

**RHODE ISLAND INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE**  
**Principals' Committee on Athletics**  
**August 17, 2026 @ 1:30 pm**  
**RIIL Office**  
**875 Centerville Road, Building #3**  
**Warwick, RI 02886**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present:** Chairperson Caluori; Mmes., Craven and Ward; Messrs., Barbieri, Barr, DeCiccio, Erickson, Fontaine, Gibbons, Green, Heath, McGair, Richard and Welsh

**Also Present:** Michael Lunney, Executive Director; Thomas Marcello, Assistant Executive Director; Susana Borges, Administrative Assistant; and Carolyn Thornton, Dir. of Communications & Student Services and Brendan McGair, *Pawtucket Times*

**Absent:** Messrs., Costa, Lazzareschi & Sollitto

*The August meeting of the Principals' Committee on Athletics was called to order at 1:35 p.m.*

**RECOGNITION**

The Committee presented RIIL Administrative Assistant Mrs. Julie Mancini with a plaque recognizing and thanking her for her twenty years of dedicated service to the League.

**PCOA MINUTES JUNE 15, 2026**

On a motion made and seconded, the PCOA minutes from the June 15, 2026 meeting were unanimously (14-0) approved.

***On a motion made and seconded, the Committee voted to move to Executive Session.***

**PCOA EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The following items were discussed in Executive Session: RIIL Rules and Regulations; Insurance; eSports; Girls' Flag Football; PCOA Vacancy and Facilities.

***On a motion made and seconded, the Committee voted to move out of Executive Session.***

**RIIL FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Lunney reported on the Finance Committee meeting held on August 17, 2026. The items discussed and reviewed were the 2025-26 RIIL budget update, RIIL annual audit is underway and insurance update. Also, Mr. Steven Chapman, general manager at Teall Properties Group updated the Committee on partnerships and relationships with league sponsors in his ongoing role and the importance of continuing to build relationships with potential sponsors throughout the state. In addition, Mr. Stuart Peterson of Janney made recommendations for changes to the RIIL's investment portfolio. On a motion made and seconded, the Finance Committee unanimously (4-0) voted to approve the recommendations as presented.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Lunney reported on the following:

- InsideOut Initiative
  1. The InsideOut Initiative event will be aimed at superintendents, principals and athletic directors to launch a three-year initiative to provide schools and coaches with the resources and tools to ensure school-based athletics are a transformational experience that help coaches prioritize character and personal growth along side competition. It will be held on September 16, 2026 at Gillette Stadium.
- RIIL Initiatives - 2026-27
  1. Student Ambassador Program
    - a. This initiative will encourage any RIIL student-athlete interested in becoming a RIIL Student Ambassador to complete the requirements. To earn the NFHS National Student Credential and become a RIIL Student Ambassador, students must complete the FREE core online NFHS Learning Center courses "Student Leadership: Becoming a Leader," "The Student Experience" and "Student Mental Wellness." On a motion made and seconded, the

Committee unanimously (14-0) approved the development of a RIIL Student Ambassador Program.

2. Student Leadership Experience (iHeart Radio and RI Army National Guard) at Camp Fogarty, East Greenwich – Fall: October 8, 2026; Spring: TBD
  3. 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Kyle Cares Mental Health Summit at RI College on January 7, 2027.
  4. Financial Trivia Challenge (Navigant Credit Union)
  5. Operation Clean Competition Program
  6. Even Field Honors Program
    - a. Recognizing Character and Leadership in School Sports
- NFHS Update
    1. The Case for State High School Athletic/Activity Associations
      - a. NFHS Parent Survey, the study revealed that: 93% rated their child's experience as good or excellent, and 96% would encourage their child to participate again; 93% said participation helped their child develop teamwork and communication skills; compared with before participation, 83% reported a stronger connection to school, 75% greater motivation to do well in school, and 80% improved overall well-being; More than two-thirds of parents (68%) said the school-based experience provides something unique that cannot easily be replaced outside school; 93% support continued investment in school-based athletics and activities.
    2. Foundation Committee
    3. Strategic Plan – Direction Committee (#5)
    4. Section 1 Meeting – Rhode Island (September 2027)
  - Summer Meetings
    1. RIASP Summer Conference
    2. RIIL Staff Meetings
    3. Sport Committees
    4. Sports Medicine Advisory Committee
    5. RIIAAA Executive Board Meetings
    6. Fall Sports Coaches Interpretation Meeting (Virtual) was held on August 11.
    7. Fall Sports Officials Meeting (Virtual) was held on August 11.
    8. Fall Athletic Director Workshop was held on August 14<sup>th</sup> at RI College.

### **MIDDLE SCHOOLS**

Mr. Quigley provided an update on the fall sports planning. The first day of practice for middle school fall sports is August 24, 2026. The middle school cross country coaches meeting is being held on August 17, 2026 and the soccer coaches meeting is being held on August 19, 2026.

### **RIIL RULE REVISIONS**

On a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously (14-0) approved to establish a rules review committee made up of administrators and athletic directors. The role of the Committee is to collect feedback from the membership on RIIL rules and regulations and make recommendations to the Principals' Committee on Athletics for consideration in the future.

### **RIIL SPORTS MEDICINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SMAC)**

Mr. Lunney reported on the following:

- Ortho RI – FREE Pre-Participation Physicals
- Heat Acclimatization Guidance
  1. NFHS Guidance – Football Lineman (NEW)
  2. Cold Water Immersion Tubs
- Concussion Management Guidance (REAP Manual)
- Emergency Action Planning
  1. NFHS Learn FREE Online Course – EAP Planning
  2. Anyone Can Save a Life Program

3. Pre-Game Safety Card
4. Medical Coverage - Personnel Responsibilities

#### **REQUESTS FROM SCHOOLS – GIRLS FLAG FOOTBALL**

Mr. Lunney reported, in accordance with the standards listed in Article 15, sixteen (16) member schools petitioned the Committee to officially sanction Girls' Flag Football as a varsity sport with a championship. On a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously (14-0) approved to sanction Girls' Flag Football beginning the spring of 2027.

With the addition of Paul Cuffee High School to the Alternative Education Program with the RIIL, and in an effort to maintain equitable athlete enrollment among Providence host schools, Paul Cuffee students will be assigned to participate with Mt. Pleasant High School. On a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously (14-0) approved the revision from the Providence Schools.

#### **RIIAAA REPORT**

Mr. Justin Erickson, President of the RIIAAA presented a recommendation on behalf of the RIIAAA to change the previously approved start date of the middle school winter sports season. After discussion, on a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously (14-0) supported the RIIAAA's recommendation to change the middle school winter sports start date to the same date of the high school winter sports start date of Monday, November 30, 2026.

#### **OFFICIALS**

On a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously (14-0) approved to establish a RIIL officials committee made up of administrators, athletic directors and the RIIL Director of Finance.

#### **FALL SPORTS – START DATES**

The first day of practice for all high school fall sports is August 17, 2026 and first day of practice for middle school fall sports is August 24, 2026.

Mr. Lunney updated the Committee that it was confirmed that the RIIL Cross Country Championships will be returning to Ponaganset High School for the 2026 RIIL fall championships.

#### **WINTER SPORTS – ALIGNMENTS**

Mr. Marcello presented the gymnastics and wrestling alignment proposals to the Committee on recommendations from the sport committees and endorsed by the RIIAAA. On a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously voted (14-0) to approve the gymnastics and wrestling alignments for winter 2026-27 & 2027-28. Mr. Lunney commended the athletic directors on the gymnastics committee, Mr. Dino Campopiano, Mrs. Kelly Moniz and Mr. Bobby Palazzo, for their efforts and involvement in helping to prepare for the 2026-27 season. The RIIL will send out the schedules to schools.

The Ice Hockey Sport Committee's alignment recommendation was presented to the PCOA. After review by the RIIAAA Executive Board at their August meeting, concerns were raised and sent back to the Sport Committee for consideration. Mr. Justin Erickson presented the RIIAAA's concerns. Mr. Toby Gibbons, who is the PCOA representative on the Ice Hockey Committee, also presented the committee's rationale for their recommendation. After discussion and deliberation, the PCOA considered both viewpoints, and it was acknowledged that the recommendation was within the established and approved alignment guidelines. On a motion made and seconded, the ice hockey alignment was unanimously (14-0) approved as presented by the Ice Hockey Sport Committee.

#### **SPRING SPORTS**

The spring sports alignment committees are underway.

*The Committee then adopted the following closing motion: THAT ANY AND ALL MOTIONS, AMENDMENTS AND ACTIONS BY THE PRINCIPALS' COMMITTEE ON ATHLETICS AND THE EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF THE PRINCIPALS' COMMITTEE ON ATHLETICS TO THIS DATE BE REAFFIRMED AND RATIFIED.*

*The August meeting of the Principals' Committee on Athletics was adjourned at 4:00 P.M.*

Signed:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Susana Borges, RIIL Board Secretary