

**RHODE ISLAND INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE
Principals' Committee on Athletics
June 15, 2026 @ 1:30 pm
RIIL Office
875 Centerville Road, Building #3
Warwick, RI 02886**

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Chairperson Caluori; Mmes., Craven and Ward; Messrs., Barbieri, Barr, Costa, Crowley, Fontaine, Gibbons, Green, Heath, Lazzareschi, McGair, Richard, Sollitto and Welsh

Also Present: Michael Lunney, Executive Director; Thomas Marcello, Assistant Executive Director; Susana Borges, Administrative Assistant; and Carolyn Thornton, Dir. of Communications & Student Services and Brendan McGair, *Pawtucket Times*

Absent: Messr., DeCiccio

The June meeting of the Principals' Committee on Athletics was called to order at 1:40 p.m.

PCOA MINUTES MARCH 23, 2026

On a motion made and seconded, the PCOA minutes from the March 23, 2026 meeting were unanimously (16-0) approved.

On a motion made and seconded, the Committee voted to move to Executive Session.

PCOA EXECUTIVE SESSION

The following items were discussed in Executive Session: RIIAAA – Officials; Spring Tournaments; eSports and Finance Playoff Formats.

On a motion made and seconded, the Committee voted to move out of Executive Session.

STEVEN CHAPMAN, GENERAL MANAGER, TPG

Mr. Lunney welcomed Mr. Steven Chapman, General Manager of marketing and sponsorships at Teall Properties Group (TPG) working on behalf of the RIIL.

RIIL FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Lunney reported on the Finance Committee meeting held on June 15, 2026. The items discussed and reviewed were the 2025-26 RIIL budget, RIIL annual audit is underway for 2025-26 and the proposed 2026-27 RIIL operating budget that was recommended by the Finance Committee. On a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously (16-0) approved the 2026-27 RIIL operating budget. Also, Mr. Stuart Peterson of Janney provided the Committee with an RIIL update on investments.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Lunney reported on the following:

- Year in review – the Committee watched a “Year in Review” video which highlighted the past years championships and league initiatives.
- 14th annual RIIL Annual Awards Breakfast, which honored 19 individuals, including 16 student-athletes, for their exemplary achievements over the past year, was held on April 30, 2026 at Chelo's Banquet Room, Warwick, RI.
- 12th annual Peanut Butter Express challenge leads to more than 1,500-pound donation to RI Community Food Bank. Congratulations to Smithfield HS, which led the statewide collection effort! Thank you to all schools for contributing to another successful Peanut Butter Express Challenge!
- Inside Out Coaching Initiative – NEW! Planning launch September of 2026 at Gillette Stadium, Foxborough, MA.
- URI – Graduate Pathway Program in Athletic Administration
- Legislation Update
 1. Anti-Hazing Policy
 2. Soft Helmet Covers – Football
 - School opportunity from the Shriners

- Summer Meetings
 1. Website and Technology Integration
 2. RIIL Staff Meetings
 3. Sport Committees
 4. Sports Medicine Advisory Committee
 5. RIIAAA Executive Board Meetings
 6. Fall Sports Coaches Interpretation Meeting (Virtual)
 7. NEW - Fall Sports Officials Meeting (Virtual)

2026-2027 PCOA MEETING DATES:

August 17 and November 16, 2026 and January 25, March 22 and June 14, 2027

2026-2027 FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING DATES:

August 17, 2026, March 22 and June 14, 2027

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

On a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously voted (16-0) to approve the following 2026 middle school spring sports championships: Boys' & Girls' Outdoor Track & Field, Softball and Baseball.

Mr. Lunney reported, in accordance with RIIL Rules and Regulations, a protest filed by Hope Highlands Middle School was upheld due to a misapplication on the NFHS softball rules by the umpires. As a result, with the cooperation of both school principals, Hope Highlands Middle School and Alan Shawn Feinsten Middle School were declared as the 2026 RIIL Middle School Softball Co-Champions.

RIIAAA REPORT AND NEW RIIAAA APPOINTMENT – JUSTIN ERICKSON

Mr. Marty Crowley, President of the RIIAAA submitted a recommendation on behalf of the RIIAAA regarding two (2) different tiers of yellow cards for boys and girls soccer. This proposal differentiates between yellow cards for technical violations and Tier 1 yellow cards for vulgar language, unsportsmanlike conduct and dissent. Tier 1 yellow cards and red cards will be counted toward the 16 card accumulation rules that disqualifies a team from the playoffs. On a motion made and seconded, the Committee voted to approve (15-1) the recommendation.

In addition, on behalf of the RIIAAA and on a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously (16-0) approved to put more structure in place when it comes to cheerleading. Since some fall squads may have already had tryouts, fall rules will go into effect in spring 2027. No competition cheerleading squads can start until the first day of winter sports which is November 30, 2026. Also discussed was the start date for winter middle school sports to start the same as winter high school sports. A survey was sent to all schools. The matter was tabled until the August PCOA meeting.

In addition, the Committee thanked Mr. Crowley, who concludes his two-year term serving on the PCOA as President of the RI Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (RIIAAA). He has served with distinction and dedication. As a result, and on a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously (16-0) approved the nomination of Mr. Justin Erickson, athletic director at Johnston High School to serve as the RIIAAA representative on the PCOA for a two-year term.

REQUESTS FROM SCHOOLS

None.

RULE VIOLATIONS

Central High School – Article 6, Section 6., Use of Ineligible Athlete (Indoor Track)

Based on information received by the RIIL Office, Central High School self-reported violations of Article 6, Section 6 of the RIIL Rules and Regulations regarding the use of ineligible athletes and failure to properly include student-athletes on the eligibility list. In accordance with RIIL Rules and Regulations, Central High School is hereby assessed a fine of \$200 for two separate eligibility list violations. Additionally, as required by Article 6, Section 6, in each instance, a letter is required to be submitted that states the reason(s) why the student's name was omitted from the eligibility list, the actions taken by the school in compliance with RIIL rules to the violations, and the steps that the school is taking to avoid any future rule violations. The RIIL relies on its member schools to support the agreed upon membership rules and to continue the required practice of self-reporting rule infractions. We commend the Central High School administration for their integrity in self-reporting these violations.

RIIL RULE REVISIONS

Mr. Lunney submitted a recommendation to establish clear and consistent criteria for school sponsorship of interscholastic teams, oversight of team operations, and the process by which new sports achieve official recognition and championship status within the RIIL. On a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously (16-0) approved the following section be incorporated into Article 15 of the RIIL Rules and Regulations “*Procedures to Establish Recognized Sports and RIIL Championship Status.*”

Article 15 – Procedures to Establish Recognized Sports and RIIL Championship Status

School and Team Competition

Sponsoring Interscholastic Teams

Interscholastic competition shall be defined as any athletic contest between students representing two or more member schools. Students are considered to represent their school in interscholastic competition when the school does any of the following:

- Provides partial or full support for the activity, including equipment, uniforms, transportation, or entry fees.
- Controls or administers the funds—regardless of source—required to operate the activity.
- Allows students to compete under the name of the school.
- Publicizes or promotes the activity through school announcements, bulletins, or publications beyond the typical level afforded to outside organizations.
- Presents or displays team or individual awards associated with the activity.

Authorization to Sponsor Teams

A school may sponsor a team for interscholastic competition in a sport when the following conditions are met:

- The governing body of the district or nonpublic school has approved participation in the sport and has notified the RIIL Executive Director in writing of its intent to sponsor the team.
- The school controls all funds necessary to operate the team, including coaching stipends, equipment, transportation, medical supervision, and facility use. Contributions or donations from outside organizations must be made in writing, acknowledged as school property, and approved by the principal or administrative head.
- The school agrees to comply with all applicable NFHS Rules in the Sport.
- The school agrees to comply with all applicable RIIL rules and regulations governing interscholastic athletics (i.e. eligibility, academics, etc).

Levels of Sport Development

The RIIL shall classify sports according to the number of schools fielding varsity teams as follows:

- **Level 1 – Developmental Sport:** Fewer than 25% of member schools that offer athletic programs at the varsity level. RIIL rules and regulations do not apply to Level 1 sports.
- **Level 2 – Championship Sport:** 25% or more member schools that offer athletic programs at the varsity level.
 - Schools may petition the Principals’ Committee on Athletics for official recognition of the sport.
 - Upon petition and adoption of a tournament proposal, the RIIL may establish a state championship for Level 2 sports.

Withdrawal of Recognition: If a sport falls below the school minimum participation threshold of Level 2 for two consecutive years, the RIIL may suspend recognition or the state tournament until participation levels are restored.

In addition, Mr. Lunney reported on preliminary research regarding the need for the Principals’ Committee on Athletics and RIIL member schools to update and revise the RIIL rules and regulations regarding athletic recruitment and coaching out of season. Due to the changing landscape surrounding high school coaches that also coach outside of school teams, the increase in transfers for athletic reasons and other concerns expressed by member schools, the RIIL and the Committee will be working on new policy and procedures that will be presented for consideration and Committee approval in the future.

OFFICIALS

None.

RIIL SPORTS MEDICINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SMAC)

Mr. Lunney reported on the following:

- Ortho RI – FREE Pre-Participation Physicals – available for schools
- Emergency Preparedness Summit for School and Athletic Leaders – opportunity
 1. November 18, 2026 at Moses Brown School
- Emergency Action Planning
 1. NFHS Learn FREE Online Course – EAST Planning
 2. Anyone Can Save a Life Program
 3. Pre-Game Safety Card
 4. Medical Coverage – Personnel Responsibilities

FALL SPORTS – START DATES

Mr. Lunney reported on the planning for the championship venues. The first day of practice for high school fall sports is August 17, 2026 and first day of practice for middle school fall sports is August 24, 2026

WINTER SPORTS – ALIGNMENTS

On a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously voted (16-0) to approve the following 2026 & 2027 alignment proposals: Boys' & Girls' Swimming; Boys' & Girls' Basketball and Gymnastics. The RIIL will send out the schedules to schools.

SPRING SPORTS AND CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr. Lunney expressed his thanks and gratitude to the RIIL staff, spring sport directors and committees, officials, athletic directors and principals for their cooperation in working together to navigate the annual challenges, especially during this unprecedented year, and conflicts with graduations, school events and weather interruptions.

On a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously voted (16-0) to approve the following 2026 Spring Sports Championships: Boys' and Girls' Outdoor Track & Field, Boys' and Girls' Lacrosse, Boys' Tennis, Boys' Volleyball, Unified Volleyball, Golf, Softball and Baseball.

The Committee then adopted the following closing motion: THAT ANY AND ALL MOTIONS, AMENDMENTS AND ACTIONS BY THE PRINCIPALS' COMMITTEE ON ATHLETICS AND THE EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF THE PRINCIPALS' COMMITTEE ON ATHLETICS TO THIS DATE BE REAFFIRMED AND RATIFIED.

The June meeting of the Principals' Committee on Athletics was adjourned at 4:09 P.M.

Signed:

Susana Borges, RIIL Board Secretary

Date: _____