



OSAA Equity and Diversity Newsletter

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 8

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OSAA Equity Resources

As the OSAA continues to raise awareness and provide resources in the area of racial equity to schools across Oregon, the OSAA Support and Equity area of the website has continued to become more and more popular. Here is some of what is currently available under [Training and Resources](#):

Training

- » [OSAA Racial Equity in School Athletics and Activities Training](#)
- » [Racial Equity Training Memo - Sept. 16, 2020](#)
- » [List of online training course completions](#)

Equity and Diversity Newsletters

- » [October 2020](#)
- » [November 2020](#)
- » [December 2020](#)
- » [January 2021](#)
- » [February 2021](#)
- » [March 2021](#)
- » [April 2021](#)

RISE to WIN

- » [Rise to Win website](#)
- » [Positive Coaching Alliance: Sports as a Vehicle for Social Change module](#)
- » [Positive Coaching Alliance: Equality vs. Equity module](#)
- » [Understanding Our Identities Workshop, November 18 Follow-Up handout](#)
- » [Perspective Taking Workshop, February 10 Follow-Up handout](#)
- » [RISE Leadership Workshop Series](#)

S.T.A.R. MISSION STATEMENT

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

NFHS: What Have We Learned During the Pandemic in High School Sports and Performing Arts?

By: Dr. Karissa Niehoff, NFHS on April 14, 2021

We are excited about a potential full return to competition this fall for high school athletics and performing arts programs. With the expectation that a majority of adults will have received the COVID-19 vaccine, and perhaps many young people, there is a hope that all states will be able to return to “normalcy” when schools open this fall.

While there is great optimism about having students back in their favorite sport or activity, and fans back to support these student participants, we must be careful not to forget what we have learned during this unprecedented pandemic. The struggles we have faced over the past year have reminded us of many significant aspects of participation in sports and performing arts activities.

So, what must we remember?

- **The Importance of Participation.** Participation in high school activity programs provides students many benefits beyond what they learn in the classroom. They learn teamwork – how to work together to produce positive outcomes. Through participation in athletics and other activities, students learn self-discipline, build self-confidence and develop skills to handle competitive situations. All of these experiences support growth and development. While success and playing in state championships is an extra benefit of education-based activity programs, nothing is more important than students having the opportunity to interact with their peers in sports and performing arts programs.
- **The Mental and Emotional Health of Students is Tied to Participation.** In a study conducted by the University of Wisconsin’s School of Medicine examining the impact of school closures on the health of more than 3,000 Wisconsin high school athletes, 65 percent of those surveyed reported symptoms of anxiety, and 68 percent reported symptoms of depression. There was a 50 percent reduction in physical activity, and a significantly lower report of quality of life. Involvement in high school sports and activities is absolutely vital to the social, emotional and mental health of high school students.
- **We Must Be Thankful and Appreciative.** The pandemic hopefully has helped us to become better people – thankful and appreciative for what we have. For the first time in the lives of most individuals, normal daily activities were essentially gone – in an instant – and for a period of time the future regarding return to “normal” life was uncertain, and a bit scary. Hopefully, those who may have held critical perspectives about education-based activities will now have more compassionate perspectives, and we all will realize the incredible blessing we have to be involved in high school athletics and activities programs.
- **There is More Than One Way to Accomplish Goals and Dreams.** The adage “we’ve always done it that way” didn’t apply during the pandemic. The shutdown and eventual return to play forced everyone to find new ways of accomplishing tasks. We all had to stretch beyond our comfort zone and into our creative zone, and, on the other side, we realized there were other ways to handle situations.

Coaches were faced with not being able to communicate with players face to face in the early days of the pandemic, but, because of the dedication and “out of the box” thinking of many, teams were able to stay united and active – thanks to various online communications platforms.

More so than in the past, with states returning to play at different times based on specific regulations, we learned there is no right or wrong in many cases. We have learned to be open to other people’s ideas, opinions and observations. We must continue to value the thoughts of other people and the value of collaboration.

- **We Must Show Respect for Opponents, Officials and Others.** In the case of contest officials, many individuals made great sacrifices to continue officiating during the pandemic – perhaps even putting their own lives at risk – in order for games to continue to be played. While we desperately need more individuals to officiate high school sports, we must ensure that they are treated with respect and protected from verbal and physical abuse. Let’s hope that the restoring of high school sports after the pandemic will bring a greater degree of respect for officials, opponents and others.
- **We Can Do Anything.** If students, coaches, parents, administrators and others can work successfully through the impact of COVID-19, they can handle any adversity that comes their way. The perseverance required to survive this past year should bring a new level of confidence about handling adversity in the future.
- **Fans and the Community At-Large are Essential for High School Sports and the Performing Arts.** We definitely have learned that nothing can replace parents, students and others in the community when it comes to lending positive support to high school students involved in sports and performing arts. We have missed the cheers, the applause, the encouragement... We have missed being together.

As we return to athletics and activities, let’s remember how difficult it was to be without them, and let’s be the best participants, coaches, fans and leaders that we can be!



RISE Workshop Handout: Sports as a Vehicle for Change

April 7, 2021 from 2:00 to 3:30pm PT, Zoom

RISE hosted an interactive 60-minute workshop for Oregon School Activities Association athletics directors and other stakeholders.

Over the course of the workshop attendees:

- Built awareness of the ways in which RISE and its partners are using sports as a vehicle to eliminate racial discrimination, champion social justice and improve race relations.
- Participated in a RISE Sports as a Vehicle Change module designed to examine examples of athletes using sports as a vehicle for social progress. They also explored ways in which they and the athletes they serve can use their own platforms to drive change.
- Became familiar with tools and resources available to increase understanding of racial equity and build cultural competence.
- Engaged in a closing Q&A period with RISE facilitators.

RISE resources related to the session topic of Sports as a Vehicle for Change include:

- [RISE resources page](#): see Sports as a Vehicle for Change discussion plan
- [RISE Digital Learning Series: Sports as a Vehicle for Change](#)

Additional resources are available on the [RISE website](#), including curriculum to use with athletes, coaches and staff.

- [Understanding our Identities](#) (activity facilitated November 18, 2020 with OSAA)
- [Diversity Concepts](#)
- [Inclusion, Exclusion & Racism](#)

Finally, RISE's [Digital Learning Series](#) provides videos, articles and activities on several topics including equality vs. equity, privilege, sports as a vehicle for change and empathy.

About RISE

RISE a national nonprofit that educates and empowers the sports community to eliminate racial discrimination, champion social justice and improve race relations. Through partnerships and programs, RISE inspires leaders in sports to create positive change on matters of race and equality.

Visit www.RISEtoWIN.org to learn more.

[Twitter & Instagram](#): @RISEtoWIN

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