



OSAA Equity and Diversity Newsletter

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S.T.A.R. Initiative Roll Out August 2021

The STAR Initiative (Safety, Tolerance, Acceptance and Respect) is built around racial equity awareness, action and resources on how to prepare for, educate and interrupt discriminatory behaviors occurring during high school events. This initiative is designed to provide the context identifying the need to continue the education for all participants in OSAA events and the ways in which actions can be taken to eradicate discriminatory behaviors safely and respectfully.

As we put together the final details for the August roll out of the S.T.A.R. initiative for our Association, we wanted to give you links to assets that can be used as you prepare for the seasons ahead in the 2021-22 Association Year. We hope that you will find the art, video link, and other resources useful as we spread this essential message across all of our Member Schools. The OSAA Staff will work with the Association at the Administrator's Workshops in August to review resources and ways to implement them. The video is available with other resources on the OSAA website on the [S.T.A.R. and Resources](#) page.



Trainings Available

- The OSAA [Racial Equity in School Athletics and Activities Training](#): A 20-minute online course aimed at starting the conversation at your school, with your coaches, your community and your students on ways to better the experience for all participants, but especially for our students of color across the state of Oregon.
- The NFHS [Implicit Bias Course](#): Implicit biases are the automatic reactions we have toward other people based on our past learning and expectations. Studies show that Implicit Bias affects the experiences of students in school athletic and activity programs. The NFHS has partnered with Project Implicit to bring you this course, Implicit Bias.

S.T.A.R. MISSION STATEMENT

To create a safe, welcoming & validating environment in Oregon schools by specifically disrupting racism and combating discrimination so EVERY student can thrive as they are.

NFHS and OSAA Rule Assessment Process

The OSAA staff has been working closely with the NFHS, the OSAA Equity and Diversity Committee, the OSAA Executive Board and other important stakeholders in assessing the cultural inclusiveness of various rules and policies. During the softball rule change process in the Spring of 2021, the OSAA submitted a proposal to the NFHS to allow hair beads to be worn while competing in softball. The proposal was accepted by both the softball rule change committee and the NFHS rules committee and the 2021-22 NFHS Softball rules will include the allowance of hair beads.

Dr. Karissa Niehoff has expressed her expectation for the NFHS to continue to evaluate playing rules to ensure both the safety of students as well as confirm the rule is inclusive of all students. Dr. Niehoff has stated the following in an article titled *Player Equipment Changes Highlight Softball Rules Changes; Rule Banning Beads in Hair Removed*.

“The NFHS, in its effort to be a learning organization and one that is founded on the basis of inclusion is striving to work with our young participants in our efforts to celebrate the beautiful diversity that continues to increase,” said Dr. Karissa Niehoff, NFHS executive director, in a recent *The NFHS Voice*. “We are excited about that and want to support that. And while we will always strive to keep kids safe and keep games being played the way they were designed to be played, we do want to recognize the importance of a young person’s identity.” Full Article can be found [here](#).

The OSAA researched all of the activities offered in their association regarding the rules that prohibit athletes from wearing hard hair adornments while participating. The activities that currently have NFHS rules that do not allow hard adornments include basketball, cheer, football, soccer, volleyball and wrestling. The OSAA worked with other rule governing bodies to determine where hard hair adornments were allowed. Volleyball and Cheerleading both have other rule governing bodies that allow for hard hair adornments to be worn. For basketball, football, soccer and wrestling there was no other rule developing organization that allowed for hard hair adornments to be worn while participating because of the risk the adornment could pose to both the player wearing the hair adornment and the players surrounding the player wearing the adornment. However, the OSAA Executive Board and the OSAA Equity and Diversity Committee has tasked the OSAA staff with continuing to research injury data as well as collaborate with the NFHS regarding whether or not hard adornments should be allowed in other activities where they are currently prohibited due to safety. An excerpt of the [OSAA Hair Adornment Executive Board policy](#) can be found on page 3 in this newsletter.



Contact the OSAA

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OSAA Hair Adornment Board Policy

The OSAA aims to be inclusive of all students from varying cultural backgrounds to access athletic and activity programs provided at member schools, while providing a fair and safe environment. This policy was developed inclusive of the language established in Oregon House Bill 2935 and in collaboration with the OSAA Equity and Diversity Committee and other stakeholders. The OSAA recognizes that this policy will need to be reviewed on a regular basis and continued education to member schools will be required to ensure understanding of this policy. The OSAA recognizes the value of athletics and activities for all students and the potential for inclusion to reduce harassment, bullying and barriers faced by certain students. The OSAA also recognizes the concerns of students, parents, and coaches to ensure a fair, equitable, and safe competitive environment.

Activities Allowing Hair Adornments as Exception to NFHS Rules. House Bill 2935 requires OSAA to implement equity focused policies that balance the health, safety, and reasonable accommodation needs of participants on an activity-by-activity basis. After careful review, and in alignment with House Bill 2935 and other rule-governing bodies, the OSAA will allow hair adornments in the following activities, despite current NFHS rules prohibiting them.

Cheerleading – Currently prohibited per NFHS Spirit Safety Rule: 2.1.5 Situation A.

OSAA Interpretation – Hair must be worn in a manner that is appropriate for the activity involved. Hair adornment(s) must be secured.

Volleyball – Currently prohibited per NFHS Volleyball Rule 4.1.6.

OSAA Interpretation – Hair with adornments must be secured so as not to present a safety hazard to the player, teammates, or opponents. If the hair adornment(s) become dislodged prior to or during competition, it must be secured before the participant can return to play.

Activities Adhering to NFHS Rules Prohibiting Hair Adornments. House Bill 2935 requires OSAA to implement equity focused policies that balance the health, safety, and reasonable accommodation needs of participants on an activity-by-activity basis. After careful review, and in alignment with House Bill 2935 and other rule-governing bodies, the OSAA is adhering to NFHS rules prohibiting hair adornments in the following activities due to health and safety considerations.

Basketball – Prohibited per NFHS Basketball Rule 3-5 Article 4.

Football – Prohibited per NFHS Football Rule 1-5 Article 3.

Soccer – Prohibited per NFHS Soccer Rule 4-2 Article 1.

Wrestling – Prohibited per NFHS Wrestling Rules 3-1-4b and 4-2-1.

Activities Already Allowing Hair Adornment per NFHS Rules. OSAA-sanctioned activities where hair adornments are already allowed by NFHS or rule-governing bodies.

Cross Country

Dance

Baseball

Golf

Softball

Swimming

Tennis

Track and Field