

Activities Director Report- Frank Bartsch
4/28/25

Softball, baseball and golf have started and both the softball team and baseball team have played a couple games. We have been able to host a few games that otherwise would have been canceled due to the other school's facilities not being playable, so thank you to the staff that helped get our field ready.

The softball team has started well and have been hitting and getting strong performances on the mound. The baseball team shows a lot of promise, and it will be fun to watch these boys grow and learn the game. The golf team has been practicing primarily indoors but will be getting outside this week. Their first competition is on Monday, 4/28.

Softball participation is staying consistent at 19 players, baseball is at 12 and golf has 3 girls playing. Other students that signed up for golf have pursued other jobs and/or activities this spring.

As far as future activities, our fall volleyball schedule is set and officials have been assigned. The girls will host an 8-team home tournament on 8/22 and will play in road tournaments on 9/20/25 and 10/4/25 as part of their 17-date regular season schedule. Football is waiting on the MSHSL to finish District placement, but it looks like our football cooperative will stay in Section 5 for 2025. Both basketball schedules have been completed and officials notified of dates for home games.

Polar League Update – There is talk that Barnum may be leaving the conference to join a conference further south. If that happens, we most likely will still play them but the games will be non-conference events. Stella Maris Academy in Duluth has expressed interest in joining the Polar League, and their admission will be voted on in the future. Since SMA is a private school, we are waiting on their school representatives to come and speak at one of our AD meetings, so questions can be asked about school size, varsity sport participation and other items. I have scheduled some Floodwood/SMA games in softball and basketball, so we will see what type of competition they will provide in those sports.

On the following pages, I have included some notes from the MN Activities Administrators Conference I attended in late March. The theme of creating belonging is something we would like to foster here at Floodwood, so there were some good strategies discussed that will be utilized going forward.

As always, if you see any issues that need to be brought to my attention or have topics you would like me to include in my monthly reports, please let me know via email at fbartsch@isd698.org or phone at 218.269.9207. The same goes for any questions you may have.
Go Bears!

Thank you.

Frank Bartsch

MNIAAA 2025 – Creating a Culture of Belonging
Conference Notes and Summaries – Frank Bartsch

The following notes provide a summary and some detail of the development sessions I attended at the MNIAAA Conference in late March. With the theme of the conference focusing on creating a belonging culture in our athletic programs, many of the sessions had messages that intertwined with other presentations. My plan is to use some of the strategies discussed over the three days to increase participation and commitment in our athletic programs.

TUESDAY

Student Leadership Development - Jaime Sherwood & Mark Kuisle

To foster student leadership characteristics, athletic administrators and coaches should encourage participation in activities, provide opportunities for leadership roles, offer mentorship, and emphasize skills like communication, developing alliances, and problem-solving.

Detailed breakdown:

1. Create Opportunities and Promote Involvement:
 - a. Encourage participation in student government, clubs, and organizations to gain experience in leadership roles.
 - b. Involve students in sports teams and other after-school activities to foster teamwork and leadership skills.
 - c. Provide opportunities for volunteering and internships to build leadership skills through real-world experiences.
 - d. Encourage students to pursue their passions through projects that allow them to take initiative and lead.
2. Provide Leadership Training and Development:
 - a. Organize training sessions focused on leadership skills, such as communication, decision-making, and problem-solving.
 - b. Pair students with mentors (teachers, staff, or experienced leaders) to provide guidance and support.
 - c. Encourage coaches to use role-playing and simulations to practice leadership skills in a safe and controlled environment.
 - d. Analyze real-world leadership examples and discuss different leadership styles.
3. Emphasize Key Leadership Skills:
 - a. Develop strong communication skills, both written and verbal, to effectively convey ideas and collaborate with others.
 - b. Promote teamwork and collaboration by assigning group projects and encouraging students to work together towards common goals.
 - c. Help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills to address challenges effectively.
 - d. Provide opportunities for students to make decisions and take responsibility for their actions.
 - e. Encourage students to embrace challenges, learn from mistakes, and adapt to changing situations.
 - f. Promote empathy and inclusivity by encouraging students to listen to different perspectives and respect diverse opinions.

4. Provide Feedback and Recognition:

- a. Provide regular feedback on student leadership performance, both positive and constructive, to help them grow.
- b. Recognize and celebrate student leadership achievements to motivate and inspire others.
- c. Encourage students to document their leadership experiences and achievements in a portfolio to highlight their skills and accomplishments.

I would like to implement some of these strategies in Floodwood through a “Captains Council” where we would learn about, and practice, leadership through training, providing opportunities for growth and providing direction for youth leaders.

Creating a Sense of Belonging on Athletic Teams - Rick Tune, Punahou School, Honolulu, HI –

Mr. Tune provided strategies that help increase student participating and commitment, including the strategies below:

- a. Mentors - Pair students with mentors (teachers, staff, or experienced student leaders) to provide guidance and support.
- b. Best Practices – Encourage different ideas for solutions, empower students, encourage open communication, connect students, facilitate growth opportunities, give recognition, team bonding, avoid micromanaging after giving responsibility, create psychological safety, lead by example, make students feel welcome, offer regular feedback, celebrate differences, and strengthen student relationships
- c. Safety Protocols - Encourage open communication, create an inclusive culture, empower students, facilitate growth opportunities, give recognition, create psychological safety, and provide team bonding situations.
- d. Encourage Community – volunteer, attend local events, join other clubs and groups.
- e. Social Emotional and Ethical Learning -fosters a sense of belonging by teaching students skills to understand and manage emotions, build relationships, and make responsible decisions, ultimately creating a more supportive environment.
- f. Athletic Surveys - Athletic surveys can be a valuable tool to gauge and improve a sense of belonging within sports teams and communities by gathering feedback on experiences and perceptions, allowing for targeted interventions and fostering a more inclusive environment.

Supporting Spud Athletes – Dean Haugo - The focus of “Supporting Spud’s” was how AA’s support athletic participants in the areas of Travel, Athletic Development and Mental Health/Performance. Athletics departments/schools should support-

- travel events by communicating clear information and direction toward resources that update families

- athletic development through personalized training plans and skill-building opportunities, and
- mental health/performance by fostering a supportive environment, promoting open communication, and offering resources for stress management and mental well-being.

WEDNESDAY

Region 7A Caucus – 9th Grade Governance and Classification discussion

Eligibility and Enrollment discussion – **Bob Madison MSHSL** - separated couples being discussed as an addition to a category of eligibility

Sports Updates- Erich Martens MSHSL

Small School AD - Doing it All on Your Own – De Hanuman

Small school AD's can excel in their job by being an excellent communicator, understanding with empathy, having a servant mindset, building meaningful relationships, not taking everything personally, seeking help (establishing other stakeholders) and promoting successes

Student Leadership: Fostering Growth and Connectedness – Keelie Sorenson

School connectedness is an important factor in both health and learning. Students who feel connected to their school are: more likely to attend school regularly, stay in school longer, and have higher grades and test scores, less likely to smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, or have sexual intercourse; less likely to carry weapons, become involved in violence, or be injured from dangerous activities such as drinking and driving or not wearing seat belts; and less likely to have emotional problems, suffer from eating disorders, or experience suicidal thoughts or attempts.

Athletic Directors, Coaches and Teachers can foster growth and connectedness by: creating processes that engage students, families, and communities and that facilitate academic achievement; providing opportunities for families to be actively involved in their children's academic and school life; providing students with the academic, emotional, and social skills they need to engage in school; using effective classroom management and teaching methods to foster a positive learning environment; participating in professional development opportunities to enhance abilities to meet the diverse needs of students; and promoting open communication, trust, and caring among school staff, families, and community partners.

Stress Management and Mental Health Among HS Athletes in MN – Dr Kiristen Robinson

Close to 60% of all high school athletes have experienced at least a moderate level of stress due to their sport, and 25% reported stress negatively affecting their performance. A lot of athletes would have sought help for their stress but did not, because of lack of knowledge regarding mental health facilities and stigmas surrounding mental health problems. Unaddressed, stress in athletics may cause problems in the future such as anxiety and depression. Tools to help student-athletes manage stress could include: helping athletes recognize their feelings and emotions; encouraging a support system (family, teacher, coach, medical professional); make them aware of potential triggers of anxiety or stress; have them work on coping strategies. (breathing exercises, meditation, and mindfulness); and letting them know it's OK to take a break, if needed, to tend to mental health.

MNIAAA Awards Banquet

THURSDAY

MNIAAA Annual Meeting

AD Advisory Board

MSHSL Head Coaches Course for AD's