



2021-2025

STRATEGIC PLAN

PLAY.COMPETE.PERFORM.TOGETHER.

NFHS VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

Mission Statement

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) serves its members by providing leadership for the administration of education-based high school athletics and activities through the writing of playing rules that emphasize health and safety, educational programs that develop leaders, and administrative support to increase participation opportunities and promote sportsmanship.

Core Beliefs and Values

We Believe

Student participation in education-based high school athletics and activities:

- Is a privilege.
- Enriches the educational experience.
- Encourages academic achievement.
- Promotes respect, integrity and sportsmanship.
- Prepares for the future in a global community.
- Develops leadership and life skills.
- Fosters the inclusion of diverse populations.
- Promotes healthy lifestyles and safe competition.
- Encourages a positive school/community culture.
- Should be fun.

The NFHS:

- Serves as the national authority that promotes and protects the defining values of education-based high school athletics and activities in collaboration with its member state associations.
- Serves as the national authority on competition rules while promoting fair play and seeking to minimize risk of injury for student participants in education-based high school athletics and activities.
- Promotes lifelong health and safety values through participation.
- Develops and delivers impactful, innovative and engaging educational programs to serve the changing needs of state associations, administrators, coaches, directors, officials, students and parents.
- Provides professional development opportunities for member state association staffs.
- Promotes cooperation, collaboration and communication with and among state associations.
- Collects and provides data analysis in order to allow its membership to make informed decisions.

2021-2025 NFHS STRATEGIC PLAN

The formulation of the 2021-2025 NFHS Strategic Plan was delayed several months due to the pandemic, but the delay did not impact the quality of another outstanding plan to guide the future of the NFHS.

This is the eighth Strategic Plan developed by the NFHS since the process was initiated in 1996. We are thankful to the leadership efforts of Julian Tackett, commissioner of the Kentucky High School Athletic Association, who chaired the committee.

The Strategic Planning Committee gathered in Indianapolis in May 2021 to begin the planning process and refined the goals during a virtual meeting in June. Following these meetings, NFHS directors participated in a retreat to review the strategic priorities developed by the committee and to formulate areas of focus to supplement the five priorities. The strategic priorities were introduced at the section meetings in fall 2021 and approved by the NFHS Board of Directors at its October 2021 meeting.

The NFHS staff and Board of Directors are excited about these five strategic priorities for the next four years as we continue to provide opportunities for students to participate in education-based high school activity programs.



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NFHS Executive Director



Davis Whitfield
NFHS Chief Operating Officer



Julian Tackett, Kentucky
Strategic Planning
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STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2021-2025

1.

Student Mental, Emotional and Physical Wellness

2.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

3.

Sportsmanship, Ethics and Integrity

4.

Case for Education-Based Athletics and Performing Arts/Fine Arts Activities

5.

Officiating

1.

STUDENT MENTAL, EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL WELLNESS

BELIEF

Education-based athletics and performing arts/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 dropout rates. In addition, starting at the youth level, there is 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.



Focus Areas:

- Increase the level of expertise on the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee to enable its guidance.
- Develop a strategy for the role of the NFHS.
- Consider establishing a Performing Arts Medical Advisory Committee or enhance expertise on the Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (specialists in auditory, musical risks, vocal health); consortium (NATA, PAMA, AATA).
- Explore collaborative efforts with other organizations, such as school counselors association, administrators, medical organizations, school-based university programs (e.g., Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence), American Association of Adapted Sports Programs (AAASP), United Sound, Special Olympics of North America (SONA).
- Consider separate committee to address mental and emotional wellness issues.
- Sponsor Educational Summit(s) that put experts in front of membership.
- Expand educational resources that address mental, emotional and physical wellness of everyone involved in education-based programs (students, coaches, officials, administrators, etc.)
- Monitor federal and state legislative activity.
- Continue research, including High School Rio.
- Monitor outside efforts relative to education-based programs.
- Pursue funding where appropriate, such as the NFHS Foundation.
- Continue risk minimization efforts within the NFHS rules-writing process (public-facing educational component, evidence-based focus, expertise, approach to cultural components).

2.

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 everyone involved in education-based programs.



Focus Areas:

- Education – course development, training webinars, book study.
- Representation (provide resources for the following):
 - › Students – best practices for social media posts, photo selections for print material and videos.
 - › Staffing – participation/inclusion, perspective representation, advancement, pipeline.
 - › Coaches – pipeline; work with state associations.
 - › Officials – pipeline; work with state associations and organizations.
 - › Committees – orientations; all state leaders and committees.
 - › Rotation for minority candidates.
- Infrastructure – define values/beliefs; foundational work; tools to assess and guide direction; best practices guide; templates for policy development.
- Membership Experience – meetings and conferences – prayer invocation, topic selection, moderator selection.
- “The Face” of the NFHS – staffing; website; publications; communications need to better reflect diversity.

3.

SPORTSMANSHIP, ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

BELIEF

Sportsmanship, ethics and integrity are the heart of education-based athletics and performing arts/fine arts activities. It is on the fields, courts and stages where students are challenged, inspired and 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 education-based athletics and performing arts/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 arts/fine arts activities. We must exemplify the behavior and integrity we want to see in students, thereby helping them to evolve into future leaders.



Focus Areas:

Education – the process:

- Must state the expectations for proper behavior.
- Sportsmanship must be a priority in the NFHS overall strategy (social media, *High School Today*, marketing, website, all departments).
- Purposeful in our social media, develop a strategy and capitalize on examples.

Education – online courses for all groups:

- Create parent courses (freshman parents, sophomore parents, junior parents, senior parents).
- Create NFHS National Sportsmanship Banner Program (levels).
- Create NFHS Network Sportsmanship/Officiating Public-Service Announcements (:30/:60 spots).

Promotion (re-package current materials):

- Consistent messages across all platforms.
- Student Services – Student Leadership Summit (Virtual Conference).

- › Ongoing initiatives throughout the school year – provide turnkey toolkit to state associations/local levels (30-35 states have state student leadership conferences).
- › Toolkit to recognize sportsmanship in schools.
- Promote the positive benefits of activities through NFHS channels.

Strengthen Relationships with Outside Groups:

- National Governing Bodies, Special Olympics (Unified Champion Schools), Education Groups (AVCA Example)
- Slogans – #WeAreHighSchool, #ThisIsHighSchool, #WeAreMiddleSchool, or #Play.Perform.Compete. Together.
- Utilize leaders, officials, coaches, parents and students who can tell their stories.
 - › Positive and negative (turn negative stories into positive)
- Rules-writing Process – Points of Emphasis/Power-Point written related to Sportsmanship, Ethics and Integrity.

4.

CASE FOR EDUCATION-BASED ATHLETICS AND PERFORMING ARTS/FINE ARTS ACTIVITIES

BELIEF

Education-based athletics and performing arts/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 arts/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 arts/fine arts activities. This can be accomplished 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.



Focus Areas:

- Research – driven by the NFHS Mission Statement, Butler University study, NFHS Foundation grants, UpMetrics.
- Participation Survey – revised instrument; coaches, officials, broader metrics, impact of pandemic.
- Advocacy for the Performing Arts – impact of participation on growth and development; unique aspects of education-based programs; national, state and local levels; toolkit and resources; save programs.
- Advocacy for Athletics – impact of participation on growth and development; unique aspects of education-based programs.
- Other Education-based Programs – collaboration with organizations; alignment with NFHS strategic priorities.
- Communication – campaigns; all available formats.

5.

OFFICIATING

BELIEF

Officials are essential to education-based athletics and performing arts/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.



Focus Areas:

- Survey
- Recruitment – best practices, preparation, expectations, relationships.
- Education – clinics, training resources, mentorship.
- Support – reciprocity, pay, networking, recognition programs, communication/advocacy for the profession.
- Technology – NFHS Center For Officiating Services platform, streamline services and processes.
- Retention – address perception, fan behavior, collaboration across organizations.

DIRECTORY OF MEMBER STATE ASSOCIATIONS

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