



Ohio High School Athletic Association

Doug Ute, Executive Director

Thursday, June 13, 2024

ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

2022-23 School Year, No. 23

Hello!

With the end of the school year here, I want to take this opportunity to thank all administrators for your work with the student-athletes at your schools. Your students are going to look back at their lives and see you as someone that believed in them when maybe others did not. The work you do is often difficult and challenging, but don't forget that most things worth doing are not easy. You not only impact the lives of our young people but often set them on a path for success. It's a tremendous honor to work for the OHSAA, which emphasizes education-based programs for our students, but our programs are only as good as the tremendous work you do at your schools. Thank you so much for all that you do!

I also want to thank all of you who make the effort and take the time to serve as hosts for our tournaments. We could not get along without you, so please know how much you are appreciated along with your community members who assist. Our OHSAA District Athletic Boards also deserve tremendous praise for organizing and overseeing the early rounds of the tournaments, and I also want to recognize our staff's sport administrators for their great work with our tournaments.

Besides thanking you, I also want to take a few minutes to share some highlights from this school year and look ahead toward 2024-25.

- Last year the OHSAA Board of Directors approved the establishment of an athletic enrichment fund for the purpose of providing an equal financial contribution to each member high school's athletic department to assist with costs of equipment, uniforms, game transportation, officials and improving sporting behavior. Schools that return their membership cards and past due invoices by June 30 will be receiving a \$2,000 check from our office in August. In addition, we will continue to provide travel stipends to schools that participate in OHSAA regional and state tournaments in team sports. During the 2023-24 school year, we project the total of travel stipends provided to schools to be \$1.5 million and the enrichment fund donation to total \$1.6 million.
- As I have shared at both of our Regional Update and Athletic Discussion meetings, the OHSAA financial picture continues to be positive. The Board of Directors recently approved a draft of our 2024-25 budget, which is an initiative of the OHSAA's strategic plan and guides the financial health of the organization, providing measures of accountability and transparency. The annual budget reflects best estimates and assumptions to project anticipated revenues and expenses. Many tournament ticket prices were lowered during the school year that just ended, and some prices may be reduced further for 2024-25. While the budget is inclusive of the expansion of divisions in several sports next year, contingency expenses were budgeted for unforeseen costs that could arise under the new format. As I've stated several times, our goal as a non-profit organization is to operate profitably and maintain cash reserves equal to nine months of expenses. We have achieved those goals the past two years.
- The transition to DragonFly Athletics as a technology solution this past school year went well. 2023-24 also saw us successfully expand upon our existing partnership with FinalForms. We are continuing talks with both companies to determine the best course of action for transferring other activities currently located in *myOHSAA* to other platforms during the next few years. We certainly understand how fast the transition to DragonFly was and the fact that there were some bumps along the way. Despite those issues, we believe we are in a good place with DragonFly and have confidence in their ability to continue to expand and mold the software to fit the needs of the OHSAA and our member schools.
- A major concern we emphasized during the 2023-24 school year was improvement of the environments at our contests (e.g. sportsmanship). Some positive strides were made, but this is something in which our work will be

ongoing. As administrators, we all contribute greatly to the quality of the lessons our student-athletes are receiving. Let's continue make it a goal to teach POSITIVE lessons by creating better environments at our events! Please make it a point to visit our website at <https://www.ohsaa.org/Respect-the-Game>, where we created tools, recommendations and reminders for school administrators to assist in your sporting behavior efforts. For the 2024-25 school year, you are highly encouraged to make it a priority and utilize these tools to develop a program for teaching and promoting the ideals and fundamentals of good sportsmanship within your entire school community. Included categories on the OHSAA website are:

- Tools to Assist Administrators
- Preseason Parent Meetings
- Sportsmanship Responsibilities
- Recent Positive Sporting Behavior Reports
- OHSAA Officials Appreciation Week
- Public Address Scripts
- Public Address Announcer Guidelines
- Audio Public Service Announcements
- Video Public Service Announcements
- Program Ads
- Posters and Banners
- Contest & Event Management Guidelines

- Coach Beyond, a program initiated through LiFEsports at The Ohio State University in partnership with the OHSAA, has had a busy and successful 2023-24 school year. Across the year, Coach Beyond has partnered with 17 school districts to implement the multi-session coach and student-athlete educational series, while also reaching one-third of Ohio's districts with at least one training session. Since 2021, 17,000 coaches have been trained by the Coach Beyond program, learning to go "beyond the X's and O's" in their roles as coaches, exceeding the original goal of 15,000. An additional 7,000 student-athletes have attended a Life and Leadership Series event, learning skills such as communication, mental strategies for performance, leadership and more. The Coach Beyond team has also hosted quarterly "State Team" meetings, five regional training events around Ohio and launched two online, highly interactive coach courses. If you are interested in bringing a **free** training from Coach Beyond to your district, connect with the team here: <https://lifesports.osu.edu/what-we-do/teaching-learning/coach-beyond/>. You can also find access to our **free online training on Supporting Student-Athlete Mental Health** (approved for the PAP requirement) here: <https://uscah.com/cdn/FREE-Coach-Beyond-USCAH-MH-Training-QR-2.pdf>.
- As you are aware, the OHSAA Board of Directors approved our office's recommendation to expand tournament divisions in the competitive balance sports of baseball, basketball, soccer, softball and girls volleyball beginning with the 2024-25 school year. This initiative was membership driven, with many school administrators and coaches expressing their interest to me on expansion nearly from the time I started as executive director, combined with the concern in the enrollment disparity of the teams from the top to the bottom of the larger divisions. Our No. 1 goal is to do what is best for the student-athletes, so the Board and staff regard expansion as being extremely healthy. We have continued to expand opportunities for our participants as evidenced by our recent additions of sanctioning and the continued growth in girls wrestling and boys volleyball, and we are continuing discussions on whether expansion of additional divisions in other sports or adding more sports is appropriate. I want to thank our board and staff for all of the additional time and work spent on this initiative and for our administrators and coaches for providing feedback.

Lastly, I want to again thank you for your tremendous work. Providing students with meaningful participation opportunities and a platform to teach life lessons is the best way to create our leaders of tomorrow. I'm so glad we are able to work together on this to the benefit of our students. All the best for a great and relaxing summer!

Respectfully,



Doug Ute, Executive Director