



Oregon School Activities Association

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May 11, 2023

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

FROM: Kris Welch, Assistant Executive Director

SUBJECT: OSAA Officials Recruitment and Retention Committee Update – May 10, 2023, meeting

The Officials Recruitment and Retention Committee conducted their second meeting overall and first with a public open session for testimony on Wednesday, May 10, 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.

There were no attendees seeking public testimony, and the Committee starting with the Discussion topics. Rob Younger attended the NFHS Officials Consortium 2.0 in Indianapolis and gave a synopsis of the Conference:

- There are three identities involved in high school sports and all have an equal stake in the game;
 - Coaches
 - Players
 - Officials
- NFHS has a rockstar in their office strictly to help with the officials, Dana Pappas and she talked about identifying external and internal barriers.
 - External barriers include bad bench behavior and the lack of administrators to supervise spectator behavior.
 - Internal barriers include overworking the officials and they are getting tired and burned out; professional development and growth opportunities for officials so they can improve their skill set and be successful officials.
- State Associations need to work with their Officials Associations to conduct these professional growth opportunities. Next summer the OAOA is organizing a Leadership workshop for their commissioners and Board members.
- Role of the State Associations to use foundation monies to help with equipment costs of the new and upcoming officials. Using the website to promote and make for easy registration and information for the new official to get connected immediately.
- National Organizations have the coaches, players and officials work together to set the gameday environment. They can help make the impressions of the officials as human beings and positive individuals; and can/have created PSA to help with recruitment using themes like giving back to the game.
- Setting standard expectations for schools in hosting officials by creating a template to help guide schools.
- Having schools require parent meetings where the coach can talk about setting the expectations for fam behavior and inviting officials to speak at those meetings as well.
- Having students or athletes read the pregame scripts instead of the PA and having those scripts read just prior to the National Anthem to ensure spectator attention. These scripts, while saying the same message need to be changed and refreshed often.
- Best Practices

- Internal Barriers
 - Educating the local assigners in assigning officials in a positive way especially with the newer/younger officials. Communicating to them on how to move up and do higher level games and making sure they have a mentorship and evaluation program in place. Having the officials (veterans and rookies embrace each other and create fellowship opportunities with other officials.
- These topics lead to additional conversations on what we can do to help with recruitment and retention.
 - Identifying why officials are leaving (retirement, poor pay, burnout) the best tool for retention is recruitment. OAOA will work with Commissioners on creating a survey for them to have their officials who are leaving fill out and send those results to the OAOA.
 - Larry Staab referenced having a document on Pathway to Success on helping recruitment. Larry will send the OSAAS that document and send that out at the Commissioner's meeting.
 - Trying to create an "area/city" Recruitment group. Having flyers made for distribution and social media with contact information of all sports in a particular area for those individuals who are interested in officiating.
 - Adding a line for Recruiting Chair on the Associations Board information.
- Try and get in the high schools/colleges to educate on officiating, instead of creating a new course, some schools have a Senior seminar or Advisory class and with that maybe officials can come in as guest speakers to talk on those sports. We can try and find out which colleges have officiating classes, EOU offers them and maybe the OAOA can collect their curriculum to use or add to what they already teach.
- Creating positive recognition within the local association and promote that in Social Media i.e. Beyond the Whistle – award to have celebrate all the good things each association is doing. Making sure the local Commissioners are keeping track of the number of years in the profession for the officials and honoring them with certificates at their end of the season banquets.

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 in the late summer, date and time to be determined, 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.