



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND BOARD PRIORITIES



STUDENT MENTAL, EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL WELLNESS

- **Belief:** Education-based athletics and performing and fine arts activities promote physical, mental, and emotional wellness during the most important time of a young person's life. These activities are essential in promoting a physically healthy lifestyle; developing character attributes such as leadership, teamwork, self-discipline, empathy, and civic engagement; boosting academic performance, and encouraging positive relationships.
- **Challenge:** The variety and nature of education-based programs differ greatly relative to accessibility, allocation of resources, defined purpose, leadership, organization, and measured outcomes. As a result, students with mental and emotional wellness issues often are not provided necessary supports and are identified as the group with the highest school drop-out rates. In addition, starting at the youth level, we face an obesity epidemic, leading to shortened lifespans due to unhealthy nutrition and exercise habits.
- **Opportunity:** Capitalizing on multiple avenues for engaging the NFHS membership and stakeholder communities, the NFHS can provide national guidance through development of educational programs and resources, support for research on wellness issues, collaboration and advocacy efforts, and the creation of opportunities for shared learning.



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

- **Belief**: Addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion through inclusive practices creates opportunities to improve the overall quality of the human experience. Valuing perspectives, prioritizing respect, and compassion for all, and embracing authenticity are essential to promoting positive behaviors, increasing participation, and developing relevant and sustainable programs to expand and grow human potential.
- **Challenge**: Effective diversity, equity, and inclusion practices may require an adjustment to infrastructures that are anchored in identity and privilege. The desire and need for awareness, education and improvement are at differing levels throughout society.
- **Opportunity**: Recognizing, inviting and embracing individual and organizational characteristics, values, beliefs, experiences, backgrounds and healthy behaviors are all powerful drivers for the NFHS to broaden and expand services and resources for all involved in education-based programs.



SPORTSMANSHIP, ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

- **Belief:** Sportsmanship, ethics, and integrity are the heart of education-based athletics and performing and fine arts activities. It is on the fields, the courts, and the stages that students are challenged, inspired, empowered to perform at their best with teammates and classmates.
- **Challenge:** We cannot control the behaviors of others; however, we can influence them. When those in our education-based athletics and performing and fine arts activities step outside the lines and demonstrate questionable ethics or integrity, it casts a shadow over our mission and interferes with our ultimate purpose.
- **Opportunity:** We have the opportunity and the responsibility to educate and influence all who impact education-based athletics and performing and fine arts activities. We must exemplify the behavior and integrity we want to see in students, thereby helping them to evolve into future leaders.



CASE FOR EDUCATION-BASED ATHLETICS AND FINE ARTS ACTIVITIES

- **Belief:** Education-based athletics and performing and fine arts activities are an integral part of education as they teach valuable life lessons, emphasize teamwork, and foster a sense of community. They also provide an avenue for all students to be involved and participate in activities that are essential to their physical and emotional development.
- **Challenge:** Various youth programs throughout the nation compete for participants, resulting in intense demands on the participants' time and commitment. These programs also tend to engage participants at an earlier age and oftentimes present messaging that is inconsistent with those of education-based athletics and performing and fine arts activities. Significant concern exists nationwide regarding the elimination of education-based programming.
- **Opportunity:** The NFHS can serve as the national leader in developing and disseminating educational resources to make the case for education-based athletics and performing and fine arts activities by capitalizing on the extensive research that indicates the positive impact of participation in education-based programs on the growth and development of young people.



OFFICIATING

- **Belief**: Officials are essential to education-based athletics and performing and fine arts activities. They should always be treated with respect and dignity. Elevating the officiating development experience will grow the size and quality of the profession.
- **Challenge**: Due to the critical shortage of officials it is proving difficult to maintain an adequate number of well-trained officials, while also recruiting, training, and retaining the next generation.
- **Opportunity**: The NFHS can develop a comprehensive national model for devising, packaging, and disseminating officiating assets that engage, embolden, and develop both new and current officials. This model can institute the latest in techniques and technology to modernize and elevate the profession, increase respect and credibility, and solidify its sustainability.



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NFHS AS A NATIONAL LEADER

The NFHS will continue to expand its role, reputation and influence nationwide through service on boards, committees, and task forces and through communication via multiple platforms. The NFHS “voice” in these settings will advocate for the significance, support and security of education-based athletics and activities in conjunction with state associations. Significant issues at this time include but are not limited to:

- The value of participation in high school athletics and activities
- The importance of collaboration with colleague organizations such as National Governing Bodies, youth sport agencies and national education associations
- Amateurism and emerging challenges regarding Name, Image and Likeness
- Recruitment and the importance of high school involvement in the process
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion issues at all levels and across all co-curricular areas
- Implementing communications and marketing efforts that promote NFHS brand and body of work



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

The NFHS will take a leadership role in promoting diversity, equity and inclusion practices within its membership through offering guidance for resource development and programming. The NFHS will utilize a multi-phased approach to advance the following initiatives:

- Facilitate listening and sharing sessions
- Educate the membership on issues that challenge equity through the process of examining historical practices (societal and organizational)
- Provide resources that address representation: students, staffing, coaches, officials, and committees
- Provide resources that address definition of values/beliefs, best practices, templates, and policies
- Build diversity, equity and inclusion strategies for the following groups:
 - Students
 - Boards/Committees
 - Staff
- Create learning opportunities through NFHS course development, webinars, meetings and conferences
- Conduct a national book study



SUPPORT FOR THE OFFICIATING PROFESSION

The NFHS will increase its focus on efforts to recruit, support and retain athletic officials and activity adjudicators through the following initiatives:

- Continued development of the “NFHS Center for Officials Services”- NFHS COS
- Increased collaboration with officials associations and colleague organizations
- Expansion of educational offerings- courses, short video resources, webinars
- “Become an Official” campaign
- Utilization of communication platforms to promote the profession
- Include messaging about sportsmanship and respect for officials in educational materials and communications as appropriate
- Conduct research to monitor trends and perceptions relative to officiating



STUDENT MENTAL, EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL WELLNESS

The NFHS will provide national guidance through development of educational programs and resources, support for research on wellness issues, collaboration and advocacy efforts, and the creation of opportunities for shared learning.

- Sports Medicine Advisory Committee-The NFHS SMAC will continue to provide guidance regarding rules development, health and safety guidelines/recommendations, working with state health agencies, and the overall role that the NFHS plays- or does not play- in the sports medicine ecosystem. Consider expansion to include expertise in mental health and health issues related to the performing arts
- Enhance collaborative efforts with related organizations- ex. school counselors, school administrators, school-based university programs
- Expand educational resources that address mental, emotional and physical wellness of all involved in education-based programs



NFHS NETWORK

The NFHS considers the NFHS Network to be a significant priority as it can promote the mission of the NFHS through highlighting events, educational activities and messaging that can help to support “The Case for High School Activities” as well as other priorities of the NFHS. The NFHS will continue to work with the NFHS Network to focus on the following:

- Increase in the number and type of events covered
- Increase in support for schools interested in implementing school broadcast programs
- Promotion of the benefits of participation in education-based activities
- Development of educational resources relative to the broadcast process
- Promotion of the NFHS and the NFHS Learning Center
- Providing increased technology support for schools

