

September 2010

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PUBLIC LIAISON ADVISORY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

To: The Florida High School Athletic Association Board of Directors
The Florida House of Representatives Education K-12 Committee
The Florida Senate Education Committee

The Florida High School Athletic Association's Public Liaison Advisory Committee would like to thank the Florida Legislature and the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) for the opportunity to work within our given responsibilities (1) to act as a conduit for the general public to have input into the decision-making process of the FHSAA, (2) to conduct public hearings in which interested parties may address issues, rules and administrative issues of the FHSAA, and (3) to conduct an annual evaluation of the organization as a whole.

The Report of the FHSAA Public Liaison Advisory Committee is as follows:

FHSAA Administrative Staff: The FHSAA Staff continues to work diligently with the member schools to make the athletic experience for our student athletes the best in the nation.

The Handbook Revision Task Force has completed the revision of the FHSAA Bylaw and Policy handbook. It now includes all sport specific manuals.

Compliance reviews: The FHSAA conducted on-site visits at seven second-year schools around the state as per Bylaw 3.4.1.2 (b) to evaluate the schools' readiness to go from provisional membership to full membership. The seven schools were: Brooks-DeBartolo (Tampa), Diamond Community (Palm Bay), Village Academy (Delray Beach), Eagle Charter (Lauderdale Lakes), International Studies Charter (Miami), Barrington Christian (Florida City), and Oasis (Cape Coral). After conducting interviews and inspecting athletic facilities, it was determined all seven schools demonstrated adequate knowledge of FHSAA rules and procedures. They were recommended to the FHSAA staff to be elevated to full members at the June Board meeting.

Board of Directors: The Board of Directors positions, as established by the Legislature, provides a good cross-section that takes into account gender and ethnic diversity of groups with an interest in high school athletics, all bringing different perspectives and insights to the Board. The Board has a representative balance of the member public and private schools. These elected positions can be principals or athletic directors. Appointed positions to the Board provide the perspective of school boards and superintendents, and the public. This Board weighs all the issues brought before it and tries to make decisions in the best interest of all student-athletes and schools across the entire State of Florida.

The Representative Assembly continues to give member schools, as well as coaches, athletic directors, school boards, superintendents, parents, the media and members of the public through the various committees and the Board of Directors a venue to propose changes to the bylaws. Representatives discuss and debate bylaw changes the day before the vote is taken on the proposed bylaw change. There is representation from all parts of the state and the effect of the bylaw change on each region can be considered. The Commissioner has done an outstanding job in informing and ensuring the participation of member schools, both public and private, in all parts of the state in this process. The Representative Assembly again ran smoothly and information was in the hands of member schools in advance of the meeting so delegates could obtain opinions from their legislative division and make wise and thoughtful decisions on all the changes.

The Representative Assembly as created by the Florida Legislature in 1997, has been a great forum for member schools to participate in the governance, policies and operation of their association. As a result there is less dissention and dissatisfaction among the member schools, the media and the public. The image of the FHSAA is more positive, responsive and accessible than it was prior to the 1997 legislative reorganization.

Sectional Appeals Committees are comprised of seven-member committees. These members consist of: 2-Public School, 1-Private School, 1-Private appointed, 1-appointed by FASA, 1-at-large, and 1-Legal Profession, such as an Attorney, Judge, etc. who will serve as the Chair as mandated by Florida Legislature in 2009. The creation of the Sectional Appeals Committee in the 1997 legislation seems to have resolved most of the complaints from the public, parents and member schools about the hardship hearings. Placing the majority of the decision-making process required for hardships at the local level in the hands of the Sectional Appeals Committee and creating an appeal process, has resulted in fewer cases being heard by the FHSAA Board.

The Public Liaison Advisory Committee is now listed with the other committees on the FHSAA website. The Public Liaison Advisory Committee is the only conduit for the public to voice concerns to the FHSAA. PLAC now has a direct e-mail link to the committee members listed on the membership and governance page. The PLAC is a committee for the public.

The FHSAA Public Liaison Advisory Committee in the four administrative regions of the state held Public Hearings during January 2010. The hearings were advertised on the FHSAA website, and through member schools. Section 3's concerns were shared with the members of the PLAC, a response sent to the concerned party and forwarded to the appropriate FHSAA Staff members. Sections 1, 2 and 4 had no public concerns.

Awards Programs: The FHSAA launched a new awards program during the 2006-07 school years. The Academic Team Champion awards program recognizes the school in each sport whose team's cumulative grade point average is the highest in its classification and the Association overall. The FHSAA continues to conduct the FHSAA Academic All-State, Fred E. Rozelle Sportsmanship Award, All-Sports Award programs, and operates the Florida High School Athletic Hall of Fame. These various awards programs are a positive and prestigious

way to recognize student-athletes, teams and other individuals who have excelled or made a significant contribution to high school sports in Florida. These awards set the standards in high schools athletics.

The Academic All-State Awards Banquet is always a highlight of the year for coaches, students, parents, and administrators. Each school can nominate two students for the award based on their academic and athletic achievement, community service, honors, and club participation. The student then submits an essay on a topic chosen each year by the FHSAA. Twenty-four students, 12 girls and 12 boys, are chosen and invited to the banquet to receive their award and cash. Out of those, a boy and a girl are chosen to receive the Scholar Athlete of the Year award and a larger sum of cash. It is an honor just to be nominated and recognized for this award. It is so encouraging to see such outstanding young people who have demonstrated character, determination, discipline and commitment throughout their high school years.

Lawsuits continue to be addressed. Placing the majority of the decision-making process required for hardships at the local level in the hands of the Sectional Appeals Committee puts more pressure on the schools to abide by the decisions of their peers than to sue the FHSAA.

Conclusion: The FHSAA Public Liaison Advisory Committee believes that the operation, management, committees, Board of Directors and staff of the FHSAA are working hard to maintain the integrity of high school sports. The decisions of the FHSAA are carefully considered and are made in the best interest of the student-athlete and member schools. The PLAC commends the FHSAA on the positive direction and changes the organization has made and would like to see the FHSAA continue to work with the member schools to keep athletics affordable in the state.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Blumer, CAA
PLAC Chairman

Cc: FHSAA Board of Directors
PLAC members