



Missouri State High School Activities Association

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For Immediate Release

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Urhahn to Retire at end of 2021-22 School Year

Columbia, Mo. – After 31 years in education, Kerwin Urhahn has announced his retirement upon completion of the 2021-22 school year. Joining the Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA) staff as Executive Director in 2006, Urhahn became the sixth individual in the 96-year existence of the Association to serve in that role.

Prior to joining the MSHSAA staff, Urhahn was a high school math teacher, athletic director, high school principal, and superintendent of schools. He taught all levels of high school mathematics and coached volleyball, basketball, baseball and golf at Bloomfield High School from 1991 to 1997. He assumed the role of assistant to the principal and athletic director at Bloomfield in 1994 and was named principal there in 1997. He accepted the position of superintendent of schools for the Portageville School District in 2000.

Considered by his peers as an administrator with passion, vision and dedication, Urhahn noted when hired as Executive Director that his vision for the future of the Association is one based on leadership and communication.

"I want to see MSHSAA as a user-friendly and approachable organization by its membership," he said. "I want schools to know that we're here for them to assist in advancing programs at the local level; that we provide services to assist them."

Since joining the Association, Urhahn has overseen many improvements to technology used by the MSHSAA office and staff. In addition, the complete rework of the MSHSAA website, Urhahn's vision helped turn the MSHSAA website into more of a business tool for member schools, helping upload rosters and eligibility information.

Expansion in technology is not the only expansion that has taken place under Urhahn's guidance. Broadcasts of championship events grew from one football game and two basketball games when he started as Executive Director to a total of 177, including semifinals as well as championships in some activities. Expanded classifications in many sports led to more schools finding success in post-season play. This also meant more individual success in many sports such as tennis, track and field and cross country. The highlight of this expansion may have been the addition of a girls' classification in wrestling which currently has over 1,800 female students participating.

Urhahn has also taken the lead in dealing with multiple legislative challenges and assisted lead counsel with court cases filed against the Association.

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"The MSHSAA promotes the value of participation, sportsmanship, team play and personal excellence to develop citizens who make positive contributions to their community and support the democratic principles of our state and nation."

Urhahn to Retire

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A member of numerous professional organizations, he was a representative on the Missouri Association of School Administrators (MASA) State Accountability Committee, and also served on the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education MSIP Performance Committee. In 2003, he was elected as the 10th representative to the MSHSAA Board of Directors from the southeast region and also served on the MSHSAA Southeast Investigative Committee from 1998-2001.

Urhahn served a four-year term on the National Federation of High School State Associations (NFHS) Board of Directors, as well as serving as that board's President during the 2020-21 school year. Currently, Urhahn also serves on the Council on Standards for International Education Travel (CSIET) Board of Directors and served as its President for the 2020-21 year also.

He was a member of the inaugural NFHS Technology Committee, served on a strategic planning committee for the NFHS, and presented multiple times at the NFHS Summer Meeting.

"I would like to thank the MSHSAA Board, present and past. All my staff over the last 16 years that kept going in the right direction," Urhahn said to the Board of Directors. "Thanks to all my staff who have put up with me for the last 16 years. I could not have done any of this without my team around me. The assistants in the office do not get enough thanks and praise for all they do, and put up with when we all get intense, nervous, and tight as championships approach and run because we want them to go smoothly. None of that happens without the assistants that make sure we have everything done and prepared for when the kids get there."

About the Association: MSHSAA is a not-for-profit association of member schools. The current MSHSAA membership includes 730 schools, including 593 senior high schools. The Association annually awards 97 team state championships in 14 activities, and oversees interscholastic competition in 16 activities in all. Changes, additions and modifications to the Association's by-laws and constitution are proposed and voted upon annually by the superintendents or principals of its member schools. The Association also registers and trains more than 5,000 athletic officials each year, and provides numerous educational services and materials for administrators, coaches, students and officials.

MSHSAA Executive Directors

Carl Burris + 1926-1948

T.L Noel 1948-1957

Irvin A. Keller 1957-1977

Jack W. Miles 1977-1992

Becky Oakes 1992-2006

Kerwin Urhahn 2006-2022

(+) Part-time secretary-treasurer

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