



# Executive Director's Update

Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association

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## **An Update from Executive Director Robert Baldwin**

Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association

**February 2, 2023**

### **Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Council (MIAC) Constitutional Revision**

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association's (MIAA) Organizational Analysis and the Executive Director's Plan for Growth and Improvement were presented and approved at two consecutive Board of Directors meetings in 2022 (February and March). This proactive undertaking to implement several reforms are consistent with my conclusion that "the status quo is not an option."

In our attempt to move forward, one of the major objectives for growth and improvement is a governance initiative. One of the key actions of this initiative is to develop an organizational structure of oversight and support that is legally sound and fiscally responsible.

The goal of this process is to provide greater clarity and consistency to the membership. The execution of this plan entails constitutional revisions of the MIAA and the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Council (MIAC). The process for constitutional change at the MIAA is that the Board of Directors can recommend revision, and the Assembly is ultimately responsible for voting constitutional revisions. The MIAC was created in 1950. Its constitution is separate and independent of the MIAA constitution. As a result, the MIAC would need to vote to approve its own constitutional revision.

Our collective goal within this governance initiative is to codify systems and processes that provide clear roles and responsibilities that lead to consistent implementation for the membership. On January 25, 2023 an MIAC/MIAA Working Group was convened to discuss how to delineate clear lines of absolute and advisory authority in order to best serve the membership.

The proposal was to validate the vast majority of the work throughout the year(s) by re-defining the role of the MIAC. The re-purposing of their role would create consistency throughout the Association. This proposal would allow the MIAC to continue to be at the table where the vast majority of our appeals exist. The area of student eligibility is a significant role in the Association.

The eligibility processes were validated by the Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) on Monday, August 29, 2022. The SJC concluded that MIAA's Eligibility Appeal Board (EAB) fully considered all the evidence presented in light of all the factors necessary for a waiver, and subsequently the SJC ruled that the Board's decision was plainly not arbitrary and capricious and should have been upheld. The SJC held that courts

reviewing MIAA student eligibility decisions must use the "arbitrary and capricious" standard of review, which allows courts to overrule MIAA decisions only when they lack any rational basis.

This decision was a victory for all MIAA student-athletes who deserve an even playing field. It was an affirmation of the difficult, important work of MIAA educator-volunteers who make rules and decide cases that ensure that high school athletics in Massachusetts are conducted in an equitable and appropriate manner. This ruling validates the MIAA eligibility and appeals process that is conducted by Massachusetts school leaders who volunteer countless hours serving the EAB.

The other role of the MIAC would be to act on all rule change proposals, however, the final vote on all rule change processes would now lie with the MIAA Board of Directors because of their relevant and current nature in the role they represent. The MIAC would now have an advisory vote on the rule change process, while the MIAA Board of Directors would be the final regulatory authority over this process.

This process mirrors a successful transition that was developed by a subcommittee of MIAC and ERB members when reviewing the entire eligibility process. They decided to eliminate the second level of appeal and essentially combined a duplicative process into one rule, with new language. The subcommittee felt that eliminating a level of appeal would create a more consistent and efficient process.

It is my pleasure to inform you that on January 31, 2023, the MIAC voted unanimously (10-0) to replace their current constitution with the following as written ([CLICK HERE](#) for updated constitution). In order for this proposal to be successful, members of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC), the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (M.A.S.S.), MIAA Principals/Assistant Principals, and members representing the Massachusetts Secondary School Athletic Directors Association (MSSADA) had to subjugate their egos to do what is in the best interest for the greater good for the long term. Job well done to all of the individuals that looked beyond "what is in it for me" and chose to do what is in the best interest of the membership. That is courageous leadership!

On February 8, the MIAA Board of Directors will have an agenda item entitled Constitutional Revisions. To reiterate, this begins with the MIAA Board of Directors recommending revisions to the legislative body ultimately responsible for voting constitutional revisions, which is the Assembly. We will continue on our quest to codify systems and processes that provide clear roles and responsibilities that lead to consistent implementation for the membership, and consistently apply and act upon these decisions with fidelity.



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## Becoming a Student of Leadership Workshop March 10, 2023

This free student leadership workshop will be hosted at the MIAA Office on Friday, March 10, 2023. The workshop will be facilitated by Deb and Trevor Hult from Core Trainings. Workshop topics include Defining Leadership, Courage and Collaboration, and Why I Can. Schools may register up to 10 students to participate in the training by [CLICKING HERE](#).

## Student-Athlete of the Month Award

Nominations are currently being accepted for the MIAA Student-Athlete of the Month Award. This award recognizes two student-athletes on a monthly basis (September-May) who display excellence in the areas of academics, athletics and community service. Students in grades 9-12 who attend MIAA member schools are eligible to receive the award. Award recipients will receive a \$1,000 scholarship and be honored at an event in collaboration with their school. Nominations are due by the last day of each month. Please [CLICK HERE](#) for the nomination form.

## Sherman A. Kinney Award

**For outstanding contributions to the sport of high school basketball**

Each year, the Sherman A. Kinney Award is presented to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the sport of basketball in the school or community, has consistently served as a positive role model for young student athletes; whose actions consistently exemplify the tenets of the MIAA Sportsmanship Philosophy; and has provided long term service in the sport of basketball in the school or community. Please [CLICK HERE](#) to submit a nomination. Nominations are due February 10, 2023.

## Boston Bruins/MIAA Sportsmanship Awards

For the past 21 years, the MIAA and Boston Bruins have partnered to honor one student-athlete from each boys' and girls' high school ice hockey league in the state for best demonstrating a commitment to sportsmanship in their conduct on and off the ice. Each league is asked to select one student-athlete that meets the criteria described on the nomination form to serve as the league's award recipient. After selecting this recipient, the student-athlete's information must be submitted on the online [nomination form](#) no later than 12:00pm on March 1, 2023. Award recipients will be honored on March 21 during the Boston Bruins game at the TD Garden.

## Girls and Women in Sports (GWS) Day has Changed

The new date for GWS Day is April 28, 2023 at Faneuil Hall starting at 10:00am. If you have already registered for this event, we will keep your registration and honor it for new date. If you

can no longer attend or you need to make any changes to your registration, please contact us. [CLICK HERE](#) to register for GWS Day.

## Calendar

Start time 10:00am unless otherwise noted:

- February 8 MIAA Board of Directors
- February 13 Sports Medicine Committee (4pm)
- February 14 Tennis Committee (virtual)
- February 15 Tournament Management Committee
- February 15 Unified Sports Advisory Committee
- February 15 Volleyball Committee (virtual)
- March 1 Football Committee

## In case you missed it...

[Executive Director's Update January 12, 2022](#)

## Thanks for your continued support.

Robert Baldwin



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