



MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

PROMOTING SUCCESS ON THE COURT, ON THE FIELD, ON STAGE,
AND EVERYWHERE ELSE UNDER THE BIG SKY SINCE 1921

January 22, 2026

TO: MHSAA MEMBER SCHOOLS

FROM: BRIAN MICHELOTTI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RE: MHSAA JANUARY EXECUTIVE BOARD ACTION

On Saturday, January 17th, the MHSAA Executive Board conducted its regularly scheduled meeting. The following is a synopsis of the major items and items that are being sent to member schools for a two-week notice period. These changes will be effective for 2026-27 (unless noted):

- The Executive Board reviewed fall sports postseason financial reports.
- The Board placed the 2026 Class A/B/C State Baseball Tournament in Polson. The event will be held at O'Malley Park in Polson on May 28–30, 2026.
- The Executive Board approved Wibaux High School to participate in Class C 6-Player football during the 2026-27 football season. Wibaux was placed in the Southern Division.
- The MHSAA approved the following policy change regarding music being played during competition at MHSAA Events:

The use of bells, air horns, whistles, wooden blocks and other noise makers during indoor Association contests is prohibited. Handheld megaphones larger than 8" are prohibited. At indoor contests bands **or music** may only play before the start of a contest, during intermissions between periods (quarters) and during a time out. They may not play during "live ball." At outdoor contests the use of electronic and air-amplified devices, including vuvuzelas, by spectators is prohibited. At all outdoor contests bands **or music** will not be allowed to play during live ball.

Final action was taken on the following realignment items from previous meetings:

- 1) The Board approved the baseball alignment into two classes, along with new conferences for the 2026 baseball season. [Click here for the 2026 MHSAA Baseball Conferences.](#)
- 2) The Board approved new language regarding wrestling walk-up music for this year. [Click here for the new policy.](#)
- 3) The Board approved updated language for the MHSAA Media Policy Requirements. [Click here for more information.](#)
- 4) The Board approved updated policy language regarding safety precautions during MHSAA events. [Click here to view the updated rule.](#)
- 5) The Board approved updated language clarifying the MHSAA Ejection Policy. Under these new interpretations, a coach or spectator who is ejected must leave the site immediately and shall not be present on-site or within sight, sound, or communication for the remainder of that day of competition. A student who is ejected may be allowed to remain on the team bench as long as they do not create further disturbance. However, officials may require the student to leave, in which case they must be accompanied by an adult.



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- 6) The Board approved an exception to the MHSAA Practice Rule for fall sports. If a student returns from documented military basic training over the summer, the MHSAA Executive Director can reduce the total number of initial practices (no more than half the number of required practices for that sport or activity) at their school. In football, the student athlete will still be required to have at least 3 days of practice with no pads and only helmets.
- 7) The Board approved a new format for sub-varsity basketball jamborees. Schools interested in piloting this format for the 2025–26 season may do so with permission from the MHSAA Executive Director. [Click here to view the new format.](#)

Other items for your information - MHSAA Annual Meeting

Proposals Approved

The 2026 Annual Meeting was conducted in Helena on January 19, 2026. The proposals approved by the membership to take effect in 2026-27 were:

The MHSAA By-Laws were revised regarding profit distribution in Class C 6-Player Football. At the beginning of the next academic year, any profit remaining at the conclusion of the playoffs will be distributed among the 16 playoff teams. Previously, profits were distributed to all schools participating in 6-Player Football.

MHSAA Executive Board By-Laws for expedited hearings were amended. The non-refundable fee was increased to the appellant for these hearings in the future.

The MHSAA By-Laws were amended to authorize the MHSAA Executive Director to rule on academic hardship appeals. Previously, all such appeals were heard directly by the MHSAA Executive Board; this change establishes an additional level of review.

MHSAA Transfer Rule By-Laws were amended for member school students who transfer in the same district to homeschool or non-public schools to be ineligible to participate for the required number of pupil instruction days at the varsity level.

MHSAA Eligibility By-Laws were amended to allow a revision to the MHSAA Awards Rule. Training apparel for practice and/or workouts provided by the school will now not be included in the “non-monetary compensation amount” (\$500 per year), that is allowed per student-athlete. These items include, but are not limited to, the following: practice shirt, practice shorts, spandex, tights and a pair of socks. [Click here for the new MHSAA Awards Rule.](#)

The MHSAA Eligibility By-Laws were revised to add a 2-week suspension to each spectator who is ejected from a contest in the future. [Click here for the new MHSAA Spectator Ejection Rule.](#)



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Awards

The following awards were presented at the 2026 Annual Meeting:

MHSA AIM Higher Contributor

Butte High School

AIM Higher Award

Billings Skyview High School

NFHS State Music Award

Jeff Skogley - Cascade High School

NFHS State Speech and Drama Award

Liz Schwartz – Laurel

Mildred Adams Award

Butch and Pixie Zieske - Richey

Ennis Geraghty – Columbus

Terri Bowen – Colstrip

Deb Gibson – Richey

MHSA Heart of the Arts Award

Laura Brayko – Helena Capital

MHSA Spirit of Sport Award

Kyler Venable - Custer County High School

MHSA Service Citations

Brandon Gondeiro – Highwood

Steve Yokim – Sidney

Bill Melvin – Butte

John O’Dell -- Townsend

Tim McMahon -- Helena

James C. Haugen Meritorious Service Award

Mark Dennehy – Kalispell

If there are any questions, please feel free to contact the MHS Association office.