



MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION  
2012 ANNUAL MEETING

Monday, January 16, 2012  
Billings Hotel & Convention Center  
Billings, Montana

PROPOSALS

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## 1. PROPOSAL TO AMEND MEMBERSHIP BY-LAW

Manhattan Christian High School proposes the following addition to By-Laws, Article I, Section (1) Membership on page 11 of the current MHSA Handbook in reference to MHSA membership:

- 1.4 A non-member school may petition to receive Associate Member status in order to receive sanctioning to compete in out-of-state competitions. Associate member schools will not be assigned a district schedule and will be ineligible for instate postseason play as well as in-state multi-school events. All member fees will apply. Associate members must submit schedules for out-of-state competitions, that require sanctioning, at least 60 days in advance.**

### Rationale:

Most state associations have some form of associate membership that allows private schools to receive sanctioning for parochial system tournaments. Since many private schools have become sanctioned by their associations, it has become important for all private schools to be sanctioned in order to play each other at tournaments. Since there is currently no such provision in Montana, the only option for a Seventh-day Adventist or Jewish school is to become a full member and then request tournament scheduling accommodations for Friday night and Saturday games. An Associate Member provision will provide a path for such schools to receive sanctioning for out-of-state parochial tournaments thus avoiding disruption to MHSA tournaments. This amendment will also generate income for the association through dues in exchange for minimal services provided.

## 2. PROPOSAL TO AMEND PARTICIPATION BY-LAW

Bigfork High Schools proposes the following amendment to By-Laws, Article I, Section (1) Membership on page 11 of the current MHSA Handbook in reference to participation:

- ~~1.2 Any member school will not be permitted to participate in any interschool athletic contest with a school, club team or other groups (teams) that are not accredited by the State Board of Public Education in the state of Montana and, hence, not eligible for membership in the MHSA, if more than two schools would be participating in the event. If a member school does participate in an interschool contest with a non-accredited school, club team or other groups (teams) and more than two schools are involved, the member school or schools will be subject to penalties under Article VIII.~~

- 1.2 Non-member schools can compete against member schools in any regular season contest or regular season invitational tournament/meet if the non-member school is an established 9-12 high school. This will not include post season interscholastic athletic competitions or include participation by club teams or groups not established as a high school.**

### Rationale:

To allow non MHSA schools to participate in regular season track and golf invitationals. It would be a benefit, especially in Golf, as teams are looking for more meets and there need to be at least 3 teams involved for scores to be able to qualify for state tournament.

This is just for regular season events.

### 3. PROPOSAL TO ALLOW WRESTLING PRACTICE BY EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS

Choteau High School proposes the following amendments to By-Laws, Article II, Section (5) Students Below Ninth Grade on pages 20-21 of the current MHSA Handbook:

- 5.1 No student who is enrolled in a grade below the ninth shall be eligible to participate in an Association Contest, except as noted in 5.3 or eighth grade students meeting the following requirements:
  - a. Eighth grade students may play on a high school volleyball, track relay and/or basketball teams. ***Eighth grade students may practice with the high school wrestling program.***
  - b. Permission for eighth grade participation ***or practice*** must be requested by the school and authorization granted by the Executive Director of the MHSA. Once granted approval, those eighth grade participants are eligible to participate in varsity and JV competition ***for volleyball, track relay and/or basketball teams. Eighth grade wrestlers may practice with the varsity or JV team(s).***
  - c. Any eighth grade student allowed to participate ***or to practice*** will have eight semesters of high school eligibility remaining.
  - d. All eighth grade students participating ***or practicing*** must meet the academic requirements.

#### Rationale:

Our concern is having a wrestler in a lower weight class (98,105, & 112) paired up at practice with a wrestler from a higher weight class (140 & 145). Pairing wrestlers from different weight classes poses a safety concern and puts our lower weight class wrestlers at risk of getting injured. In the past several years, we have needed wrestling partners for our lower weight class wrestlers to protect their safety. Even when we have had two wrestlers in the lower weight class, this has been a concern when one of the wrestlers can't practice due to illness or injury. This proposal is a safety request; NOT a ploy to have Jr. high wrestlers participating on the high school wrestling team.

### 4. PROPOSAL TO ELIMINATE MASTER BASKETBALL SCHEDULING

The MHSA Executive Board proposes the following amendment to Basketball, I. General Rules and Regulations on page 98 of the MHSA Handbook:

- (11) ~~Master Basketball schedules are for varsity competition only. Any deviation must be approved by the MHSA Executive Director.~~
- (11) ***In Classes AA, A, B and C it is the responsibility of each MHSA member school to develop their school's basketball schedule for each school year.***

#### Rationale:

In 1985 an MHSA Regional Basketball Committee was formed to address MHSA member schools' basketball scheduling and the cost related to each school's basketball travel. The committee developed a regional basketball schedule, which was started in the 1987-88 school year, where schools would play other schools within a 100 mile radius, but may not play all the schools within their conference. With the 2004-05 request by MHSA member schools to play other schools in their conference two (2) times, if possible, the original intent of reducing costs for MHSA member schools by developing a regional

basketball schedule has been lost. Many member schools now drive through a school's community to play a contest with a different school.

Several schools do not play other members of their district or division until tournament time.

Schools are not always listed in the same sequence on the master basketball schedule thus causing games to be played during the week and not only on weekends. School time is lost with more weekday games.

The Master Basketball Committee is the only MHSA Committee that develops schedules for MHSA member schools.

The Master Basketball Scheduling Committee has worked very hard to meet the basketball scheduling requests of the MHSA member schools. However, the task of creating a workable schedule while accommodating all requests is increasingly difficult, in part because of the following factors:

- Schools move from one classification to another.
- Schools move from one conference to another.
- Schools are requesting cooperative sponsorship agreements more frequently.
- Cooperative sponsorship agreements and other factors can create realignment issues, in some cases resulting in 9, 10 or 11 team conferences.
- Concerns from schools about scheduling, which are unique to basketball because in other sports schools develop their own schedules.

The vast majority of schools request a schedule consisting of sixteen games, which allows little or no flexibility in the scheduling process.

Fiscal Note:

There will not be any fiscal difference to the MHSA.

**5. PROPOSAL TO RESCIND ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR MAJOR PERFORMING GROUPS**

Malta High School proposes that the academic eligibility rule for major performing groups in music which are in effect for 2011-2012 be maintained, and that the academic eligibility standard approved by the MHSA Executive Board to align major performing groups with all other activities in 2012-2013 be rescinded.

2011-12 Eligibility:

Students in major performing groups must be enrolled in the corresponding music class in order to participate in the district music festival.

2012-13 Eligibility:

Students in major performing groups must meet the same academic standards as state music participants, forensics participants, and athletes. A student must be enrolled in twenty hours per week and in regular attendance ten hours per week at the school where the student participates. A home school student is not eligible to participate for an MHSA member school. A student must have received a passing grade and received credit in at least twenty periods of prepared class work or its equivalent in the last previous semester.

## Rationale:

Malta High School respectfully requests consideration of keeping the current, successful District Festival eligibility rules for bands, choirs and orchestras in place.

A thorough rationale was provided by the MHSA Music Committee when the current rule was adopted more than fifteen years ago. From our perspective, the arrangement has worked well all those years, and the rationale originally provided is still valid. Eligibility for major performing groups should be defined as enrolled in a curricular class.

District Music Festival, as it applies to bands, orchestras and choirs, represents a nexus of academics and activities. A performing group's performance at the District Music Festival is the most rigorous academic authentic assessment available to school music groups in Montana. Far from being "festive," the event provides a practical, affordable forum in which students and teachers are not only assessed on their current level of musical achievement, but also receive expert advice on how to improve. A panel of trained professional adjudicators assesses the group's performance using a rubric designed specifically for the type of group (band, orchestra, choir, brass solo, string solo, etc.). All MHSA certified adjudicators have degrees in music, most have advanced degrees.

Very few administrators have the background to provide technical assistance to their music teachers, or understand how to evaluate their music program based on state and national standards. Input from District Festival adjudicators is one of the few ways directors are introduced to effective assessment and teaching techniques that most administrators are unable to offer.

Given the extraordinary amount of brain research linking academic success to music making, it is clear that a band, choir or orchestra's District Festival performance is the culmination of a rigorous academic unit which begins when the music is selected, probably in February, and ends only after the adjudication sheets have been reviewed and suggestions for improvement are implemented.

There is a fundamental issue with attempting to apply extracurricular rules to such a clearly curricular process. District Music Festival is unlike any other MHSA activity. There is no other academic area in which, if a student enrolls, he/she is also considered an extracurricular participant because of one performance at one annual event. Schools are required to enter their major performing groups in District Festival, if they have paid the appropriate fees, or face MHSA sanction. Almost exclusively, directors require students to perform with the group for district festival as a grade requirement. To music education, the festival performance is analogous to turning in a term paper, or presenting a science project. However, it is unique in that the entire group must present their project at the same time to make it a valid educational experience. Administrators should be aware that there are a number of students who would choose *not* to attend the festival if attendance were not required.

Denying a student participation in the most valid authentic assessment of the school year because of poor performance in other classes is not a student-centered decision. To follow the analogy above, not to allow a student to take his unit history test, even if he needs to ride a bus to a different town to take the test, because of poor math grades makes no sense.

And it is not just the festival performance that is affected. What is the director to do with an ineligible student during the six weeks or so of intense rehearsals leading up to the festival, if the student will not be part of the performance? The music must be rehearsed as it will be performed, not rehearsed with parts (musicians) that will not be present during the actual performance. Keep in mind, unlike a sports team, there are no substitutes to bring in off the bench in a music group.

If the school band has only two drummers, but both are deemed ineligible to perform at the District Festival, it is entirely conceivable that the entire band would not be able to perform because the integrity of the music is lost. Imagine a snappy march with no drums. Or, the director could choose music with no drum parts, but what becomes of the two drummers for the six weeks of rehearsals? That scenario affects

*all* students' learning and could easily invalidate the assessment process, the very reason festivals exist, or create legal issues.

MHSA eligibility rules apply to students auditioning and participating in All-State groups, and students who enter district festival as a soloist or small ensemble with the opportunity to participate at State Festival. Those are clearly extracurricular--as the term suggests, more than the curriculum calls for. But the band, choir or orchestra festival performance is clearly curricular.

The issue boils down to being able to tell a parent why their son can go to the music festival on Friday, but not the track meet on Saturday. MHSA's mantra has always been "local control." If an administrator feels reasonable people will not be able to understand the rationale, a school may supersede the MHSA rule and apply local control. But please do not impose that situation upon the entire state.

To quote Thomas Jefferson, "*There is nothing more unequal than the equal treatment of unequal people.*"