

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

January 20, 2021 Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association



Joint Legislative Oversight
& Sunset Committee

History: Prior to 1900, athletic associations were formed within Delaware schools. These associations were open to any student who wanted to join and initially run by students with faculty guidance. As participation grew, schools began to take initiative in athletics supervision by using faculty to manage programs. From 1921 to 2002, Delaware’s athletic association was restructured or renamed several times. In 2002, JLOSC voted to sunset the then-existing Delaware Secondary School Athletic Association (“DSSAA”) with the General Assembly reestablishing DIAA under DDOE.

Purpose and Participation: DIAA strives to provide leadership for education-based middle and secondary school interscholastic athletics by prioritizing health and safety, academics, leadership, and sportsmanship. As of September 2019, membership in DIAA consists of 62 high schools and 54 middle schools across all 3 counties. During the 2017-2018 school year, 30,034 students (16,217 males and 13,817 females) participated in interscholastic athletics at the high school level. The current rate of female participation stands at 46%, exceeding the national rate of 42.2%.

DIAA Board of Directors: The Board of consists of 19 voting members and 1 non-voting member. Representation includes superintendents, principals, nonpublic schools, school boards, athletic directors, coaches, DDOE, a physician, and the public with all 3 counties represented.

Complaint, disciplinary, and eligibility processes are set by regulations with the Board authorized to impose penalties for violations. A waiver process exists when special circumstances allow for an exception to the rules and regulations. Decisions made by DIAA and its Board are appealable to the State Board of Education.

Staff and Funding: DIAA is staffed by an Executive Director, a Coordinator of Interscholastic Athletics, and an administrative assistant. 22 standing committees (17 are sport-specific) have 250 volunteer staffers to manage DIAA state tournaments and advise the Board. DIAA operations are financially supported through ticket sales with the revenue deposited into the Secondary Interscholastic Athletic Fund.

Challenges:

- Non-DIAA sports organizations.
- Escalating State Tournament costs and decrease in certified officials.
- DIAA staff size.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- Increase staff size.
- Development of a Strategic Plan.
- Structure of the Committees and Board management.
- Clarity of regulations.
- Financial analysis and fee restructuring.

For additional information, please refer to the [2020 DIAA Report](#).

2021 UPDATES

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Board Membership/Staff Update

August 2019 saw the retirement of DIAA Executive Director, Tommie Neubauer. In October 2019, his replacement stepped down after two months.¹ On January 28, 2020, the DIAA Board of Directors and Secretary of Education Susan Bunting announced DIAA's Coordinator of Interscholastic Athletics, Donna Polk, as the new Executive Director of DIAA.² In June 2020, Stephanie Mark was named Coordinator of Interscholastic Athletics. Currently, there is a staff vacancy for the Administrative Assistant. With only 3 full-time staff positions, DIAA is moving quickly to fill the Administrative Assistant position. On January 19, 2021, the Delaware State Senate confirmed the appointments of Dr. Amelia Hodges, Superintendent of Polytech School District, and Dorrell Green, Superintendent of Red Clay Consolidated School District to the DIAA Board of Directors. Currently, 7 Board members are serving on terms that expired in 2019 while 4 are serving on terms that expired in 2020. DIAA staff continues to work with the Governor's office on the appointment process.

Emergency Regulations 1010 and 1011

Regulation 1010: On June 24, 2020, the DIAA Board of Directors adopted an emergency regulation to govern interscholastic athletics during the State of Emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Approved by the State Board of Education, Regulation 1010 went into effect on July 1, 2020 for a term of 120 days, with the option to renew once for a period not exceeding 60 days. Following modifications to the Governor's State of Emergency Order and the receipt of public petitions, the Board made several amendments to the emergency regulations, all of which were approved by the State Board of Education. Under Emergency Regulation 1010, the DIAA fall sports season, originally slated for a shortened December start, began on September 28 with guidance from the DIAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee on proper guidelines for ensuring student safety. Due to the shortened football season, DIAA member school, Salesianum, encountered scheduling issues that would have disqualified the team from meeting playoff requirements. The Board declined to eliminate automatic playoff bids, which would have allowed the football conferences flexibility in scheduling. Salesianum appealed the Board's automatic bid decision to the State Board of Education, but later withdrew, as several games were able to be added to the schedule.

*Regulation 1011*³: Upon the expiration of Emergency Regulation 1010, DIAA, with State Board of Education approval, adopted Emergency Regulation 1011 in December 2020 to govern interscholastic athletics throughout the rest of the COVID-19 pandemic including pre-participation, physical examination requirements, suspension of activities, four Return to Play stages, dates for the fall, winter, and spring 2020-2021 sport seasons, and sport-specific requirements to protect the health and safety of student athletes. Any amendments require State Board of Education approval.

¹ <https://delawarestatenews.net/sport/cimaglia-exits-as-diaa-head-two-months-into-job/>.

² <https://www.nfhs.org/articles/polk-named-diaa-executive-director/>.

³ <https://regulations.delaware.gov/AdminCode/title14/1000/1011.shtml>

FACT SHEET

March 13, 2020 JLOSC Review of DIAA



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Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association (“DIAA”) Overview

- ➔ Promote the educational significance of interscholastic athletics & provide leadership by prioritizing health and safety, academics, leadership, & sportsmanship.
- ➔ Members schools participate under DIAA's regulatory authority.
 - 62 high schools & 54 middle schools.
 - Across all 3 counties.
 - Nonpublic schools can become members.
- ➔ Staffed by Executive Director, Coordinator of Interscholastic Athletics, administrative assistant.
- ➔ Financially supported through ticket sales with all revenue being deposited to the Secondary Interscholastic Athletic Fund.

DIAA Board of Directors

- ➔ 19 voting members and 1 non-voting member:
 - Representation: superintendents, principals, nonpublic schools, school boards, athletic directors, coaches, DDOE, a physician, and the public.
 - All 3 counties represented in membership.
- ➔ 22 standing committees with 250 volunteer staffers to manage DIAA state tournaments and advise Board.
 - 17 sport-specific committees
 - Rules and Regulations, Sportsmanship. Officials, Unified Sports, & Sports Medicine.
- ➔ Complaint, disciplinary, & eligibility processes set by regulations.
 - Board is authorized to impose penalties for violations.
- ➔ Waiver process when special circumstances allow for an exception to the rules and regulations.

Opportunities for Improvement

- ➔ Develop strategic plan to guide the Association, Board, and Executive Director to utilize resources more effectively and improve function.
- ➔ Streamline Board processes to use the time during meetings more efficiently.
- ➔ Update the regulations to provide clarity to member schools and ensure compliance.
- ➔ Review and restructure the current fee schedule. Fines have never been updated and no member school has been fined over the last several years.

DIAA Participation Summary*

| Sport | Athletes | Schools |
|-----------------|---------------|---------|
| Field Hockey | 1525 | 51 |
| Soccer | 1701 | 54 |
| Cross Country | 881 | 52 |
| Cheer | 1009 | 39 |
| Basketball | 1147 | 59 |
| Wrestling | 12 | 8 |
| Indoor Track | 868 | 40 |
| Swimming/Diving | 812 | 41 |
| Softball | 1082 | 48 |
| Crew | 121 | 5 |
| Golf | 126 | 32 |
| Lacrosse | 1140 | 35 |
| Outdoor Track | 1279 | 48 |
| Tennis | 566 | 36 |
| Volleyball | 1623 | 56 |
| TOTAL | 13,817 | |



*2017-2018

| Sport | Athletes | Schools |
|-----------------|---------------|---------|
| Football | 2777 | 45 |
| Soccer | 2104 | 55 |
| Cross Country | 1012 | 52 |
| Cheer | 26 | 8 |
| Basketball | 1653 | 59 |
| Wrestling | 1040 | 46 |
| Indoor Track | 892 | 32 |
| Swimming/Diving | 716 | 40 |
| Baseball | 1525 | 55 |
| Crew | 86 | 3 |
| Golf | 407 | 49 |
| Lacrosse | 1767 | 48 |
| Outdoor Track | 1603 | 47 |
| Tennis | 455 | 33 |
| Volleyball | 154 | 8 |
| TOTAL | 16,217 | |