

## News Release – Ohio High School Athletic Association

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### **Membership Approves 14 Referendum Issues, Including Competitive Balance; One Issue Virtual Tie**

*90 Percent of Ballots Returned; Competitive Balance Plan Passes by 88 Votes and Will Be Implemented In 2016-17. One Issue is Virtual Tie and Will be Recounted Next Week*

**COLUMBUS, Ohio** — Ohio High School Athletic Association member schools passed 14 proposed Constitution and Bylaw revisions, Commissioner Daniel B. Ross, Ph.D., announced Friday following ballot counting. One item, regarding a proposed Constitution revision that would make it mandatory for schools to return a ballot, is a virtual tie and will be recounted next week. The OHSAA's annual referendum voting period is from May 1-15, with approved items going into effect August 1 unless otherwise noted.

After a total of 820 ballots were mailed in late April, 737 were returned for a voter turnout of 90 percent. Only 83 member schools did not return a ballot.

Highlighting the referendum voting was approval of a Competitive Balance Plan that makes modifications on how schools are placed in tournament divisions in team sports. The plan, approved by the membership after three similar proposals were narrowly defeated between 2011 and 2013, passed 411 votes to 323 votes (56 percent to 44 percent, with three ballots abstaining). It will become effective during the 2016-17 school year.

“On behalf of the Board of Directors and Competitive Balance Committee, I want to thank the membership for having the confidence in this plan and voting to move forward with implementation,” Ross said. “While passing the plan was a major step and truly exciting, our work is just beginning since the Competitive Balance Committee will continue to clarify any unanswered questions and our staff will put all the wheels in motion to finalize the electronic roster collection system.

“As we’ve said before, this plan is similar to last year’s, but this version is the result of a compilation of input from our superintendents, principals, athletic administrators and coaches. I’m most proud that we were able to work together and come up with a solution that will create a better system than we currently have because it looks at how schools secure the enrollment of their students participating in interscholastic athletics.”

In addition to the size of a school’s enrollment, the Competitive Balance Plan will have new modifying factors that will be applied to students on each roster on a sport-by-sport basis and are based on where the student’s parents reside and/or the educational system history of the student. All schools will be subject to the factors of the formula, which will be applied to students in the sports of football, soccer and volleyball in the fall, basketball in the winter and baseball and softball in the spring. Click here for a link to the details of the plan:

[www.ohsaa.org/news/2014-03-19CompetitiveBalanceInformation.pdf](http://www.ohsaa.org/news/2014-03-19CompetitiveBalanceInformation.pdf).

All fifteen 2014 proposals were placed up for referendum vote by the OHSAA Board of Directors. High school principals had between May 1 and 15 to cast their votes on 14 of the issues, and one issue was voted upon by 7<sup>th</sup>- and 8<sup>th</sup>-grade principals. A simple majority is all that is required for a proposed amendment to be adopted. The complete final voting results are available on the OHSAA website ([ohsaa.org](http://ohsaa.org)), and the 2014-15 OHSAA Constitution and Bylaws will be posted on the site sometime in late June.

## **A Review of the 2014 OHSAA Referendum Issues**

### **1.) Constitution 8-1-1, Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws**

This clarifies that ballots for referendum voting are due to the OHSAA Office no later than 4:00 p.m. on May 15.

**694 in favor; 33 opposed**

### **2.) Constitution 8-1-9, Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws**

This requires school principals to return the referendum ballot, whether voting or not, by the May 15 deadline or be subject to a fine as established by the Board of Directors.

**Virtual Tie – Will Be Recounted May 20**

### **3.) Bylaw 2, Classification and Organization and Tournaments – COMPETITIVE BALANCE**

This amends Bylaw 2 by adding a new section 2 that will assign schools in team sports to a division based upon that school's Adjusted Enrollment Count, which will be determined by adding the Initial Enrollment Count (EMIS reported number of boys or girls) and the Additional Roster Count for a given sport. Further details are posted at OHSAA.org.

**411 in favor; 323 opposed**

### **4.) Bylaw 4-3-1, Enrollment and Attendance, Add Exception 8**

This adds an exception that would cover any subsequent changes to the Ohio Revised Code which might affect a student's ability to participate in interscholastic athletics when he/she is not enrolled in and attending a member school.

**677 in favor; 34 opposed**

### **5.) Bylaw 4-3-5 and New Bylaw 4-3-6, Enrollment and Attendance — Graduate**

This clarifies the procedures that the Commissioner's Office may utilize in considering whether a student educated in another country may continue to participate in interscholastic athletics in Ohio. New Bylaw 4-3-6 also provides concrete examples of a student whose program in another country would not be sufficient for graduation from an Ohio high school.

**682 in favor; 44 opposed**

### **6.) Bylaw 4-4-4 and Bylaw 4-4-7, Scholarship**

The amendment to Bylaw 4-4-4 adds the word "immediately" before "preceding grading period" to provide consistency to the scholarship bylaw, indicating that grades from the grading period which precedes the participation are the ones which shall be considered. The amendment to Bylaw 4-4-7 simplifies the bylaw by indicating that summer school or other educational options cannot be used to restore eligibility for either high school or 7th-8th grade students who fail to meet the required standards.

**674 in favor; 48 opposed**

### **7.) Bylaw 4-6-3, Residence, Exceptions 2 and 4 — Parents Outside Ohio**

Exception 2 has been rewritten to clarify that a student whose parents move outside of Ohio remains eligible for the remainder of the 11th grade year and the senior year provided continuous enrollment is maintained in that high school. The change in language in Exception 4 clarifies that a student must be enrolled in a parochial school of the same system by the beginning of grade four in order to have eligibility in Ohio in a high school in that parochial system.

**652 in favor; 74 opposed**

### **8.) Bylaw 4-7-2, Transfers (Editorial Revision) and Bylaw 4-7-3, Transfers (Addition of Note)**

This clarifies that the penalty for transfer students who do not meet an exception shall be ineligibility for all contests until after the first 50 percent of the maximum allowable regular season contests in those sports in which the student participated during the 12 months immediately preceding the transfer have been completed (indicating that scrimmages, previews, jamborees and Foundation Games would be included). The note in 4-7-3 clarifies that a student who transfers during that sports season shall be ineligible for the remainder of that sports season, and the 50 percent penalty may carry over to the following season (Example: football player transfers after week six. The player will be ineligible for the remaining four games of that season and will not regain eligibility at that school until game two of the next football season to satisfy the 50 percent penalty.).

**660 opposed; 70 in favor**

**9.) Bylaw 4-7-2, Transfers, Exception 1, Parents' Bona Fide Move**

This adds a provision that would permit the Commissioner's Office to extend conditional eligibility for up to 90 days when one parent cannot make a move and the former residence is more than 100 miles from the current residence in Ohio. The change also makes it clear that regardless of whether the move is from outside of Ohio into Ohio or between two districts in Ohio, the student's only choices are the public high school in the new district of residence or any non-public high school.

**682 in favor; 50 opposed**

**10.) Bylaw 4-7-2, Transfers, Exception 2, Legal Change of Custody**

This permits the Commissioner's Office to approve transfer eligibility after considering extenuating circumstances that may compel a student who is 18 and no longer eligible for a legal change of custody to transfer schools and move into a new residence with a parent.

**681 in favor; 51 opposed**

**11.) Bylaw 4-7-2, Transfers, Exception 3 — School Closes**

This adds language to clarify that once a student enrolls in another high school, the student's eligibility is at that high school insofar as transfer is concerned. In addition, notes have been added to refer members to Bylaw 4-7-4 when closings within a multiple high school public school district occurs and indicates that the exception does not apply to community schools or non-chartered non-public ('08) schools.

**691 in favor; 39 opposed**

**12.) Bylaw 4-7-2, Transfers, New Exception 7 — Anti-Harassment, Anti-Intimidation, Anti-Bullying**

This new exception addresses cases of severe harassment, intimidation and/or bullying that place a student's health and welfare in jeopardy should the student continue enrollment at a high school. Consideration for this exception would require documentation from the school in accordance with established Ohio Department of Education or Board of Education/governing board policies as outlined in the proposed five steps within this exception.

**539 in favor; 192 opposed**

**13.) Bylaw 4-9-3, Mass Marketing, Permissible Locations of Open Houses**

An issue that was narrowly defeated in 2013, this proposal allows schools to request a waiver that their open houses be permitted to be conducted in another location other than the high school campus that is open to the general public. This would exclude private clubs, a private room within a public facility or a private home that is not accessible to all persons.

**529 in favor; 200 opposed**

**14.) Bylaw 4-9, Mass Marketing, Attendance at a Contest or Athletic Related Event**

This clarifies that an invitation to attend a high school contest or athletic related event is to watch the contest only and shall not include running out onto the contest venue with the team or standing on the sidelines and shall not include locker room visits, pre-contest meals with the high school team and/or any other interaction with the team prior to or after the contest.

**553 in favor; 175 opposed**

**15.) Bylaw 4-3-4, Semesters for Grades 7-8 (New)**

Related to the eight-semester high school rule, this amendment permits students who complete the sixth grade and before entering the ninth grade eligibility for athletic competition for a period not to exceed four semesters taken in order of attendance, whether the student participates or not. The issue was raised by administrators who are concerned about the "redshirting" of students in grades seven and eight.

**377 in favor; 64 opposed**

**820 high school ballots were mailed, 737 ballots were returned including 1 invalid (90 percent)**

**817 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade ballots were mailed, 445 ballots were returned including 4 invalid (54 percent)**