



**MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
2023 ANNUAL MEETING**

**Monday, January 16, 2023
Holiday Inn Missoula Downtown
Missoula, Montana**

PROPOSALS

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Presented by: Missoula Hellgate High School

1. PROPOSAL TO ADD A PRIVATE SCHOOL MULTIPLIER BY-LAW

Proposal: (Include all deletions as well as additions. List by article, section and page numbers. Lima High School proposes to add a private school multiplier to By-Law, Article X, Athletic Classification and Districting. Member schools that are considered private under OPI's definition or non-public schools shall use a 1.5 multiplier of enrollment when determining enrollment numbers for classification and districting.

Rationale: According to NFHS there are 21 states that use either a multiplier or competitive balancing formula for private schools. Many of the private MHSA member schools are located in relatively urban (by Montana standards of urban) areas of Montana providing a more competitive enrollment/recruiting/selection process. An example of the need for this can be found in Class C. Between 2015 and fall 2022 one private/nonpublic school has won 33.3% of all the state championships for Volleyball, Basketball, Golf, Track and Field and Cross Country combined. This can, in part, be attributed to the enrollment/recruiting/selection process for private schools. Some private schools across Montana choose to play up a classification for the competition. This proposed multiplier does not impact their ability to continue to play up a classification as allowed under the current By-Law, Article X.

Fiscal Note: (if any) The only fiscal note would be the different travel times for teams. This could be more or less than the current situation based on the location of the private school.

2. PROPOSAL TO AMEND COOPERATIVE SPONSORSHIP OF ACTIVITIES

Proposal:
Section (35)

Add D

D. Cooperative sponsorship of any activity by two or more-member schools are permitted in one of the following categories:

1. Combined Cooperative Program: Students from more than one school combine to compete as one team. The combined teams' classification is determined by combined enrollments of the member schools involved. This program applies to football, volleyball, soccer, basketball, softball and baseball.

If the combined enrollments of the schools involved in a combined cooperative program exceeds the minimum number of the next higher classification the combined cooperative team will compete at that higher classification in that activity.

2. Collective Cooperative Program: Students from more than one school share resources, but must compete as representatives of their home school at district, divisional and state competition. School classification remains the same for the individual students. This program applies to cross country, wrestling, swimming, golf, tennis, track, debate and speech.

The following sections the language remains the same, but has been relettered.

E. To be eligible to participate in MHSA sanctioned activities schools must have an enrollment at or below the maximum classification enrollment. New applications must be filed with MHSA by February 1st of each year. The enrollment count will meet or exceed this number for two consecutive years in order to be mandated that the cooperative contract will no longer be allowed.

Reletter from here down because of additions:

F. To be eligible to participate in six-player football, schools must be Class C and have a high school enrollment at or below 65 students. No football cooperative contracts may exceed an enrollment of 65 students when two or more participating member schools are combined (Exception – See Article X Section (2) 2.2). New applications must be filed with MHSA by November 15th of each year. The enrollment count will meet or exceed this number for two consecutive years in order to be mandated to switch to eight-player football.

G. Application forms and a list of details that describe district to district issues affecting cooperative sponsorship will be made available by the MHSA to school districts upon request. The activity fees payment as outlined in Article I Section (2) 2.1 must be paid upon approval of the co-op.

H. Refunds will be made, upon request, up to the date of the first allowable contest of the activity.

I. Cooperative implementation of an activity by two or more member schools will be considered under the following conditions:

1. Schools are to be located in the same geographic area and combined enrollments will be used as a guideline.

2. Making activities available for students that would not be available in their home school if cooperative contracting did not occur.

3. The school board of the participating member schools must jointly make the application to the MHSA Executive Board.

4. A resolution from each school board stating the purpose for sponsoring a joint activity must be submitted to the MHSA office in a timely manner.

5. Decisions on all applications will be determined by the Executive Director subject to appeal to the MHSA Executive Board.

6. A school may not enter into any cooperative sponsorship whereby students are sent to two or more schools in the same activity.

7. When schools from two different classifications co-op, they will compete in the higher classification of that activity.

8. When the intent is not to improve a particular school's win-loss record.

9. All other related procedures not specifically controlled or directed by the MHSA will be the responsibility of the schools named on the cooperative contract.

10. Both schools must be in compliance with the Ridgeway Settlement Agreement, specifically in terms of the number of sports offerings for each gender.

11. The co-op may be terminated by the MHSA Executive Board.

Rationale:

There are currently no standards or guidance for MHSA Schools to follow when deciding how and when to Co-op sports programs. This would eliminate unnecessary Co-ops for individual sports (Collective Cooperative Program) in the postseason.

3. PROPOSAL TO APPOINT A COMMITTEE TO STUDY BOYS AND GIRLS LACROSSE

Proposal:

TO APPOINT A COMMITTEE TO STUDY BOYS AND GIRLS LACROSSE AS A MHSA SPORT

Missoula County Public Schools proposes the following in accordance with the Rules and Regulations, Section (24) Policy, page 25 of the current MHSA Handbook:

Section (24) POLICY ON INTERSCHOOL ACTIVITIES

When any group which sponsors a high school activity requests consideration by the MHSA which may lead to direct supervision and control of this activity, or when the MHSA feels any activity is presenting a problem serious enough to merit study, then the MHSA, at its annual meeting, should authorize the Executive Board to appoint a special committee to thoroughly study each activity and to present its recommendations concerning this activity at the next annual meeting of the Association for consideration and approval or adoption by the Association.

That the MHSA authorize the Executive Board to appoint a special committee to study Boys and Girls Lacrosse as a MHSA sanctioned sport. Recommendations will be presented at the 2024 MHSA Annual Meeting.

Rationale:

Lacrosse is one of the fastest growing sports in the United States. A study conducted by the Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) showed a dramatic increase in participation from 2012-2017, with continued increases headed into the pandemic in 2020. Lacrosse is currently sanctioned by high school associations in 25 states, with the most recent additions in Ohio, Illinois and Utah. Lacrosse is supported by the NFHS, which has reported an increase in high school sanctioning of 24% for Boys Lacrosse and 28.3% for Girls Lacrosse from 2012-2017. The NCAA has seen a similar increase in sanctioned programs, 25.8% increase for Men's Lacrosse and 32.5% for Women's Lacrosse, during the same time period. The University of Montana and Montana State University both have lacrosse teams in the MCLA (Men's Collegiate Lacrosse Association) as well as the WCLA (Women's Collegiate Lacrosse Associates). The University of Montana men's team played for the National Championship in May 2022 in Round Rock, TX. MCLA teams are student-run club programs; WCLA teams are also student-run club programs, but the WCLA league is under the umbrella of the national governing body, USA Lacrosse.

We are experiencing the same growth in Montana. Currently every AA city has a lacrosse club providing opportunities for youth and high school participants. Sanctioning lacrosse at the high school level would support a continued national effort to grow the game of lacrosse.

4. PROPOSAL TO APPOINT A COMMITTEE TO STUDY ESPORTS AS A MHSA ACTIVITY

Proposal:

Missoula County Public Schools proposes the following in accordance with the Rules and Regulations, Section (24) Policy, page 25 of the current MHSA Handbook:

Section (24) POLICY ON INTERSCHOOL ACTIVITIES

When any group which sponsors a high school activity requests consideration by the MHSA which may lead to direct supervision and control of this activity, or when the MHSA feels any activity is presenting a problem serious enough to merit study, then the MHSA, at its annual meeting, should authorize the Executive Board to appoint a special committee to thoroughly study each activity and to present its recommendations concerning this activity at the next annual meeting of the Association for consideration and approval or adoption by the Association.

That the MHSA authorize the Executive Board to appoint a special committee to study eSports as a MHSA sanctioned sport. Recommendations will be presented at the 2024 MHSA Annual Meeting.

Rationale:

Esports is one of the fastest growing after school programs and activities in the United States. In the past four years, esports has experienced tremendous growth and is now ranked in the top 20 sports in terms of student participation as reported by the NFHS. Esports is officially sanctioned by 20 state associations, including Colorado (CHSAA), and Mississippi (MHSAA), which allows for widespread adoption in those states. Esports is uniquely positioned for after school programs and activities and reaches students who aren't engaged with traditional extracurriculars. According to a study done by PlayVS, a national K-12 esports provider, 45% of participating students reported that this is their first after school activity or sport. Upwards of 70 percent of esports coaches see improvement in socialization, communication, and leadership skills. For one esports provider, Montana has had 13 schools participate in the current school year, and compete against 600 other high school teams within their timezone. Schools such as Boise State University and New Mexico State offer scholarships for students to compete under a collegiate banner. With the gaming industry surpassing 200 billion dollars, exposing students to esports can help them explore careers in engineering, marketing, game design, and audio engineering.

Montana has experienced growth in esports, with schools building lasting programs for years to come. Sanctioning esports at the high school level would allow for exponential growth, providing opportunities for students that aren't typically engaged by traditional extracurriculars.

Fiscal