



Oregon School Activities Association

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April 20, 2023

TO: Officials Associations, Superintendents, Principals, Athletic Directors, and Coaches

FROM: Kris Welch, Assistant Executive Director

SUBJECT: OSAA Officials Recruitment and Retention Committee Update

The Officials Recruitment and Retention Committee conducted an organizational meeting on Thursday, April 8, 2023, at the OSAA Offices in Wilsonville and via ZOOM in a “hybrid” meeting. The purpose of this Committee is to make recommendations to the OSAA Executive Board related to increasing the total number of registered game officials and improving retention rates.

The Committee reviewed its charge and was provided an overview of the history of registration numbers for all sports in which the OSAA certifies officials. The group discussed recruitment and retention issues that are directly impacting officiating ranks. Following this conversation, the group reached consensus on the following:

- The recruitment and retention of game officials is a responsibility shared by OSAA member schools, OAOA, OACA and OADA. All affiliated groups must play a role in solving this issue.
- Current trends indicate that we’ve had a slight uptick in specific sports registrations this year. This is a positive sign, but we also know there fewer unique registrations than 10 years ago. There needs to continue to be a concerted effort by all stakeholders to help not only with the recruitment of officials, but also strategies to retain these officials.
- The significant increase in officiating fees approved for next year will be a great start and help with recruitment, but we need additional ideas as well.
- The Committee reviewed all initiatives/approaches currently in place:
 - NFHS
 - Become an Official campaign, including email sent to state office which is forwarded to the local commissioner in that area.
 - Bad Bench Behavior
 - Officials Appreciation weeks.
 - Improved communication and action from NFHS Officials liaison (Dana Pappas).
 - OSAA
 - Creation of NewOfficials.org.
 - PA reads at playoff and state championship final sites regarding recruitment.
 - Website resources; recruitment ideas, benefits, online advertising with PSA’s, flyers that local associations can personalize.
 - Local Associations
 - Recruiting Committees that attend job fairs, promote via social media, etc. As an example, Portland Football engages interested officials in the off season and gets them “thinking” football and staying engaged with meetings, quizzes, etc. Even officials who sign up too late to officiate during the season get partnered up, attend pregame meetings, and are involved in the games on Friday night in some capacity.
 - Know Your Role
 - OSAA is looking into potentially partnering up with this Southern Oregon group.

- The Committee supports the current organizational structure that relies on local associations to recruit and retain members but believes that the sharing of best practices related to recruitment and retention of game officials can be improved.
- The Committee discussed other avenues to recruit officials, such as making contact with college intramural programs and see the individuals they are using to officiate their groups. Accessing lists of graduating seniors from high school coaches in all sports has generated interest in some areas but needs to be approached from a statewide perspective.
 - Have officials use social media in a positive way, telling their story, having associations identify those officials within their local group who would be a positive example/influencer.
 - Invite officials to attend parent nights at their schools where they can make a connection.
 - Create flyers/images for schools and coaches to distribute within their communities.
 - Create a toolkit to help those Associations that may not have the resources to create things on their own.
- Member schools have the responsibility to develop a positive relationship with their local associations and to create a safe welcoming atmosphere for officials before, during, and after the contest.

The Committee requests that the focus of testimony for the next meeting be directed at the following topic:

- Proposals related to increasing the number of registered officials in all sports.
- Proposals to help in the retention of officials.
- Identifying barriers as to why people don't want to join officiating.

The OSAA staff will provide a Committee update, similar to this one, to all officials associations, superintendents, principals, and athletic directors following each meeting. The Committee roster, charge, and any additional committee information is available at <http://www.osaa.org/governance/committees>.

Written suggestions and proposals, as well as other recruitment and retention related ideas should be emailed to the OSAA at krisw@osaa.org. Any communication received by the OSAA will be shared with all committee members for review and discussion.

The next public meeting of the Officials Recruitment and Retention Committee will be at 9am on Wednesday, May 10, 2023, at the OSAA office in Wilsonville. The general format for the meeting will be for the Committee to receive public testimony followed by a closed work session.

The Committee appreciates your support and encourages your participation in this process. Please do not hesitate to contact Kris Welch (krisw@osaa.org) at the OSAA if you have any questions.