

The following are the preliminary minutes from the February 19, 2026, OHSAA Board of Directors Meeting. The Board is expected to officially approve them at its April 23, 2026, meeting.

## **OHSAA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES (February 19, 2026)**

The Ohio High School Athletic Association Board of Directors held a regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, February 19, 2026, at the OHSAA Offices in Columbus. President Stephanie Evans called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance and introductions of guests in attendance.

**Board Members In Attendance:** Stephanie Evans, president; Randy Tevepaugh, vice president; John Carter; Ray Hibbs; Matt Hutchinson; Tom Nerl; Mark Rose; Lane Warner; Jeff Wheeler, and Jared Cole (ex-officio, participated virtually) and Glen Gillespie (ex-officios).

**Staff Members In Attendance:** Doug Ute, executive director; Kristin Ronai, associate executive director (participated virtually); Bob Goldring, John Kronour, Beau Rugg, Ronald Sayers and Tim Stried, directors; Laura Vermilya, chief financial officer, and staff members Greg Bossick, Monroe Britton, Michael Cornathan, BJ Duckworth (participated virtually), Amanda Harding, Steve Hoffbauer, Alexis Holderman, Keaton Jones, Michelle Kern, Claudia Markoff, Kelly Schoenly and Lizzy Wilson.

**Others In Attendance:** Joe Fraley, OHSAA legal counsel; Ray Benjamin, Ohio High School Baseball Coaches Association; Joe Balogh, Ohio High School Basketball Coaches Association; Gerald Cooke and Steve Hale, Ohio High School Football Coaches Association; Dugan Hill, Ohio Association of Track & Cross Country Coaches, and Tim Freeman, Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators.

### **I. ELECTION OF 2025-26 BOARD OF DIRECTORS OFFICERS**

With the retirement of Walt Skaggs as superintendent of the St. Clairsville-Richland City Schools, his positions as a Class AAA representative on the OHSAA East District Athletic Board and president of the OHSAA Board of Directors became vacated. Executive Director Doug Ute noted that, per OHSAA Bylaw 13-1-1, former Board of Directors vice president Stephanie Evans has assumed the role of president through the end of the 2025-26 school year, which is July 31, 2026. Mr. Ute also welcomed Jeff Wheeler as the East District's Class AAA representative to the Board of Directors (replacing Dr. Skaggs) and Jared Cole as the ex-officio representative from the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce.

Ms. Evans then asked for nominations for the position of vice president of the Board of Directors for the remainder of the 2025-26 school year.

Mark Rose nominated Randy Tevepaugh to serve as vice president of the Board of Directors for the remainder of the 2025-26 school year. John Carter seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously moved to close nominations.

**Randy Tevepaugh** was unanimously elected vice president of the Board of Directors for the remainder of the 2025-26 school year.

### **II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Motion by Tom Nerl, second by Ray Hibbs to **adopt** the agenda for the February 19, 2026, Board of Directors meeting.

Motion passed 9-0.

### **III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion by Randy Tevepaugh, second by John Carter to **approve** the minutes from the January 15, 2026, Board of Directors Meeting.

Motion passed 9-0.

### **IV. FINANCIAL ITEMS**

#### **A. Recommendation to Approve the OHSAA Financial Report through January 31, 2026**

Chief Financial Officer Laura Vermilya provided the financial report through January 31, 2026. She said all fall sports tournament reports have been submitted, and the net profit for fall tournaments was \$1.2 million better than budget and expenses were six percent favorable to budget. Ms. Vermilya also noted that fees for registered officials netted \$1.1 million, which was approximately \$31,000 better than a year ago.

When combining cash and investments, the OHSAA's current total cash was at \$17.4 million, which would cover 8.5 months of expenses. That is slightly under the goal of nine months but is similar to where the Association stood a year ago. The financial report is summarized as follows:

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### OHSAA Financial Report (Through January 31, 2026)

<u>District</u>	<u>Total Cash</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
		<u>Gross Revenue</u>	<u>Gross Expenses</u>	<u>Net Profit/Loss</u>
OHSAA Office	\$10,579,876	\$8,566,561	\$7,299,340	\$1,267,220
Central	\$1,074,988	\$347,141	\$324,685	\$22,457
East	\$1,003,694	\$168,935	\$136,237	\$32,697
Northeast	\$696,464	\$569,613	\$672,364	— \$102,752
Northwest	\$1,738,995	\$514,250	\$386,271	\$127,979
Southeast	\$842,391	\$195,497	\$219,104	— \$23,607
Southwest	\$1,446,531	\$497,552	\$472,894	\$24,658
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$17,382,939</b>	<b>\$10,859,549</b>	<b>\$9,510,895</b>	<b>\$1,348,651</b>

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Prior Month</u>	<u>Prior Year</u>
Checking	\$5,211,380	\$7,055,425	\$6,396,687
Savings	\$1,048,034	\$1,046,114	\$1,019,764
<b>Total Operating Cash</b>	<b>\$6,259,414</b>	<b>\$8,101,539</b>	<b>\$7,416,451</b>
Months on Hand	3.0	4.2	3.7
Board Designated Capital Improvements	\$278,994	\$278,502	\$997,057
Investments - Morgan Stanley	\$10,844,531	\$10,755,650	\$9,282,572
<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>\$11,123,525</b>	<b>\$11,034,151</b>	<b>\$10,279,629</b>
Months on Hand	5.4	5.1	5.1
<b>Total Cash &amp; Investments on Hand</b>	<b>\$17,382,939</b>	<b>\$19,135,690</b>	<b>\$17,696,080</b>
Months on Hand (Cash & Investments)	8.5	9.3	8.8
Athletic Enrichment Fund	\$2,206,096	\$2,199,353	\$3,119,977

Motion by Mark Rose second by Matt Hutchinson to **approve** the financial report as presented.

Motion passed 9-0.

## V. INFORMATION ITEMS

### A. Update on Schools Changing Athletic Districts

Executive Director Doug Ute said the Executive Director's Office has completed the process to approve or deny requests from schools to change OHSAA athletic districts, and that three schools have been approved to change districts beginning with the 2026-27 school year. Minster has been approved to move from the Northwest to the Southwest district; Fayetteville-Perry has been approved to move from the Southwest to the Southeast district, and Amanda-Clearcreek has been approved to move from the Central to the Southeast District.

### B. Update on Upcoming Spring Meetings

Director Bob Goldring informed the Board that the sites and dates for the 2026 OHSAA Athletic Discussion Meetings in April have been set. The OHSAA is required by the Constitution to conduct these meetings in order to explain the upcoming referendum issues, so the majority of the meetings will be spent with directors Kristin Ronai or Ronald Sayers reviewing those items. The six locations are Cambridge, Clayton, Logan, Streetsboro, Tiffin and Westerville, with the Tiffin meeting in conjunction with a Northwest District Athletic Board. Registration material will be sent to the membership soon. In addition, the Executive Director's Office will be conducting an in-person meeting with the presidents of the various state coaches associations on Wednesday, April 22, at the OHSAA Offices. This meeting is a chance for the staff to share important reminders and discuss timely issues while also hearing the concerns from the coaches associations. Mr. Goldring said invitations will be emailed soon, and Board of Directors members are welcome to attend to listen to the discussion.

### C. Update on 2026-27 Board of Directors Meeting Dates

Director Bob Goldring said that dates for OHSAA Board of Directors Meetings for the 2026-27 school year have been selected, and most will correspond with the 2025-26 dates with the exception of the September and October meetings. Unless noted, all meetings are on Thursdays at the OHSAA Office in Columbus and begin at 9:00. The dates are: August 27, 2026; October 1, 2026; October 29, 2026; January 14, 2027; February 18, 2027; April 22, 2027, and June 10, 2027 (8:30 at 7 17 Credit Union Park in Akron). The Board will also conduct closed meetings during the state football finals in Canton in early December and during the state boys basketball tournament in Dayton in late March.

### D. Review of 2026 OHSAA Officials Hall of Fame and 2026-27 Officials-of-the-Year Selections

Director Beau Rugg informed the Board that 14 individuals have been selected to the 2026 OHSAA Officials Hall of Fame after the Hall of Fame Committee met recently, and 21 officials have been selected as OHSAA 2025-26 Officials-of-the-Year. Selected to the hall of fame were: **William Alge** (Findlay; football, retired from basketball); **Scott Bunting** (Zanesville; football, basketball); **Timothy Campbell** (Columbia Station; retired from football, basketball, baseball); **Marvin Doyle** (Lawrenceburg, Ind.; football, basketball, baseball, softball); **Mark Froelich** (Defiance; basketball); **Evalyn Hammonds** (Columbus; football, volleyball, field hockey, basketball, lacrosse); **Francis Gallagher** (Lakewood; retired from football, basketball, softball); **Sam Jones** (Tiltonsville; football, basketball); **John Kipp** (Brunswick Hills; soccer); **Dan McGinnis** (Plain City; base-

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ball); **Paul Melcher** (Westerville; football, basketball, softball); **Lori Powers-Basinger** (Columbus; gymnastics and director of officiating development); **Terri Tutt** (Chillicothe; track & field), and **Matt Velten** (Batavia; football, basketball).

2025-26 OHSAA Officials-of-the-Year are: baseball: **Glenn Harrah** (Strongsville); boys basketball: **Kurt Schooley** (Hilliard); girls basketball: **Marilyn DeWalt** (Oak Harbor); boys cross country: **Nicholas Molnar** (Lorain); girls cross country: **Lisa Rucker** (Dayton); field hockey: **Johnathan Belvin** (Munroe Falls); football: **Michael Dame** (Brunswick); gymnastics: **Jane Droese** (Hilliard); ice hockey: **Michael Wenter** (Lewis Center); boys lacrosse: **Thomas Scott** (Columbus); girls lacrosse: **Katherine Jirus** (Chardon); boys soccer: **Miklos Hendricks** (Canton); girls soccer: **Jeri McCoy** (Bucyrus); softball: **James Reneau** (Findlay); boy swimming & diving: **Alan Jaffee** (Bowling Green); girls swimming & diving: **Stephen Mayo** (Dublin); boys track & Field: **Marty Dahlman** (Pataskala); girls track & Field: **Edward Katzman** (Youngstown); boys volleyball: **Terry Bush** (Mt. Vernon); girls volleyball: **Kevin McKinstry** (East Palestine), and wrestling: **Kurt Stewart** (Kingston).

The OHSAA celebration of officiating and hall of fame ceremonies will take place June 20, 2026, at the Hilton Columbus/Polaris.

### E. Update on Appeals, Legislative Issues and Legal Cases

Staff member Lizzy Wilson provided the Board with a list of schools that have recently violated OHSAA bylaws or sports regulations. **Columbus Marion-Franklin High School** had a student-athlete violate General Sports Regulation 7.2.2 when she participated in a non-interscholastic contest after establishing herself as a member of the school's girls bowling team. In accordance with Bylaw 11, Penalties, the student-athlete was suspended for two regular season contests. **Heath High School** had a student-athlete violate General Sports Regulation 7.2.2 when he participated in a non-interscholastic contest after establishing himself as a member of the school's boys bowling program. In accordance with Bylaw 11, Penalties, the student-athlete was suspended for two regular season contests. **Columbus South High School** had a student-athlete in girls basketball violate Bylaw 4-3-1, Enrollment and Attendance, when she participated in a regular season contest without being enrolled in and attending the school full time. Further, the student did not meet the requirements of any of the enumerated exceptions codified within Bylaw 4-3-1. In accordance with Bylaw 10-2-1, Forfeitures, the school was required to forfeit any victorious contests in which the ineligible student-athlete participated. **Columbus Linden-McKinley High School** had a student-athlete who was eligible to qualify for full eligibility under Bylaw 4-7-2, Transfer, Exception 1, Bona Fide Change of Residence. However, the student participated in a competition beyond the 50 percent point of the season prior to the receipt of the Executive Director's approval. The Executive Director's Office restored the student-athlete's eligibility retroactively and prospectively, but, in accordance with Bylaw 4-1-1, Administrative Error, the school was fined \$100. **Clayton Northmont High School** had a student-athlete who was eligible to qualify for full eligibility under Bylaw 4-6-2 Exception 1, Residence, Legal Change of Custody/Guardianship to a Primary Relative. However, the school failed to submit the request for eligibility to the Executive Director's Office prior to the student participating in a regular season competition. The Executive Director's Office restored the student-athlete's eligibility retroactively and prospectively, but, in accordance with Bylaw 4-1-1, Administrative Error, the school was fined \$100. **Ashville Teays Valley West Middle School** had a student-athlete in girls wrestling violate Bylaw 4-3-1, Enrollment and Attendance, when she participated in a regular season contest without being enrolled in and attending Teays Valley West Middle School full time. Further, the student did not meet the requirements of any of the enumerated exceptions codified within Bylaw 4-3-1. In accordance with Bylaw 10-2-1, Forfeitures, the school was required to forfeit any victorious contests in which the ineligible student-athlete participated. **Canton McKinley High School** violated Bylaw 4-9-4 #3, Recruiting, when a baseball coach had impermissible contact with a prospective student-athlete prior to an application being submitted to the school for potential enrollment. The OHSAA Executive Director's office accepted Canton McKinley's self-imposed penalty of an immediate suspension for the coach and student-athlete upon notification of the violation, which included the first two scrimmages of the **2026-27** baseball season. **Winchester Eastern High School** varsity boys bowling program violated Bowling Regulation 1.6, Substitutions, when the coach substituted members during play that were removed from the match previously. In accordance with Bowling Regulation 1.6, the frames bowled by those athletes were scored as zeroes. **Middletown Madison Senior High School** had a student-athlete in boys wrestling violate Bylaw 4-4-1, Scholarship, when he participated in regular season competition after failing to pass five one-credit courses, or the equivalent, in the immediately preceding grading period. In accordance with Bylaw 10-2-1, Forfeitures, the school was required to forfeit any victorious regular season contests in which the ineligible student-athlete participated.

Ms. Holderman also provided the Board with an update on appeals. She said the OHSAA Appeals Panel has made 99 rulings on 92 appeals held during 16 hearings this school year, and 24 appeals were either granted or the penalties modified. Most of the rulings dealt with the transfer bylaw. Executive Director Doug Ute also provided the Board with an update on current legislative issues. In addition, Legal Counsel Joe Fraley provided the Board with an update on current OHSAA legal cases.

## VI. OLD BUSINESS

### A. Recommendation to Approve Additional 2026 Referendum Items

Director Ronald Sayers said the OHSAA's eligibility team and legal counsels have been reviewing potential changes to the OHSAA Constitution and Bylaws that would be placed before the membership for referendum if approved by the Board of Directors. The Board previously approved placing seven items for referendum at its October 23, 2025, and five items at its January 15, 2026, meeting, all Bylaw modifications (three 7th-8th grade issues; four high school issues). At this meeting, Mr. Sayers reviewed additional 2026 proposed items (all bylaws), and recommended that two high school issues be approved by the Board to place on the referendum ballot. If approved by the Board for referendum, member school principals would vote on the proposed modifications between May 1 and 15, 2026. The recommendations are as follows:

#### **Bylaw 4-3-1, Enrollment and Attendance, Exception 8 (New)**

This proposed addition to the bylaw's exceptions would permit a student at a member public school that does not offer a team sport (baseball, basketball, bowling, field hockey, football, ice hockey, lacrosse, soccer, softball, tennis and volleyball) in which the student desires to participate to petition to play that sport for a different member school if the following conditions are met: 1.) The public school in which the student is enrolled does not offer the team sport; and 2.) The public school in which the student is enrolled is located less than 20 miles from the public school in which the student is petitioning to play, and 3.) The superintendents of both public schools enter into an agreement approving the student's participation at the school in which the student is not enrolled.

The proposal also notes that a student enrolled at a school within a multiple high school district that does not offer a team sport in which the student desires to participate may be assigned to participate at another school within the district by the district's superintendent. Should no schools within the multiple high school district offer the team sport in which the student desires to participate, the process noted in the paragraph above shall be followed.

It was also noted that, should the proposal pass, modifications will be needed to Bylaw 2-2-4, Competitive Balance factors, and Bylaw 4-7-2, Definition of Transfer, Note 2).

#### **Bylaw 4-7-2, Transfers, Exception 1, Bona Fide Change of Residence (Modification)**

This proposed modification to the exception provides a more detailed description of bona fide change of residence and, specifically, gives a more strict application to indicate when a family is still responsible for their previous home.

Motion by Jeff Wheeler, second by Tom Nerl to **approve** placing the proposed bylaw exception addition and bylaw modification up for referendum vote by the membership as presented.

Motion passed 9-0.

It was noted that the Executive Director's Office will likely recommend additional items to be placed before the membership for referendum at the upcoming closed Board of Directors meeting in March that will be held in conjunction with the boys state basketball tournament. That will be the last date that any additional potential proposals will be added.

## VII. NEW BUSINESS (CONSENT)

### A. Recommendation to Approve a Modification to Cheerleading as an OHSAA Sponsored Event

Executive Director Doug Ute said the OHSAA for the last six years has partnered with a national company to sponsor a spirit event (state championship) that had been held in early December. He recommended that the OHSAA enter into a new partnership with the Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators (OASSA) that will recognize the annual OASSA High School Cheerleading State Championship as the official cheerleading state championship for Ohio.

Mr. Ute and Tim Freeman, executive director of OASSA, noted that OASSA has hosted the Ohio Cheerleading State Championship for the past 34 years. Under the new partnership, OASSA will continue to host the championship moving forward with the current rules, regulations, scoring structures and format, although a change for 2026-27 will shift the Game Day cheerleading category from its current place in the winter to early November. It was also noted that a coaches association has been established and that conversations with various OHSAA constituents will continue to see if any further modifications are needed.

### B. Recommendation to Utilize MaxPreps' RPI for Softball to Seed Teams to the OHSAA Tournament

Staff member Kelly Schoenly, the OHSAA's administrator for the sport of softball, said that, after discussion with the Ohio High School Softball Coaches Association executive staff, the Executive Director's Office recommended that the MaxPreps Rating Percentage Index (RPI) be utilized beginning with the 2026 season in order to seed teams to the OHSAA post-season tournament. Approval of the recommendation means that teams winning their regular season contests shall enter their results into MaxPreps immediately following each contest. It was noted the the Board of Directors discussed the recommendation the previous day

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during its Board of Directors Work Session.

- C. Recommendation to Make a Modification to the 2026 Track & Field Tournament Regulations  
Staff member BJ Duckworth, the OHSAA's administrator for the sport of track & field, said that, after discussion with the Ohio Association of Track and Cross Country Coaches executive staff, the Executive Director's Office recommended that the 2026 track & field tournament regulations be modified as follows: In the district (Divisions II-V) and regional (Division I) tournaments where semifinal heats are held in the 4x800 relay, 800, 1,600, and 3,200, the top eight (8) from each semifinal heat will advance to the finals.
- D. Recommendation to Ratify Recommendation to Appoint Interim Class AAA Representative on the East District Athletic Board (Through July 31, 2026)  
Board member Jeff Wheeler said the East District Athletic Board has recommended that Michael Dunlap, athletic administrator at New Concord John Glenn High School, be appointed as the interim Class A representative on their board through July 31, 2026. The position was previously held by Walt Skaggs, who retired as superintendent of the St. Clairsville-Richland City Schools. If interested in continuing in that position, Mr. Dunlap would then have to go through the election process in May 2026 to fill the position, with the term running August 1, 2026, through July 31, 2032. Mr. Wheeler asked that the Board ratify this recommendation.
- E. Recommendation to Ratify Recommendation to Appoint Interim Class AA Representative on the East District Athletic Board (Through July 31, 2026)  
Board member Jeff Wheeler said the East District Athletic Board has recommended that Kevin Smith, superintendent of the Crooksville Exempted Village School District, be appointed as the interim Class AA representative on their board through July 31, 2026. The position was previously held by Mark Kowalski, who retired as superintendent at Coshocton High School. If interested in continuing in that position, Mr. Smith would then have to go through the election process in May 2026 to fill the position, with the term running August 1, 2026, through July 31, 2030. Mr. Wheeler asked that the Board ratify this recommendation.

Motion by John Carter, second by Mark Rose to **approve** New Business Consent Items VII A., VII. B., VII. C., VII. D. and VII. E. as presented.

Motion passed 9-0.

## VIII. NEW BUSINESS (OTHER)

None

## IX. ONCE AROUND

Board member congratulated their fellow members Stephanie Evans and Randy Tevepaugh for moving into the roles of president and vice president, respectively, of the Board of Directors for the rest of the 2025-26 school year. They also welcomed Jeff Wheeler back to the Board, Jared Cole as the new ex-officio member of the Board and wished former Board President Walt Skaggs the best as he recovers from a health issue.

Board members also thanked the OHSAA staff, tournament managers and site managers for all of their work preparing for the 2026 winter tournaments. Special thanks were also given to the OHSAA staff for their outstanding communication; to Executive Assistant Michelle Kern for all of her work with the Board, and the OHSAA eligibility team for all of their on bylaw interpretations, appeals and referendum issues.

Glen Gillespie, Board ex-officio and executive director of the OIAAA, said preparations for the 2026 OIAAA Fall State Conference have already started with the Northeast District and fellow Board member John Carter charged with oversight of the agenda and speakers. The state conference will be held Nov. 15-17 in Columbus, while the OHSAA Offices will again be utilized for the OIAAA Summer Institute that will take place June 9-11.

In addition, Board member Mark Rose offered condolences following the death of Bloom-Vernon Local School District (South Webster) superintendent Marc Kreischer, who died last Sunday at the age of 48. He had been that district's superintendent since 2014.

There was a unanimous motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:33 a.m.

Motion passed 9-0.

Bob Goldring, recorder.

## FUTURE MEETINGS

(Unless noted, all meetings are on Thursdays and begin at 9:00 but are subject to change.)

**2025-26 School Year:** April 23, 2026; June 11, 2026 (8:30 at Canal Park in Akron).

**2026-27 School Year:** August 27, 2026; October 1, 2026; October 29, 2026; January 14, 2027; February 18, 2027; April 22, 2027, and June 10, 2027 (8:30 at 7 17 Credit Union Park in Akron).