

September 2011

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Florida High School Athletic Association
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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.

Compliance reviews: The FHSAA conducted on-site visits at 10 second-year "Provisional Member" schools around the state as per Bylaw 3.4.1.2 (b), to evaluate school's readiness to be elevated from provisional membership to full membership. The 10 schools were American Prep (Davie), Archimedean (Miami), Choice Prep (Miami), Gold Coast (West Palm Beach), Hialeah Educational, Mater Academy East (Miami), North Florida Educational (Jacksonville), Pepin Academy (Tampa), Somerset Charter (Homestead), and Woods Haven (Dania Beach). After conducting interviews and inspecting the schools, it was determined that eight of the schools demonstrated adequate knowledge of FHSAA rules and procedures, in addition to meeting all of the legal and fiduciary responsibilities required. One school was recommended to have its provisional period extended by one year (Hialeah Educational), and another school was recommended for non-renewal of membership (Choice Prep). The eight schools that demonstrated a working knowledge of the FHSAA were recommended to the Board of Directors at its June meeting for evaluation to full membership. Additionally, Cornerstone (Gainesville) had its interview the year prior and was deemed proficient at that time for full membership, but was not recommended for full membership until June of 2011. Also, second year school Victory Prep (Orlando) was recommended for non-renewal of membership without a site visit.

Parent surveys: FHSAA conducted a parent survey on Bylaw 9.2.4 and will use the feedback provided by participants to disseminate additional materials and information, which will benefit parents and students alike. Bylaw 9.2.4 states:

Participation in Non-School Athletic Activities Affiliated with a School: *The FHSAA supports and endorses Florida's philosophy of school of choice for academic purposes. However, if a student chooses to attend or participate for a school, public or private, in which the student participated in any non-school athletic activities affiliated with a school that the student does not attend or did not attend in the previous school year (in the case of home education students, does not participate for or did not participate for) and then establishes his/her school residence (in the case of home education students, he/she participates) at the affiliated school within one calendar year of such participation will not be eligible in the new school until the student has been in attendance at that school for one calendar year. Establishing such school residence is bona fide evidence that the student is attending the school in whole or in part for athletic reasons.*

Bullying: FHSAA is being proactive with the concerns of bullying that have been brought to its attention. FHSAA is taking measures to assure that student athletes requesting school transfers for reasons of bullying are in accordance with State Statutes. Principals from transferring schools will have an opportunity to respond to the filed report.

Concussions: FHSAA has implemented a comprehensive Concussion Action Plan for required use by all Members Schools and their Coaches through the NFHS. This includes every head coach, and every paid assistant coach to enroll and pass the National Federation of High Schools Course entitled **"Concussion in Sports: What you need to know"**.

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: 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 Executive Director 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.

Sectional Appeals Committees are comprised of seven-member committees. These members consist of:

- (a) *Two members representing public schools elected by and from among the public school representatives in the section;*
- (b) *One member representing non-public schools elected by and from among the non-public school representatives in the section;*
- (c) *One member representing public school districts selected on a rotating basis, when possible, by the*

Florida Association of District School Superintendents from among district school superintendents, or by the Florida School Boards Association from among district school board members in the section.

- (d) One member representing recognized non-public school accrediting associations selected by the Florida Association of Academic Nonpublic Schools from among district-, regional- or school-based non-public school administrators or governing board members in the section;*
- (e) One at-large member from an under-represented gender and/or race appointed by the Board of Directors from among district-, regional- or school-based administrators in the section; and*
- (f) One attorney from among attorneys living in the section, who within the last five years has been a member in good standing of the Florida Bar or the bar of any other state in the union.*

The Public Liaison Advisory Committee is listed with the other committees on the FHSAA website. The Public Liaison Advisory Committee is the primary 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.

As required by statute the FHSAA Public Liaison Advisory Committee conducted Public Hearings in the four administrative regions of the state during January 2011. The hearings were advertised on the FHSAA website, and through member schools. The concerns brought to the committee were: 1) Parent Consent Form- add language so that parents acknowledge and understand that their child may be videotaped during an athletic contest, with the understanding that the video may become “public record” in the event of a challenge or appeal, and if a parent is making their own recording it also could become “public record”. 2) Injury reports-suggest that there be an improved procedure regarding the reporting of injury and not only if the injury is the result of a penalty. Any injury that requires a school official to come on to the field or court would require an injury report to be filed by the school. Most schools have this in place already, but would like to see consistency throughout the state. 3) Parent Concerns were brought to our attention concerning dual-officiating system in soccer and when a severe injury occurs and officials did not stop the play of the game. They would like to see methods to improve the qualifications/training of officials concerning the ability to recognizing serious injuries. A request also was presented for the FHSAA to implement a grievance procedure that can be initiated by a non-school official. The procedure would require the initial step of school involvement, but there would be a process for parents or other interested parties to file an appeal thereafter.

Awards Programs: 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 and Overall Class winner for Academic Team Champion. 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. Students must letter in at least two varsity sports and maintain a minimum of a 3.5 grade point average. Twenty-four students, 12 girls and 12 boys, are chosen and invited to the banquet to receive their award and scholarship. Out of those, one boy and one girl are chosen to receive the Scholar Athlete of the Year award. 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.

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