

**RHODE ISLAND INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE
Principals' Committee on Athletics
Tuesday, January 27, 2026 @ 1:30 pm
RIIL Office
875 Centerville Road, Building #3
Warwick, RI 02886**

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Mmes., Caluori, Craven and Ward; Messrs., Barbieri, Barr, Costa, Crowley, DeCiccio, Fontaine, Gibbons, Green, Heath, Lazzareschi, McGair, Richard, Sollitto and Welsh.

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

Absent: None

The January meeting of the Principals' Committee on Athletics was called to order at 1:30 p.m.

WELCOME NEW PCOA MEMBERS

The Committee on Athletics welcomed new PCOA members Dr. Jeffrey Heath, Portsmouth High School, Mr. Michael Lazzareschi, Burrillville High School and Mr. Timothy Welsh, La Salle Academy.

PCOA MINUTES NOVEMBER 17, 2025

On a motion made and seconded, the PCOA minutes from the November 17, 2025 meeting were unanimously (17-0) 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: Rules and Regulations; PCOA Vacancies; Rules and Regulations; Officials; School Safety Workshop, Marketing and Sponsorships and Flag Football.

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

NEW PCOA CHAIRPERSON

On a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously (17-0) approved the nomination of Mrs. Candace Caluori, principal of Toll Gate High School, to the position of Chairperson on the Principals' Committee on Athletics.

PCOA ASSISTANT CHAIRPERSON VACANCY

In addition, the Committee unanimously (17-0) voted to table the PCOA Assistant Chairperson vacancy until the March 23, 2026 meeting.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Lunney reported on the following:

- School Scheduling Procedures
 1. Roles and Responsibilities
 - a. RIIL Office
 - b. Member Schools
 - c. Officials Assignors
- RIIL/Kyle Cares Student Mental Health Summit
 1. Held on January 8th at Rhode Island College
 2. Keynote Speaker – Donovan Taylor Hall
- Proposed Legislation
- Student Athlete of the Year Nominations – due by February 2, 2026
- Navigant Credit Union – Financial Trivia Challenge

- Resources to Schools
 1. Student Eligibility Support
 2. Sport Rules Support
 3. NFHS/RIIL Branded PSA's
 4. Sportsmanship Toolkit – Bench Bad Behavior Campaign
 5. Coaches Certification Tracking System
 6. Transfer Management Tracking System
 7. Electronic Payment of Officials
 8. Officials – preseason virtual meeting
 9. Schools – championship pre-planning virtual meeting

RIIAAA REPORT

Mr. Marty Crowley, President of the RIIAAA reported back to the Committee with an update on the number of schools interested in offering Girls Flag Football as a RIIL sanctioned sport. On a motion made and seconded, the Committee denied 5-11-1 the recommendation from the RIIAAA to sanction Girls Flag Football in the spring of 2027.

On a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously (17-0) voted to form a sub-committee to develop RIIL standards that would have to be met before the Principals' Committee on Athletics would sanction any new sport.

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Mr. Quigley provided a winter championship planning update for boys' and girls' middle school basketball and wrestling. Also, provided a spring season planning update.

On a recommendation endorsed by the RIIAAA and approved by the middle school sports committee, the Committee unanimously (17-0) approved a revision to the middle school outdoor track handbook to add a second qualifying opportunity for member schools effective for the 2026 middle school outdoor track season. There will be two state qualifying opportunities. *“Qualifying can be achieved at an invitational on May 9 with FAT being utilized, and at the division meet. Students must meet the standard in order to qualify for the state meet.”*

RIIL RULE REVISIONS

Baseball high school and middle school handbook pitching limitations:

On a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously (17-0) approved revisions to the high school and middle school baseball handbooks to include the following recommendations from Pitch Smart USA:

- Make sure to properly warm up before pitching.
- Follow pitch-count limits and required rest periods.
- Avoid playing for multiple teams at the same time.
- Avoid playing catcher while not pitching.
- Avoid pitching in multiple games on the same day.
- Take at least 4 months off from throwing every year, with at least 2-3 of those months being continuous.
- Do not exceed 100 Combined innings pitched in any 12-month period.

Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the parent and the student-athlete to ensure that the player follows the guidelines over the course of the year – given that he/she will oftentimes play in multiple leagues with different affiliations covering different times of the year.

On a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously (17-0) approved including the free NFHS online course “Bullying, Hazing & Inappropriate Behaviors” as a requirement to the initial certification requirement in Article 13, Coaching Requirements. This requirement is effective for all coaches beginning in the 2026-2027 school year.

The Field Hockey Sport Committee recommended a revision of the goggles rules. After discussion, the matter was referred to the RIIL Sports Medicine Advisory Committee for their review and was tabled to the March meeting.

RULE VIOLATIONS

Central High School – Article 6, Use of Ineligible Athlete (Football)

The Committee is requesting further clarification from Central High School administration regarding the use of an ineligible student athlete. The matter was tabled to the March meeting.

RIIL SPORTS MEDICINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SMAC)

None.

REQUEST FROM SCHOOLS

None.

OFFICIALS

None.

FALL SPORTS – ALIGNMENTS AND CHAMPIONSHIPS

On a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously voted (17-0) to approve the following 2026 & 2027 alignment proposals: Field Hockey, Football, Boys and Girls Soccer.

On a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously voted (17-0) to approve the following 2025 Fall Sports Championships: Field Hockey, Boys' and Girls' Cross Country, Boys' and Girls' Soccer, Girls' Tennis, Girls' Volleyball, Unified Volleyball, Game Day Cheerleading, and Football.

WINTER SPORTS

Mr. Lunney reported on the planning for the championship venues.

SPRING SPORTS

Mr. Lunney reported the spring schedules have been sent to all schools. Confirmation date is February 6, 2026. Also, provided a spring season planning update.

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 January meeting of the Principals' Committee on Athletics was adjourned at 4:30 P.M.

Signed:

_____ Date: _____
Susana Borges, RIIL Board Secretary