

2026 Annual Questionnaire

The purpose of the Annual Questionnaire is to obtain a consensus from member schools which will aid the Board of Directors in determining changes desired in interscholastic regulations and in planning the type of program the majority desires. **THIS IS NOT A BALLOT**, but is an important instrument of communication between member schools and the Board of Directors. Included within this document you will find background information pertaining to each questionnaire item. The background information will assist your understanding of the rationale for each questionnaire item. Only the actual questions will appear on the online Questionnaire located on the MSHSAA website. **The school's superintendent or principal may access the questionnaire which will be online from February 16 through 2.** No other school personnel's log-in is eligible for marking the school's choices.

Several topics from the area meeting had strong support and will be on the ballot. Those topics include: Special Transfer Exception of Refugee/Political Asylum, Special Transfer Exception of Active-Duty Military Personnel, Scholar Bowl Contest Limitations, Speech and Debate Additional Contest, Dance Contest Limits, Tennis Jamboree, and Coach/Director Requirements.

You are strongly urged to inform members of your staff who are engaged in the activities program of the questions on this questionnaire and to get their input on those items that will affect their specific programs before you complete the Questionnaire online.

Online Process for School Principal or District Superintendent:

- 1) Go to www.mshsaa.org
- 2) Log in with your username and password.
- 3) Go to your school home page if the log in doesn't take you there automatically.
- 4) Select "Ballots and Questionnaires"
- 5) Select "2025 Annual Questionnaire"
- 6) Review each question and complete your answers.
- 7) At the bottom of the questionnaire, click on the SUBMIT BALLOT button.
- 8) Then click on the CONFIRM SUBMIT button to finalize your answers.

If you have COMMENTS or questions regarding an item on the Questionnaire, please email them to: email@mshsaa.org.

Topics Reviewed at the 2026 Area Meetings

Topic 1: Transfer Topic – One-Time Transfer Exception

BACKGROUND: The Ad Hoc Committee on Transfers asked the Board of Directors to engage schools in a discussion on a one-time transfer exception that would allow a student to gain full eligibility upon a first transfer, provided their not evidence of athletic reasons or undue influence and academic and citizenship standards have been met. Several state associations have recently moved in this direction or created structured "one-time" pathways as a way to simplify administration.

A one-time full eligibility transfer would need to be defined by how long the opportunity would last and/or at what grade(s) would a student have access. Additionally, will there be any change in the existing transfer exceptions for any future transfers beyond the first?

Some states allow for the one-time transfer if it happens before the first day of the sophomore year. Some extend that to the first day of the junior year, and some all the way to senior. Questions like these would be among those to consider if the MSHSAA membership moves forward with this concept: would the exception be used for junior high students or just high school; what are the impacts educationally; what are the impacts competitively?

Some rough data collected from our system since we began entering transfers onto our website is below. This data describes how many transfers submitted are from a particular student over their HS career.

Number of HS Transfers	Total Number from 2007-Current Year	Number Per Year Average	Percentage
All Transfers	72,419	4023	100%
1 Transfer	68,852	3825	95.07%
2 Transfers	3280	182	4.53%
3 or More Transfers	287	16	0.40%

**Table Information:

- Transfers at Promotion were excluded from this data
- These are rough numbers, matching on student first name, last name, and date of birth – so the numbers might be slightly bigger as some duplicates will be missed
- This data begins in 2007, so 18 total years
- Archived students are excluded as these could be inadvertent duplicates

Area Meeting Polling Totals:

Support for adding the One-time Transfer Exception – 48% Yes, 52% No

Response to potential limitations on a scale of 1 (Not Important) to 5 (Very Important):

- Should this be in addition to Transfer at Promotion – 3.59
- Transfer at Promotion Should Count for Students Not at a Feeder – 3.43
- Should be Limited to Prior to the 5th Semester – 3.64
- Should be Limited to Prior to the 7th Semester - 3.70

QUESTION(S)

VOTING: All Member Schools

1. Are you in favor of amending By-Law 3.10.4, to add a One-Time transfer exception in addition to the Transfer at Promotion? YES or NO?
3. Should this One-Time transfer exception be eligible only to students prior to the student's 5th semester? YES or NO?
4. Should this One-Time transfer exception be eligible only to students prior to the student's 7th semester? YES or NO?

Topic 2: Transfer Topic – Non-Resident Parent Employee Transfer Exception

BACKGROUND: Currently, a student who transfers to a school where a parent works but the student does not live within the boundary can only access full eligibility if the situation meets an applicable exception that is not directly tied to the parent's employment.

This proposal seeks to add a transfer exception for children of personnel who accept employment in a school district where they do not reside. The intent is to provide an employment-related benefit that may assist member schools in recruiting and retaining qualified staff. Allowing children to attend and participate immediately at the school where the parent is newly employed.

Considerations:

- Scope of Eligibility: The exception would apply to certified professional positions (teachers, administrators, or other educational professionals). Should it be expanded to include all regular employees as defined by state statute as 20 hours per week? [In Missouri Statute 167.151 Section 5 details that a teacher and regular employee of a school district can bring their child with them to the district. Section 6(b) define “regular employee” as an individual who devotes at least 20 paid hours per week fulfilling employment requirements or providing services to or for the benefit of a school district, public school in such district, or charter school in any position that is covered by a retirement system created under chapter 169.]
- District Structure: In multi-high-school districts, the exception would not apply to transfers between schools within the same district. The intent is limited to district-to-district employment changes.
- Hiring Benefit: This provision would serve as a recruiting and retention benefit for member schools, providing flexibility to attract professional educators who may not reside in the hiring district.

Area Meeting Polling Totals:

Support for adding a special transfer for students of Non-Resident Parent Employee Transfer Exception – 89% Yes, 11% No

Response to which level of qualifying employee that would qualify for this exception – Less Restrictive (all regular employees as defined above) 57%; More Restrictive (only certified and/or contracted professional positions) 43%

QUESTION(S)

VOTING: All Member Schools

1. Are you in favor of amending By-Law 3.10.4, to add a special transfer exception for students of Non-Resident Parent Employee transfers? YES or NO?
2. Which level of non-resident parent employee should be included in this transfer exception? CERTIFIED AND/OR CONTRACTED PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS or REGULAR EMPLOYEES AS DEFINED BY STATUTE (REGULAR EMPLOYEE WORKING AT LEAST 20 HOURS/WEEK)

Topic 3: Speech and Debate

BACKGROUND: The current allowable earliest start time of 2:00 pm on Fridays for Speech & Debate competitions creates time constraints and can force competitions to last long into the night on Fridays and a majority of the day on Saturday. The Speech & Debate Advisory Committee has proposed a change to move up the allowable Friday start time to 12:00 pm.

Current: No interscholastic speech event shall start before 4:00pm on a school day, except that events may start as early as 2:00 pm on Friday.

Proposals: There are two proposals to consider. The membership could vote to change the start time on Friday from 2:00 pm to 12:00 pm. The other option would be to eliminate the start time limitation for Speech & Debate, making this more aligned with other sports and activities.

Area Meeting Polling Totals:

Support for allowing an earlier Speech & Debate competition start time on Friday from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm – 85% Yes, 15% No

Support for eliminating the start time limitation for Speech & Debate competitions on school days – 81% Yes, 19% No

QUESTION(S)

VOTING: All Member Schools

1. Are you in favor of any change to the start time allowable for Speech and Debate? YES or NO
2. Which level of allowance do you support? CHANGE START TIME ON FRIDAYS FROM 2:00 PM TO 12:00 PM or ELIMINATE THE START TIME LIMITATION ON SCHOOL DAYS

Topic 4: Non-School Competition Exception

BACKGROUND: The Fall Non-School Competition Exception allows students to continue participation in non-school competition and practice through the day prior to the first allowable contest, provided approval is granted by a school administrator. Girls soccer was granted an exception that mirrors the Fall Non-School Competition Exception last year, due to the fact there is no accepted national season for the sport and boys soccer, as a fall sport, had access to the fall exception.

Four other sports from the fall that has access to the fall exception are in the spring: golf, tennis, softball and volleyball. There has been concern expressed that the soccer exception should have been extended to these four sports due to the equity of the fall season to the spring.

Expanding the Non-School Competition Exception to all spring sports would align spring opportunities with those currently available in the fall and for girls soccer, while still maintaining school administrative oversight. The discussion should consider competitive equity, student-athlete workload, season preparation, and consistency across sports when evaluating whether such an expansion is appropriate.

Alternatively, the option exists to eliminate all exceptions, giving no exception to fall sports, also creating equitable access. Further, the exception could be extended to include all sports.

Considerations:

- Equity between the seasons The membership has always made efforts to provide an equitable opportunity between different seasons of the same sport.
- Impact on school teams The 14-day conditioning requirement and maintaining administrative oversight will mitigate.

Area Meeting Polling Totals:

Support for expanding the Spring Non-School Competition Exception from just girls soccer to all spring sports - 75%
Yes, 25% No

Support for expanding the Non-School Competition Exception to all sports in all seasons - 72% Yes, 28% No

QUESTION(S)

VOTING: All Member High Schools

1. Should the Non-School Competition Exception be expanded to include all spring sports during the period between the first allowable practice date and the first allowable contest date? YES or NO
2. Should the Non-School Competition Exception be expanded to include all sports in all seasons during the period between the first allowable practice date and the first allowable contest date? YES or NO

Other Topics

Topic 5: Cooperative Sponsorship Allowances

BACKGROUND: As approved cooperative sponsorships have increased, it has come to the attention of the membership that some by-laws need to be expanded to include students of those approved cooperative sponsorships.

By-Law 3.14.6 outlines the parameters for Out-of-Season Sports Conditioning. Under the Allowable Participants, the non-host school students in an approved cooperative sponsorship are not included; therefore, not allowing them to participate in out-of-season sports conditioning with the teammates and coaches from the host school. These students are also not included as allowable participants in By-Law 3.14.7 Out-of-Season Sport-Specific Practice Periods and 3.15.3 and 3.15.4 Limits on Contact (Summer).

QUESTION(S)

VOTING: All Member Schools

1. Would you support adding language to By-Law 3.14.6, 3.14.7, 3.15.3, and 3.15.4 that include students of an approved cooperative sponsorship schools as allowable participants? YES or NO

Topic 6: Seeding Final Site (Possible Future Area Meeting Topic)

BACKGROUND: The Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA) has historically balanced two foundational principles when structuring championship competition: competitive equity and geographic representation. As championship formats evolve, particularly at the final site level, the discussion of seeding presents both opportunities and challenges within that balance.

Seeding at the final championship site could be implemented to: ensure the highest-performing teams are placed in positions that reflect their demonstrated regular season and postseason success; avoid semi-final match ups between top-ranked teams that could otherwise occur due to predetermined bracket placement; enhance the overall competitive integrity of the championship event; and increase spectator interest and perceived fairness of the tournament structure.

Because all qualifying teams have already advanced through the established district/sectional process and are present at the final site, seeding at this stage does not change which regions are represented. This approach allows MSHSAA to maintain the integrity of geographic representation.

The development of a district seeding point system continues to move forward, with each sport's advisory committee currently establishing a maximum number for score differential to be used within the point system. Based on this ongoing work, the 2026–2027 school year is being targeted as a pilot year for implementation. This pilot phase would allow MSHSAA and member schools to evaluate the effectiveness of the point system, identify any necessary adjustments, and gather feedback before full implementation, expected for 2027-2028. Once this system is fully developed and implemented, the seeding at the final site could be done using the automatic seeding system.

For some individual-sport championships, such as Tennis and Wrestling, this model could be applied at the final site after district tournaments. This potential change would be dependent on the securing of/development, and implementation of an automated seeding system.

QUESTION(S)

VOTING: All Member Schools

1. Would you support adding language to board policy and sport specific manuals to seed the final four teams in the state team tournament? YES or NO

2. Would you support adding language to board policy and sport specific manuals to seed the final championship site in the sport of wrestling? YES or NO
3. Would you support adding language to board policy and sport specific manuals to seed the final championship site in the sport of individual tennis? YES or NO

Topic 7: Championship Factor (Informational Item to Be Used for the Ad Hoc Committee on Competitive Equity)

BACKGROUND: The Championship Factor was created to address competitive equity concerns between:

- Public schools, which by law must accept every student living in their district boundaries, and
- Private/charter schools, have the ability to manage school population by count and/or make-up.

The Championship Factor is a classification adjustment tool that uses postseason success to determine whether a school should move up in classification. It is designed to consider sustained postseason performance over time, rather than only enrollment size. The current Championship Factor uses a 6-year lookback. Points are earned based on the highest level of postseason finish. Only the highest finish counts (points are not stacked), and points stay at full value until they fall off after six years. The 6-year lookback is a by-law and any change must be done through a membership vote.

The Board sets policy that controls when points are accrued, how many points are accrued, and thresholds that trigger classification changes.

The Ad Hoc committee needs information they can use as they begin to study the competitive equity. The membership thinks about:

- Depreciating Point Model (Still 6 Years) -A model that keeps the 6-year lookback, but shifts the point system so
 - Recent postseason success counts more
 - Older success counts less over time (lessening impact)
- Removing the Movement Cap
 - No limits to the number of classes a school can move up
- Applying Championship Factor to All Member Schools

Under the proposed depreciation model, points are higher at each achievement level because they decrease over time., and thresholds would be adjusted to fit the new model. Please take a few minutes to watch this video explaining a depreciation model of the championship assignments.

Explanation of the Depreciation Model of Postseason Success Points

QUESTION(S)

VOTING: All Member Schools

1. While maintaining By-Law 5.1.7 (6-year look-back), would you support adjusting the board policy which includes Championship Factor so that more recent postseason successes have greater weight and older postseason successes are gradually depreciated in the point total used for modification of classification? YES or NO
2. Would you support adjusting the board policy on Championship Factor so there is no limitation on the number of classes the championship points would move a school? YES or NO
3. Would you support a change in By-Law 5.1.7 on Championship Factor for this by-law to apply to all member schools? YES or NO