

**February 2023**

## EXECUTIVE CORNER

The MHSA Annual Meeting held in Missoula was an amazing event. It was so nice to meet face to face with many of our administrators across the state. This event has become the ideal opportunity for administrators in each classification, districts and divisions to get together mid-year to plan and strategize for the future. The Holiday Inn Downtown did a great job hosting the conference and the hospitality event hosted by Destination Missoula Sunday evening was well received.

The membership addressed four proposals and only one, the cooperative sponsorship proposal, received a passing vote. It is always interesting to hear the comments and opinions expressed during each classification's caucus on the proposals and on other MHSA issues. These various opinions, we believe, lead to a better understanding of the different points of view and the different reasons for support or opposition of the proposals and of other relevant MHSA initiatives. It is still extremely important, once again, to note the level of cooperation, compromise and understanding that existed during this meeting.

In other action the membership welcomed Aric Harris, Activities Director at Whitefish High School, as the newly elected Class A representative to the MHSA Executive Board. Also, Kara Triplett, Activities Director at Lambert was appointed for a one-year term as the Class C Representative. During the meeting, the membership recognized eight very deserving MHSA award winners. These award winners were recognized for their selfless work on behalf of our high school student activity participants and because of their long-time dedication to MHSA activities.

Next, in January we sent a memo to schools about a new interpretation regarding 1099's in Montana for our officials. The MHSA / MOA has received updated guidance due to IRS regulations regarding 1099s / mileage and per diem. Sports officials (including timers, scorekeepers etc.) are independent contractors under Montana State Law. Sports officials are exempt from unemployment insurance and workers comp.

The change is as follows. By IRS regulations, officials will be taxed only on their contest/game fees. Mileage and per diem are not taxable income, but schools and the MHSA must include mileage and per diem when calculating totals for Form 1099.

Payments for mileage and per diem do not fall under the definition of an accountable plan under the Internal Revenue Code, and the MHSA/MOA has been advised to include these amounts as taxable nonemployee compensation on the Form 1099. We recommend officials consult with a tax or legal advisor for proper treatment of the nonemployee compensation and any related expenses.

Form 1099 is required only after an official has earned \$600 or more from a single payee and Form W9 will be provided to officials by the payee to collect taxpayer identification information. Beginning with tax year 2022, pay services such as Dragonfly Pay and Arbiter pay are required by the IRS under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 to issue 1099s to ALL officials and workers who have been paid \$600 or more through their pay service.

Schools may request an official's tax ID number and officials have the right to refuse to provide that information if they believe they will not meet the \$600 minimum. However, according to MHSA legal counsel, the school has the right to refuse to hire that official if they do not receive the requested information.

The 2023 State Speech and Drama Meets have been completed and the State Wrestling Tournament and State Swim Meet will conclude soon. Congratulations to all the Speech and Drama coaches and participants and best of luck to everyone involved in wrestling and swimming.

Postseason basketball tournaments are about to begin, and as always this is an exciting time for coaches, players and fans. We must continue to reinforce the importance at all high school events of the expectations of good sporting behaviors by coaches, players and fans. Remember, crowd control is the responsibility of school administrators, not the game officials. We appreciate your help to guarantee that high school activities are wholesome events for everyone involved and demonstrating that all participants can have fun, if everyone stays centered on exhibiting good sporting behaviors. Once again, thank you for all the hard work managing your crowds during the regular season and especially during tournament time. Hopefully our spectators will keep in mind the message our Stockman Bank sponsored posters depict – Spectators – Conduct Counts! And we always encourage fans to Be Loud, Be Proud, and Be Positive!

And, of course, it is important to remind all players, coaches and fans of our tagline – “Without Officials, It's Just Recess.”

Finally, the MHSA/MOA Leadership Committee met recently, and we continue to broaden the communication between administrators, coaches and officials. The memberships will begin to hear the results of this committee in the spring. One committee member, who is a school administrator, brought up an excellent idea. The school brought several of their basketball players and their head coach to a MOA Basketball pool study club. They used this as an opportunity to share information, understand one another's role and hopefully recruit some future MOA basketball officials. We challenge all schools to get more student-athletes involved and this is a great opportunity to grow our officials across the state.

Good luck during the coming postseason events, and if the MHSA office can assist you in any way, please don't hesitate to contact us.

*Brian Michelotti*  
Executive Director

## ANNUAL MEETING

### MIAAA GOLD PASS AWARDS

The MIAAA uses the forum of the MHSA Annual Meeting to present gold passes to deserving activities directors. Nominations and selections for the awards are processed through the MIAAA.

There were no nominees this year for the MIAAA Gold Pass.

## **NFHS MUSIC AWARD**

Pat Ryan – Great Falls High School - Pat's resume as a music teacher includes junior high and high school education in Montana school districts spanning 19 years. The last 12 years have been at Great Falls High School. His service to Music in Montana is invaluable. Pat has chaired/coordinated District music festivals, served as the All-State Choir organizing chair, served as the President for the Montana Choral Directors Association for two years, conducted the 2012 Korean International Music Educators Association National Honor Choir in Seoul Korea, was President of the ACDA Northwest Region for six years and has numerous Excellence in Education Distinguished Educator Awards. Pat has built the Great Falls Public Schools music department into one of the top programs in Montana. Pat also finds time to be a music adjudicator and district festival chair for Montana.

## **MILDRED ADAMS AWARD PRESENTED**

Sally Haas – Choteau – For the past 32+ years Sally Haas has served as the bookkeeper for volleyball, and 25 years as the bookkeeper for basketball at Choteau High School. She has worked at over 1000 events. In addition to her time in volleyball and basketball she has volunteered to work at local and state track meets. Sally has volunteered her time for the community of Choteau as a Soroptimist member for 38 years, River Rats (women who live on the river) and is a lifetime member of the Catholic Church. Sally has spent her life volunteering and dedicating her time for the school and community of Choteau.

Margi Corey – Choteau - For the past 20 + years Margi has served as a Clock Keeper for Volleyball and Basketball in the Choteau School System. She has worked at over 1000 events. In addition, for the past 15 years she has volunteered at the JV Wrestling tourney for the Choteau Classic. Behind the scenes she has been instrumental to the success and management of technology in the Choteau School System, for education and athletics. Margi is very active in the community and has dedicated her life to the students and staff of the Choteau Community.

## **SERVICE CITATIONS PRESENTED**

Kara Bartlett – Destination Missoula – Kara has been a tremendous asset to the city of Missoula over the last few years with helping bring Montana High School sporting events to the area. She is always making contacts with people throughout the state and trying to bring as many events as possible to Missoula. She has helped bring State tournaments to the Missoula area, including basketball, track & field, cross country, and softball, among others. In the lead up time to an event, she is working tirelessly to make sure everything goes smoothly. She coordinates all volunteers for the events, some that take place over 4 days and are lasting 10 plus hours each day. She arranges all the food, snacks, and drinks to be ready for officials, coaches, administration, volunteers, press, plus many more. She makes every event fun and entertaining and always shows her appreciation for everybody that has helped with the event. The Missoula market had not had many statewide high school events for many years until Kara came along and she has set the area up for years to come.

Travis Blome – Activities Director Hamilton High School – Travis has contributed to MHSA activities in a variety of ways throughout his tenure as activities director, tournament manager and member of his district's administrative leadership team. This individual has served in many MHSA leadership positions in Class A at the divisional and state level. He has managed numerous district, divisional and state tournaments in volleyball, basketball, track, softball, golf, cross country, and tennis. His exceptional knowledge, professionalism, and direct approach makes him a valuable resource for new and veteran coaches and activities directors. This AD has worked tirelessly to promote school athletics not only at his school, but throughout Class A and statewide. Under his leadership, his school has achieved a co-curricular and extra-curricular participation rate of over 85%

throughout each school year. He is an unmistakable leader in his conference and classification and among his fellow activities administrators.

Bryce Wilson – Activities Director Flathead High Schools– Bryce is an exceptional leader with a great deal of talent. He has the respect of students, parents, staff, and the administration throughout his district. He has hosted multiple state events that include: speech & debate, wrestling, cross country, softball and track and field, to name a few. Additionally, he has hosted Divisional basketball for Class B, has been an official at multiple state track meets, was instrumental in starting Girls' Flag Football and is the AA master schedule builder. He does an excellent job of connecting with all students. He provides leadership for his school's mentoring program that partners freshmen with upperclassmen so there is a smooth transition into high school. He hosts a Weekly Radio Talk Show that provides updates to the community on student activities in addition to reviewing the academic side of his school. In addition to his commitment to students, athletics, and activities, he is an exceptional instructional leader. He is well versed in instructional practices from Learning Cadres to International Baccalaureate and from transformational learning to high impact learning strategies. He has worked diligently to establish an outstanding activities program and has provided a vision for the program. He has been instrumental in establishing a level of expectation for not only the coaches, but also for the students and their parents. He is a man of character and integrity, and you will find these characters throughout his programs because of his leadership.

## **MERITORIOUS SERVICE RECOGNITION**

Dave Edington – Ronan – Dave began his teaching and coaching career in Ronan in the fall of 1968 and that winter became the first head coach of boys' wrestling at Ronan. During the twenty years he headed the program his teams produced 59 individual champions and eight team championships. His teams won 225 dual meets which ranks seventh all-time in the Montana High School Association's record book. He was selected as the Montana Coaches' Association Coach of the Year seven times. Additional honors include induction into the AAU National Wrestling Hall of Fame, the Montana Indian Hall of Fame, and the Ronan Community Hall of Fame. He contributed to our country's Olympic wrestling efforts in 1976 as a member of the wrestling coaching staff and in 1984 as a member of the administrative hosting staff. While in high school in Saratoga, Wyoming, he was a four-time state champion and a member of the school's first state wrestling championship. Dave served the MHSA and MOA as the Wrestling Rules Interpreter for over 25 plus years. He traveled the state doing rules clinics, attended every state tournament and has been one of the biggest champions for the sport of wrestling in Montana. Recently he has served on the MHSA wrestling committees and has assisted the MHSA grow girls wrestling across the state

Doug Reisig – Missoula– There are not enough adjectives to describe the level of service and dedication that this individual has provided to the state of Montana in both the educational arena, as well as the athletic arena. He has spent over four decades as an educator: first as a teacher, next as a school administrator and as a Superintendent for 34 years, 22 of those years at Hellgate Elementary. In every role, he has been simply exemplary! His dedication to students, staff, parents and the entire school community has been profound. This person has now served two four-year terms on the MHSA Executive Board, as the Governors and also as the Office of Public Instruction Appointee. As a Board member, he has dedicated countless hours to ensuring that education-based activities are always at the forefront. He has provided significant leadership and dedication to the MHSA. As the current Vice President of the MHSA, a highlight for this individual has been watching students achieve success both in the classroom, as well as in sports. Success in sports for him has never been about winning a state championship or being recognized as the top athlete in the sport, but rather, it has been about the value of being a part of a team, the importance of comradery, and the sheer love of the game. Upon his retirement as Superintendent, Hellgate Elementary

dedicated their gymnasium in his honor and it is now named the Reisig Activity Center.

## **IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD PROGRAM**

In the near future, school contacts will receive the 2022-2023 school year's initial mailing concerning the Northwestern Energy Company's Academic Excellence Award. The competition was initiated in the 1988-89 school year.

Please review the materials when you receive them and make plans to enter your school's students in the 2022-2023 competition. The award is very prestigious, and we encourage schools to submit an application to recognize overall activity participants' academic achievement.

## **REPORT SPECTATOR EJECTIONS**

This year the MHSA Executive Board approved that all spectators who are ejected or removed from one of our member school contests must be reported to the MHSA. In the past, we have required player and coach ejections to be reported, but please report spectators now as well. The report should be sent to Anna Doran in the MHSA at [adoran@mhsa.org](mailto:adoran@mhsa.org).

## **BASEBALL**

MHSA sanctioned baseball's inaugural season will start with practices on March 7, 2023. The first date for competition is March 17, 2023. Twenty-two (22) schools will be participating in the first season. The teams are divided into four (4) conferences. The top two (2) teams in each conference qualify for the state tournament. The state tournament will be in Butte on May 18-20.

## **MUSIC**

### **MUSIC INFORMATION TO BE SENT TO DIRECTORS**

Music directors should be aware of the electronic mailings that will be sent in the next few weeks concerning music events.

First, information will be sent to each school concerning the coming All-State Band, Chorus and Orchestra Festival. The information includes details for the online audition process.

Next, schools will receive information concerning the State Solo & Ensemble Festivals which will be held May 5-6, 2023, in Billings (East) and Missoula (West).

For information regarding your individual district festivals, please contact the appropriate festival chair. The list of chairs is posted on the music page of the MHSA website at [www.mhsa.org](http://www.mhsa.org).

## **SPEECH AND DRAMA**

### **SPEECH AND DRAMA MEETS COMPLETED**

Schools participating in speech and drama finalized their seasons in January. Thanks to the host communities and managers listed below, the events were successful culminations of this year's competition:

Class AA – Skyview High School -  
Toby Hill, Daniel Johnson, Tournament Managers  
Class A – Sidney High School  
Chris Lee, Gail Stffanson, Christy Pierce, Tournament Managers  
Class B-C – Manhattan High School  
Julie Frank, Brad Ballantyne, Tournament Managers

## **TRACK AND FIELD**

### **STARTING DATE FOR TRACK AND FIELD PRACTICE**

For the 2022-23 school year, the starting date for track and field practice will be Monday, March 13, and the first date for track and field competition will be Friday, March 24. No individual shall compete in any Association track and field meet until he/she has a minimum of ten (10) days of track and field practice of a least one practice session per day on ten (10) different days (no practice is permitted on Sunday), prior to the date of the first allowable track and field meet.

### **TEAM MEET LIMITATIONS:**

No team shall participate in more than ten (10) meets excluding Association sponsored meets and excluding top ten or top eight meets. An athlete will only be allowed to compete in one top 10/8 track and field meet.

### **INDIVIDUAL MEET LIMITATIONS:**

No individual may participate in an out-of-state invitational only meet unless approved by the MHSA Executive Director. Any out-of-state participation approved under these criteria will count toward the ten-meet limit for the particular student.

### **POLE VAULTERS' WEIGHT VERIFICATION:**

Enclosed is a copy of the pole vaulters' weight verification form that the MHSA requires each school to complete and have on file in the Activities Director's office prior to a pole vaulter's first interscholastic competition (See the 2022-2023 MHSA Handbook #17 on page 99 for a copy of the rule).

### **TRACK AND FIELD RULES INTERPRETER (New this year)**

MHSA Rules Interpreter Liza Dennehy has agreed to serve as the MHSA rules interpreter for track & field. Liza has a long history with Montana track. She has been responsible for the finish line, FAT systems, and computers at Butte track and cross-country meets for 25+ years, and has worked as head FAT official at numerous USATF Montana, MSU, and U of M track & field meets. Liza is a USATF Certified Official and she has served as Referee at multiple Montana state and divisional track & field meets. Her experience and wisdom are a valuable asset. I am honored that she agreed to be the rules interpreter for MHSA and look forward to working with her.

If you have any questions about this information, please call Kip Ryan at the MHSA office.

## **FOOTBALL**

### **INVENTORY AND RECONDITIONED HELMETS**

We trust you have checked your existing supply of football helmets and have determined which helmets must be reconditioned so they are completely safe. The MHSA encourages each coach or athletic director, when considering reconditioning, to contact the manufacturer directly to determine its policies regarding reconditioning and warranties. Companies differ in their helmet policies, and it is wise to check them out carefully. Please feel free to contact the MHSA office for any assistance you may need in contacting reconditioners. Due to time delays, schools should send their helmets for reconditioning as soon as possible.

## **SPIRIT**

### **MAKING A GREAT SPIRIT PROGRAM**

One of the greatest things an athletic director/administrator can do for the spirit program at their school is to offer positive assistance. If your coach is new or young, guide him/her just as you would any other coach.

Although the season has already begun this year, make a note for next year to meet with your spirit coach before the season starts to go over the items you would like them to do to make both of your jobs easier. Review details like the chain of command, academic policies, the school's policies, and eligibility rules if any. Share your expectations with your coach. Decide how you will work together to increase crowd involvement, improve sportsmanship, and maintain crowd control to promote a positive atmosphere at your school. Spirit coaches should be included with other athletic coaches at all coaches' meetings.

Ask the spirit coach for his/her written rules and make certain your coach has a copy of the NFHS Spirit Rules Book and the Spirit Section of the MHSA Handbook. A copy is sent when the coach completes and turns in all MHSA requirements to Amy Bartels at [abartels@mhsa.org](mailto:abartels@mhsa.org). These requirements are mandatory for a coach to attend any post season event. (This would be a great time to talk about hair and jewelry, and what will happen if there is a reported violation.) Ask the coach for his/her practice schedule.

Ask the coach when his/her parent meeting will be held, and then attend. Ask the spirit coach to introduce you so parents see that you are there. When everyone (cheerleaders, dancers, parents, athletic director, and coaches) hear the same information at the same time, everyone is on the same page.

Approve all spirit uniforms, accessories, and music compilations before they are ordered.

It's important for students involved in extracurricular activities to feel they're supported by their administration. As an administrator, we realize you are a very busy person, but if you can, stop in to a practice or two and give them some positive feedback. This will let the cheerleaders and the coaches see the program is important to you and that you're supportive of them.

## **RULES CLINICS**

### **SPRING RULES CLINIC ONLINE**

The MHSA/MOA rules clinics for all activities are presented exclusively online. The baseball, golf, softball, tennis and track and field clinics will be posted on our main website at [www.mhsa.org](http://www.mhsa.org). The clinics will be launched on **March 1<sup>st</sup>**. Coaches and officials must view the clinics prior to **March 15<sup>th</sup> for golf and no later than March 23<sup>rd</sup> for baseball, softball, tennis and track and field** to receive credit.

**All coaches, including the head coach, all assistant coaches and all school-approved volunteer coaches, are required to view the clinic.** Activities directors are also encouraged to view the clinics. Users must complete the registration process at the end of each clinic in order to verify their attendance. If you have questions

about the requirements or about the verification process, please feel free to contact the MHSA office.

## **SPORTS RECORD ARCHIVES**

### **MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS RECORD ARCHIVES**

The MHSA is in the process of gathering information to update our Montana High School Sports Record Archives.

Please take a few minutes to review the sports records by going to the home page of our website [www.mhsa.org](http://www.mhsa.org) and look under quick links for the Montana High School records. If you have knowledge of a record that equals or exceeds the existing marks, list that record on the MHSA sports record book application form, found on our website, and mail the form back to the MHSA office. If you have any questions or concerns, please call Brian Michelotti at 442-6010.

Here is the new timeline for record updates for the MHSA:

- Fall Sport Records - Must be submitted before January 1st. The MHSA will update the records and post on the website on January 15th.
- Winter Sports Records - Must be submitted before April 15th. The MHSA will update the records and post on the website on May 1st.
- Spring Sports Records - Must be submitted before July 1st. The MHSA will update the records and post on the website on July 15th.

All Records received after the deadlines listed above will not be updated until the following year.

## **AIM HIGHER**

### **MONTANA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD / MHSA AIM HIGHER WORKSHOPS**

On January 25<sup>th</sup> a workshop was conducted in Billings at the Hampton Inn. The Facilitators were Nathan Wahl, Billings Skyview, George Warburton, Joliet High School and Scott Wilson from the MHSA. There were 129 students/advisors present in Billings. The Montana Army National Guard is the proud sponsor of this program, and we truly appreciate their support of this longtime MHSA student leadership program.

Billings was the last AIM Higher workshop for 2022-23. Thank you to all of the schools that participated this year and to the facilitators who helped make the workshops a positive experience.

## **ENCLOSURES**

Pole Vaulters' Weight Verification Form #1

Track & Field Rule Books (2)

Track & Field Poster

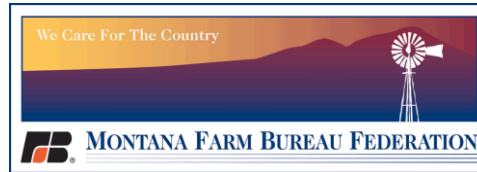
## CORPORATE SPONSORS

### THANK YOU!

Many thanks are extended to the following corporate partners for their enthusiastic support of Montana's student activities. These corporate partnerships directly impact several of our special programs for student recognition and for citizenship, as well as enhancing other services. The MHSA is pleased to recognize these entities for their commitment to activities.



BlueCross BlueShield of Montana



#### MHSA's Mission Statement

*The mission of the Montana High School Association is to assure that the membership is provided with leadership and support in advancing equitable Montana High School Association interscholastic activities for the growth and educational experience for students.*



#### Staff Members

Brian Michelotti, Executive Director  
Kip Ryan, Senior Associate Director  
Scott Wilson, Associate Director  
Amy Bartels, Assistant Director  
Greta Buehler, Assistant Director  
Anna Doran, Administrative Assistant



#### Executive Board Members

Jim Hawbaker, Vice Principal, Billings Central High School (President)  
Doug Reisig, State Superintendent's Appointee, Missoula (Vice-President)  
Luke Kloker, Principal, Fairview High School  
Steve Thennis, Principal, Helena High School  
John Fitzgerald, Superintendent, Red Lodge High School  
Krystal Zentner, MTSBA Appointee, Bridger  
Jimmy Petelis, Governor's Appointee, Billings