



NFHS Strategic Plan Update 2025 - 2029



1. Establish the NFHS as the Leader in Education-Based Athletics and Activities

- 2025 – 2026 What We Accomplished
 - Advancing the “Case for Education-Based Athletics and Activities” through NFHS Position Statement and National Campaigns
 - Launching/Scaling Campaigns – #ProtectThePurpose, #BecomeAnOfficial, #BenchBadBehavior, etc. – across Digital, Media, and Radio Platforms
 - Expanding Reach – NFHS Voice – (2.3M recipients, twice monthly) and Growing Positive National Media Engagement
 - Delivering State Association Support Tools – Customized Fact Sheets, Branded Assets, and Op-Ed Placements
 - Strengthening Engagement with Partners – NCAA, NFL, NIAAA, others – Amplify Messaging
 - Enhancing Communication – Social Media Growth Strategies and Media Relations





2. Advance and Promote Student Physical, Mental and Emotional Wellness

- 2025 – 2026 What We Accomplished
 - Launched Coaching Mental Wellness Course
 - Encourage State Associations to Secure a Mental Health Representative – SMAC
 - Adding Mental Health Emergency Action Plan to Current NFHS EAP's and Medical Time-Out Position Statements and Online Courses
 - Emergency Action Planning for Afterschool Programs
 - Continued Promotion and Investment in Risk Minimization and Injury Prevention for Interscholastic Programs – Rules
 - Continued dialogue at National Meetings and Student Leadership Conferences – Discussion Forums



3. Expand the Role of the NFHS as a Relationship Builder and Collaborator

- 2025 – 2026 What We Accomplished
 - Creating Additional Opportunities for Consistent and Detailed Information Sharing with State Associations Across Multiple NFHS Departments
 - Weekly Rules Interpretations
 - Expanded Mid-Season Webinars to Include Pre and Post-Season Opportunities
 - NIRSA Relationship
 - Three Working Groups – MMS, Social Media, Media Relations
 - NFHS 101
 - Strengthening Efforts to Provide Presence at State Association Events – Staff
 - Representing the NFHS on National Governing Boards/USOPC
 - Serving as Conduit for Relationship Building Between State Associations and Outside Stakeholders
 - National Administrative High School Boards



4. Strengthen the Position of the NFHS as the Data Leader

- 2025 – 2026 What We Accomplished
 - Establishing the Framework for How Work Will be Structured, Measured, and Advanced
 - Defining Success, Objectives, Capability Areas, Priority Measurement Areas, and Year 1 Outputs
 - Identifying Priority Indicators, Benchmarks, and Reporting Themes to Create a Year 1 baseline
 - Gathering State Association Input and Building the Initial Evidence Base through Benchmark and Research Work
 - Creating the Structure NFHS Can Track Progress and Guide Phases of Work
 - Membership Survey!



Key Findings: The NFHS Needs Assessment

The member message is clear: State Associations are managing connected, high-pressure issues and want NFHS support that is practical, coordinated, and easy to use.

THE PRESSURE IS SIGNIFICANT

76% rated transfers and eligibility as high/critical.
76% rated sportsmanship and spectator behavior as high/critical.

THE ISSUES ARE CONNECTED

Legislation, school choice, eligibility, sportsmanship, stakeholder behavior, and public understanding often overlap.

SUPPORT HAS TO FIT THE ISSUE

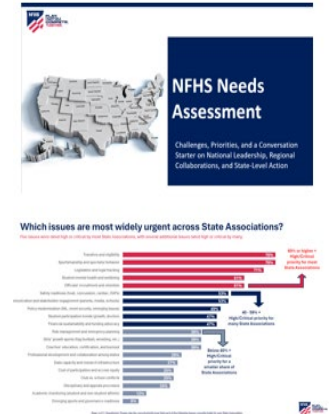
Some needs require a layered response, with each group attacking the issue with buildable solutions.

MEMBERS WANT USABLE TOOLS

53% identified dashboards as a preferred format.
47% identified briefings, infographics, and one-pagers.

RESEARCH SHOULD DRIVE ACTION

Top future research priorities include health and safety, governance, sustainability, student experience, and workforce needs.



The Needs Assessment gave the NFHS a complete member view of what is urgent, where support is needed, and how research and data can be turned into practical help for State Associations.



Key Findings: National Parent Benchmark Study

The parent case is clear: Parents do not see school-based athletics and activities as extras. They see them as part of the educational experience - building confidence, connection, belonging, motivation, and well-being in ways that are difficult to replace outside of school.



ATHLETICS

ACTIVITIES

ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES

96%

PARENTS ARE BOUGHT IN

96% would encourage their child to participate again.

94%

94%

THIS IS STUDENT DEVELOPMENT, NOT JUST PARTICIPATION

93% say participation helps students learn teamwork and communication.

91%

83%

THESE PROGRAMS CONNECT KIDS TO SCHOOL

82% say their child became more connected to school.

79%

69%

SCHOOL-BASED OPPORTUNITIES OFFER SOMETHING DIFFERENT

68% say school-based opportunities provide something unique that cannot easily be replaced outside of school.

66%

93%

PARENTS WANT THESE OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTINUE

93% of parents support continued investment in school-based athletics and activities.

92%

5. Evaluate the NFHS Rules-Making and Workflow Process

- 2025 – 2026 What We Accomplished
- Formed Working Group
 - Chair: Andy Warner, MD
 - Section 1: Michael Lunney, RI
 - Section 3: Craig Damon, FL
 - Section 4: Andrea Osters, MI
 - Section 5: Jennifer Schwartz, NE
 - Section 6: Nick Lasker, AR
 - Section 7: Jim Dean, AZ
 - Section 8: Peter Weber, OR
 - Select NFHS Staff



Using GSIQ to help with the Rules Process



Proposed Baseball Rules Feedback Results

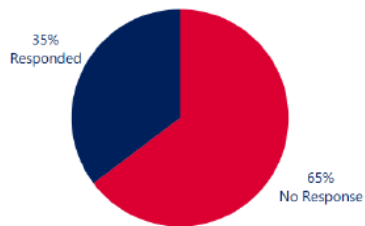


Proposed Baseball Rules Feedback Results

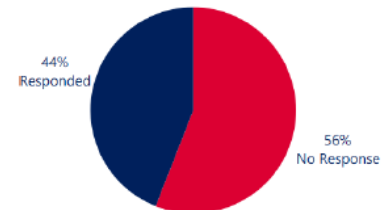


Response Summary

State Association Response Coverage



Baseball School Coverage Represented by Responding States



Feedback Respondents

Arizona	
California	
Florida	
Georgia	
Iowa	
Kentucky	
Michigan	
Minnesota	

Feedback Non-Respondents

Alabama	
Alaska	
Arkansas	
Colorado	
Connecticut	
Delaware	
District of Columbia	
Hawaii	
Idaho	
Illinois	
Indiana	
Kansas	
Louisiana	
Maine	
Maryland	

Findings Overview

Generally, in Favor 🤔★★★★★

- 3 - BBCOR / USA Baseball Bat Certification Mark Update
- 4 - USA Baseball Senior Bat Standard Option
- 5 - Uniform Pants Length Requirement
- 6 - Eye Shade Marking Restriction
- 7 - Non-Electronic Wristband / Play Card Use
- 8 - Wristband and Device Language Alignment
- 12 - Audio/Video Wearable Device Prohibition
- 16 - Coach Communication to Pitcher and Catcher
- 17 - Permitted Materials/Devices in Coach's Box
- 30 - Award Table Update for Delayed Dead Ball Balk
- 32 - Illegal Bat Penalty Cross-Reference Clarification
- 33 - Three-Foot Running Lane Clarification

Neutral/Mixed 😐★★★

- 2 - Larger First Base Alternative to Double First Base
- 24 - Delayed Dead Ball Balk Enforcement
- 26 - Runner/Fielder Base Use on Errant Throws
- 29 - Baserunning Awards for Delayed Dead Ball Balk

Generally, Against 😞★

- 1 - Double First Base: Return to State Adoption Option
- 9 - One-Way Communication to Pitcher and/or Catcher
- 10 - One-Way Communication to Defensive Players

Using GSIQ to help with the Rules Process

Proposal 6

Answer	Count	Percent	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
In Favor	15	83.33%					
Against	3	16.67%					
Neutral	0	0%					
Does Not Apply	0	0%					
Total	18	100 %					

Proposal 7

Answer	Count	Percent	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
In Favor	10	58.82%					
Against	7	41.18%					
Neutral	0	0%					
Does Not Apply	0	0%					
Total	17	100 %					

Proposal 8

Answer	Count	Percent	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
In Favor	9	50%					
Against	8	44.44%					
Neutral	1	5.56%					



Proposed Baseball Rules Feedback Results

Proposal 25 - Comment

Georgia: Bundle w/DbI 1st base rule

Nevada: Rule is beneficial; cost has not been an issue in Nevada. Schools have found a vendor that provides an attachment to current setup.

Proposal 26 - Comment

South Carolina: Why does the runner have to make this choice. There is no possible change in the world, this proposal as written can pass and be of any benefit to the runner. We cannot penalize the runner because he did not know where an errant throw was coming from. The dropped 3rd strike option needs to go as well. If we are going to use a double first base for 'safety' reasons, then we need to use it that way and make the white base for the defense and the orange base for the offense on initial plays. Any thing different, then the defense always has the advantage. Further the double base will not eliminate bad throws, and a runner decision should not be based on a 'bad' throw.

Georgia: Bundle w/DbI 1st base rule

Nevada: Agree with Rationale with respect to safety

New Jersey: Would make it more difficult for umpires to rule on obstruction and/or interference.

Proposal 27 - Comment

Georgia: Bundle w/DbI 1st base rule

Nevada: Rule is beneficial; cost has not been an issue in Nevada. Schools have found a vendor that provides an attachment to current setup.

New Jersey: Umpires rarely enforce this requirement.

Proposal 28 - Comment

Georgia: Bundle w/DbI 1st base rule

Nevada: Rule is beneficial; cost has not been an issue in Nevada. Schools have found a vendor that provides an attachment to current setup.

Proposal 29 - Comment

Georgia: Bundle w/delay dead ball balk

Nevada: Agree with Rationale; do not want to penalize the offense

Using GSIQ to help with Tracking Questionnaire Results

NFHS Survey Activity: 2023-24 - 2025-26: Survey Monkey Only

Academic Year

(All)

Feedback Type

(All)

Collection Area

(All)

Collection Activity (group)

(All)



Total Surveys

226

Surveys By Year

2023-24

90

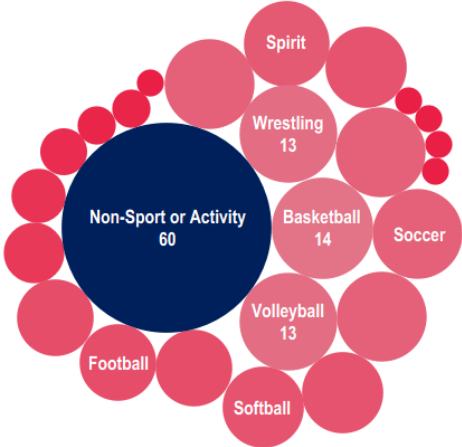
2024-25

95

2025-26

41

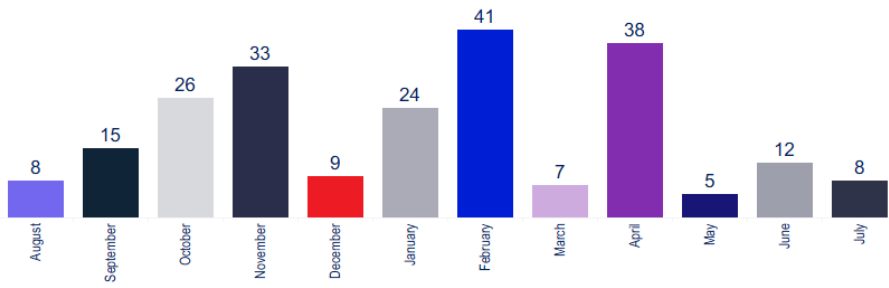
Surveys by Sport or Activity



Surveys Ranked by Response

2025 NFHS Basketball Rules Questionnaire	19,698
2024 NFHS Basketball Rules Questionnaire	18,931
2023 NFHS Football Rules Questionnaire	18,383
2024 NFHS Football Rules Questionnaire	16,139
2026 NFHS Basketball Rules Questionnaire	15,745
2024 NFHS Basketball Rules Questionnaire for Coaches and Officials	14,998
2025 NFHS Football Rules Questionnaire	13,631
2023 NFHS Volleyball Rules Questionnaire	12,834
2024 NFHS Baseball Rules Questionnaire	11,644
2025 NFHS Baseball Rules Questionnaire	11,425
2025 NFHS Volleyball Rules Questionnaire	11,252
2024 NFHS Volleyball Rules Questionnaire	11,200
2024 NFHS Soccer Rules Questionnaire	9,904
2023-24 NFHS Soccer Rules Questionnaire	8,949
2026 NFHS Basketball Rules Questionnaire for Coaches and Officials	8,131
2025 NFHS Softball Rules Questionnaire	8,025
2024 NFHS Softball Rules Questionnaire	7,736
2025-26 NFHS Soccer Rules Questionnaire	7,136
2025 NFHS Wrestling Rules Questionnaire	6,521
2025 NFHS Basketball Rules Questionnaire for Coaches and Officials	6,355
2025 NFHS Track and Field Rules Questionnaire	6,321
2024 NFHS Track and Field Rules Questionnaire	5,857
2026 NFHS Wrestling Rules Questionnaire	5,366
2024 NFHS Wrestling Rules Questionnaire	5,302
2024 NFHS Football Rules Questionnaire for Coaches and Officials	5,129
2024 NFHS Wrestling Rules Questionnaire for Coaches and Officials	5,074
2024 NFHS Baseball Rules Questionnaire for Coaches and Officials	4,728
2025 NFHS Football Rules Questionnaire for Coaches and Officials	4,333
2024 NFHS Soccer Rules Questionnaire for Coaches and Officials	3,927
2025-26 NFHS Soccer Rules Questionnaire for Coaches and Officials	3,886
2024 NFHS Volleyball Rules Questionnaire for Coaches and Officials	3,643
2025 NFHS Volleyball Rules Questionnaire for Coaches and Officials	3,609
2025 NFHS Baseball Rules Questionnaire for Coaches and Officials	3,210
2024 NFHS Softball Rules Questionnaire for Coaches and Officials	3,145
2026 NFHS Wrestling Rules Questionnaire for Coaches and Officials	3,105
2025 NFHS Swimming and Diving Rules Questionnaire	2,979
2026 NFHS Swimming and Diving Rules Questionnaire	2,843
2025 NFHS Softball Rules Questionnaire for Coaches and Officials	2,765
2024 NFHS Track and Field Rules Questionnaire for Coaches and Officials	2,540
2024 NFHS Spirit Rules Questionnaire	2,330
2025-26 NFHS Spirit Rules Questionnaire	2,242
2025 NFHS Wrestling Rules Questionnaire for Coaches and Officials	2,189

Surveys By Month



Total Responses

356,170

Responses by Year

2023-24

134,153

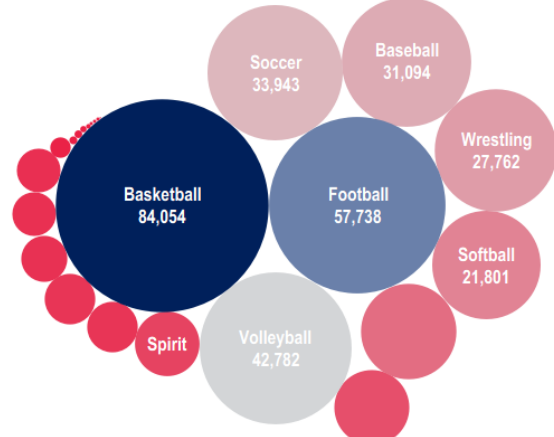
2024-25

135,746

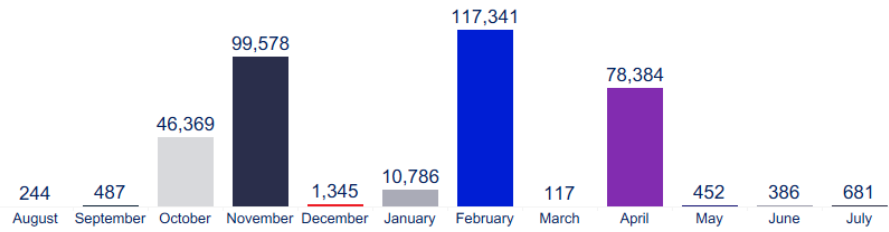
2025-26

86,271

Responses by Sport or Activity



Responses by Month





NFHS Board Priorities 2026 - 2027



Priority #1

- The NFHS Board of Directors will continue to work with NFHS staff and NFHS membership through:
 - Conducting additional research and creating a series of national studies for the “Case for Education-Based Athletics and Activities.”
 - Meeting and ensuring alignment with key national partners, including but not limited to the NCAA, NFL, NIAAA, and educational organizations that support education-based athletics and activities.
 - Preparing ten pieces of legislative material per state association.
 - Meeting with major education partners—including NASSP, AASA, and NASBE—to discuss strategic alignment and develop a comprehensive communication "deck" that clearly articulates:
 - The mission and value of the NFHS.
 - The critical role of state high school associations.
 - The importance of alignment among national education organizations.
 - Shared priorities that support students, schools, and education-based athletics and activities.
 - Opportunities for collaborative advocacy and communication.
 - Developing coordinated advocacy and communication campaigns utilizing National Student Advisory Council (NSAC) interviews, research findings, and data-driven messaging targeted toward students, parents, policymakers, and school communities.
 - Creating joint messaging in conjunction with Positive Coaching Alliance that speaks directly to parents, students, and fans.
 - Strengthening the national media presence of education-based athletics and activities by generating messaging to parents, students, and fans.
 - Building an advocacy library, with updated data and enhanced templates, for use by member state associations.
 - NFHS Marketing Campaigns – #PlayPerformCompeteTogether, #BecomeAnOfficial, #BenchBadBehavior, #ThisIsHSFootball



Priority #2

- The NFHS Board of Directors will collaborate with NFHS staff and NFHS membership on emotional, mental, and physical wellness initiatives through:
 - Surveying state associations to determine if a Mental Health professional serves on their state SMAC.
 - Distributing the new Preparticipation Physical Evaluation (PPE) program to states.
 - Completing the Mental Health Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and adding this component to the overall EAP.
 - Working on the development and incorporation of a medical timeout across all sports.
 - Promoting mental, physical, and emotional wellness through sessions and education at the NFHS National Student Advisory Council (NSAC) meetings and National Student Leadership Summit (NSLS).
 - Implementing an Emergency Medical Records system into RIO and analyzing any changes in the data.
 - Encouraging states to have 10 new Athletic Trainers participate in the RIO program in 2026-27.
 - Recording testimonials from the NSAC around physical, mental, and emotional wellness.
 - Expanding mental, physical, and emotional wellness resources on the NFHS Learning Center.
 - Creation of two courses/resources for each area.



Priority #3

- The NFHS Board of Directors will support efforts to strengthen the NFHS role as a collaborative entity and connector for state associations through:
 - Creating a map for NFHS staff to track states visited. This will increase collaboration and visibility.
 - Developing internal spreadsheet for NFHS staff to track states visited.
 - Identifying and communicating NFHS contacts for state associations regarding National Governing Bodies (NGB's).
 - Planning and hosting training sessions (Phase II) for the NFHS membership to learn about NFHS resources: MyGroups, Tools, Technology, Education, Rules Proposals, etc.
 - Hosting “Lunch and Learns” for NFHS staff throughout the year.
 - Training on NFHS Assets, Technology, and Systems – MyGroups, Tools, Education, Rules, Other
 - Establishing new networking groups for state association and NFHS staff (support staff).



Priority #4

- The NFHS Board of Directors will continue supporting efforts to improve the NFHS's ability to collect, manage, analyze, share, and use data to support strategic decision-making, member service, advocacy efforts, and the value of education-based athletics and activities through:
 - Developing a phased data collection and reporting plan that identifies what information the NFHS needs, who should have access, and how it should be reported for internal, member-facing, and public-facing use.
 - Identify the major data categories needed to support the Strategic Plan, member needs, advocacy, and Strategic Direction 4.
 - Determine what can be addressed with existing tools, what needs to be digitized or streamlined, and what may require future systems, dashboards, technical development, or additional investment.
 - Reviewing the 2026 NFHS Needs Assessment findings and National Parent Benchmark Study results to determine priority actions, State Association support needs, and future research direction.
 - Identify themes, most urgent member needs, and most useful advocacy proof points from the completed and in-progress research.
 - Translate priority issues into clear research questions, data needs, potential outputs, recommended next steps, and a proposed research and reporting calendar.
 - Establishing NFHS data standards (quality, completeness, recency, comparability, privacy, and public facing claims) and policies so research is used consistently and responsibly.
 - Identifying benchmark measures and proof points that support and expand the “Case for Education-Based Athletics and Activities” and other Strategic Plan priorities.
 - Use the National Parent Benchmark Study and existing research to identify current proof points for advocacy, communication, and member service.
 - Identify additional data points and future studies that may strengthen the evidence base over time, subject to prioritization, capacity, and budget approval.
 - Developing and using practical, member-ready resources from existing and approved research, including briefings, one-pagers, infographics, benchmarking tools, legislative materials, advocacy templates, proof points, and audience-ready summaries.



Priority #5

- The NFHS Board of Directors will collaborate with NFHS staff and NFHS membership to review, evaluate, and enhance the NFHS rules-making process. Areas of emphasis will include:
 - Informing the membership of the working group.
 - Presenting to the established working group that will examine all facets of NFHS rules development and publication systems, including committee structure, communication, workflow, member involvement, and distribution platforms.
 - Evaluating the rules process, committees, costs, shipping, warehouse process, digital library, communication, storage, etc.
 - Determining and implementing potential changes and adjustments as approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

