3) For homeschool students to be eligible, they must reside with their parents or guardian for the rule to apply; 4) 8<sup>th</sup> graders must be academically eligible and have passed the previous semester to participate in the high school activity; 5) Students must attend the designated feeder school for the high school in which they will participate as 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Mr. Blome made a motion to pass all 5 interpretations as written. Mr. McElroy seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

##### Golf Changes

Mr. Michelotti summarized four different items for clarification in the MHSA Handbook: 1) Substitution Rule will change from 'Because of injury, illness or other emergency situations' to change to 'For any reason'; 2) To add a divisional practice round blackout for golf of a 2-day period; 3) To add a penalty of disqualification of a team if the Sunday practice Rule is violated; 4) Postseason golf ticket price to add a 2-day pass for spectators to be \$20.00 for adults and \$18.00 for students. Mr. Blome made a motion to approve the four golf changes. Mr. Gordon seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

##### Football Point Differential

Mr. Michelotti explained that if the point differential reaches 70 points or more at any time during the second half, the game will be terminated. Mr. Labbe made a motion to approve the point differential as written. Mr. McElroy seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **ADDITIONAL ITEMS**

Ms. Bartels reported that District 5 has requested a district music festival date change from April 16-17, 2027, to April 8-10, 2027. Mr. Blome made a motion to approve the date change and Mr. Mills seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to conduct, Ms. Triplett adjourned the meeting at 12:43pm.