Get the recognition you deserve for all the wonderful things you are already doing at your school and in the community. And... it’s easier than ever to enter!

What is it?
An award recognizing the top all-around programs in the country, which exemplify community service, outstanding school athletic support, spirit raising activities, academics, and overall, today’s cheerleading squad!

Who is Eligible?
Any high school cheerleading squad

What are the Prizes?
The overall winning team receives a trip to the National High School Cheerleading Championship for 2 coaches and 4 captains/squad members and...
- A feature spot on ESPN
- Awards for spring banquet
- A feature spot on Varsity.com & Varsity TV
- Gift certificate for UCA camp
- Pullover jackets
- A feature in American Cheerleader Magazine

What should we include in our entry?
- A Letter of Recommendation from: Your Principal or Athletic Director and a Community Leader
- One or two community service projects/charity work events (involving the entire squad)
- Two of your most successful spirit raising activities
- Most notable academic awards/honors and recognition
- Interesting facts about your squad (tell us 3-5 things)
- Team Photos - Displaying your squad’s involvement in community service projects, spirit raising activities, and academics
- Materials must be enclosed in a 1.5 inch binder

Go to uca.varisty.com for complete entry info!

Entry Deadline: November 30, 2011
Winners Announced: December 15, 2011

Special Recognition for:
- Highest Squad GPA
- Judges’ Favorites
- Most School Spirit
- Overall Winner
- Most Involved in the Community

Special recognized teams may receive:
- Varsity gift certificate
- Gift certificate for UCA camp
- Awards for spring banquet

Sponsored by

Cheerleading is Not a Sport – Can Cheer and Competitive Cheer Be Considered?

Legal Issues
Wisconsin association prevails in live streaming case

Activity Programs
Former championship teams reflect on values of participation

In Their Own Words
Randall McDaniel moves from football field to classroom
Athletes and coaches at the high school level emulating their counterparts at the college and professional levels has existed probably since the beginning of organized sports in this country. It is a normal human response.

Assuredly, thousands of aspiring high school basketball players have spent hour after hour on the court trying to pattern their game after that of Kobe Bryant or LeBron James. High school coaches attend clinics led by successful college and professional coaches with the hope they will learn something to help pave the way to a state championship.

Call it the trickle-down effect, the actions of players and coaches at the college and professional levels have an impact on those two groups of individuals in high school sports. In football, for example, the actions of a college player on Saturday or a professional player on Sunday can have an effect on a high school player the following Friday night.

While many times this behavior-copying is harmless, there are other situations where it is not appropriate for the high school level. One of those areas where following the lead of professional athletes might not be appropriate for the high school level is “playing through injuries.”

Recently, two high-profile NFL quarterbacks – Tony Romo and Michael Vick – sustained serious injuries but were back on the field the following Sunday. Romo suffered a broken rib and punctured lung, and Vick was diagnosed with a concussion.

Because these quarterbacks were “tough” and able to fight through pain, they were praised and seen as heroic by fans in their respective hometowns. These are classic examples of the “no pain, no gain” line that has been espoused by coaches at all levels at one time or another.

Certainly, developing a “toughness” is an important part of a high school athlete’s maturation process, and, at times, that may mean fighting through some pain. But there is a big difference between playing through pain and playing through serious injuries, and high school coaches and administrators must err on the side of caution in these situations.

High school sports is about the team, not individual stars, and it is about having fun, not winning at all costs. What may be OK for professional athletes where the sport is their livelihood, may not be OK for high school athletes. If a player on a high school team is injured, the “next man (or woman) up” concept must be employed. A team is not about one star player.

Fortunately, great progress has been made in coaching concepts and philosophies at the high school level. The days of “run them till they drop” are hopefully behind us, but coaches and administrators must always be on guard to not let the mindset of professional sports trickle down to the high school level.

With more than 7.6 million student-athletes participating in high school sports, minimizing the risk of injury must remain the top priority. Caution must be the byword as decisions are made about returning to play following an injury, and the greatest concern in that regard the past few years has been with athletes who sustain concussions.

Rules now are in place at the high school level to ensure that only a qualified health-care professional is making a decision about when a concussed athlete returns to play. Although most state associations adopted the concussion language in all NFHS rules books, more than 30 state legislatures have mandated concussion laws.

While concussions still occur – and the NFHS and its Sports Medicine Advisory Committee will continue with attempts to reduce these numbers – “playing through” a concussion should no longer be an issue. While a professional athlete may be able to weigh-in or affect a return-to-play decision, the same cannot be afforded an athlete – or a coach – at the high school level.

We are pleased to report that more than 300,000 individuals have taken the free online course, “Concussion in Sports – What You Need to Know,” provided through the NFHS Coach Education Program. In case coaches or others in your school haven’t taken the course, it is offered free of charge at www.nfhslearn.com.

More than 7.6 million participants and 510 million fans tell us that high school sports are alive and well. Let’s continue to make these games as safe as possible for our student-athletes.
Takedown

Wrestling competition begins across the country this month as more than 280,000 boys and girls will be involved in the sport. Two Minnesota wrestlers are shown at a past Minnesota State High School League tournament.

Photograph provided by 20/20 Photographic, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan.
Welcome

We hope you enjoy this publication and welcome your feedback. Please take a few moments to complete the Review Form on the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org/hstoday. You may contact Bruce Howard, editor of High School Today, at bhoward@nfhs.org.

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Cover photo provided by Westport (Connecticut) Staples High School.

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Top High School Performances

Mauk sets national completions record

In Kenton (Ohio) High School’s 30-28 football victory over Elida (Ohio) High School on September 30, senior quarterback Maty Mauk set the national record for career completions. In that game, the 6-foot-2, 195-pound Mauk completed 36 passes to give him 1,136 for his career. According to the National Federation of State High School Associations’ National High School Sports Record Book, Mauk has moved ahead of J.R. House of Nitro (West Virginia) High School, who had 1,103 completions from 1995 to 1998.

Mauk also ranks second in both career passing attempts (1,790) and career passing yards (15,768), and is third in career touchdown passes (175).

Rhodes ties national receiving record

Robbie Rhodes, a junior receiver from Fort Worth (Texas) Southwest High School, caught eight passes for touchdowns to tie the national record for 11-player football in Southwest’s 66-21 homecoming victory over Fort Worth (Texas) Arlington Heights High School on October 14.

The 6-foot-1 Rhodes had 10 receptions for 394 yards and touchdown catches of 68, 20, 53, 48, 74, 32, 41 and 29 yards. According to the National Federation of State High School Associations’ National High School Sports Record Book, Rhodes tied the national record for receiving touchdowns in a game set by Earvin Johnson of Los Angeles (California) Cathedral High School on November 7, 1998. In addition, Rhodes’ 394 receiving yards ranks seventh all time nationally.

Southwest’s junior quarterback Wesley Harris also entered his name into the National High School Sports Record Book with his nine passing touchdowns. Harris’ performance ranks tied for sixth nationally with 12 other players and it is also the Texas state record. For the game, Harris completed 20-of-30 passes for 562 yards.

Israel ties 11-player national record

Tucker Israel, a 6-foot, 180-pound freshman quarterback at Orlando (Florida) Lake Nona High School, tied the 11-player football national record on October 14 when he threw 10 touchdown passes in Lake Nona’s 68-10 win over Celebration (Florida) High School.

According to the National Federation of State High School Associations’ National High School Sports Record Book, five other quarterbacks have thrown 10 touchdown passes in an 11-player football game.

Israel tied the Florida state record when he threw eight touchdown passes in the first half and he then set the new state mark with his two scoring passes in the second half. Five of Israel’s scoring strikes were caught by Ryan Sousa. Israel now has 24 touchdown passes on the season.
Legal Brief

Editor’s Note: This column features an analysis of a landmark court case highlighting a key standard of practice for scholastic sports programs. This material is provided by Lee Green, an attorney and member of the High School Today Publications Committee.

Brentwood Academy v. Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association – Part II
U.S. Supreme Court 2007

Facts: After the Supreme Court’s 2001 decision in Brentwood Part I establishing that the TSSAA was a government entity obligated to respect the free speech rights of its member schools, the case was remanded to a federal trial court to decide whether the TSSAA’s anti-recruiting rules violated a private school’s right to send recruiting-type letters and materials to potential students.

Issue: Do state association anti-recruiting rules infringe on the free speech rights of private schools to send to potential students letters and materials that serve the dual purpose of admission inducements and sports-recruiting inducements?

Ruling: In a rare unanimous decision, the Court held 9-0 that state association anti-recruiting rules are not a violation of the free speech rights of private schools, concluding that membership in state associations is voluntary and that by joining, schools agree to abide by all association rules and regulations.

Standard of Practice: The decision is a highly significant one for high school sports; a contrary result would have invalidated all state association anti-recruiting rules and opened up high school sports to a recruiting frenzy similar to that at the college level. The ruling does not limit the communication by private schools of admission information, only that related solely to sports recruiting.

Around the Nation

Question: Do you sponsor a state championship in girls wrestling?

5 YES

46 NO
Unusual Nicknames

Staples Wreckers

Prior to 1920, Westport (Connecticut) Staples High School’s mascot was the Minutemen. During one football season, nearby Norwalk High School scheduled the Minutemen as its homecoming game hoping for an easy win. Staples did not cooperate, however, beating the undefeated Norwalk team. A newspaper headline the following day read, “Staples High Wrecks Norwalk’s Homecoming.” Since that game, the school has been known as the Wreckers. Its current logo was designed in 1980 by graduate Tom Wall, and the school counts Emmy Award winner Christopher Lloyd among its graduates.

The Cost

<table>
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<th>Item</th>
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<th>High</th>
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<td>$160</td>
<td>$70</td>
<td>$250</td>
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<tr>
<td>(B) Bowling Shoes</td>
<td>$50</td>
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<tr>
<td>(C) Bowling Bag</td>
<td>$78</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practice – Rental of Lanes – Per Bowler/3 Games</td>
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<td>$125</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These prices serve as approximate costs and are not intended to reflect any specific manufacturer’s prices.*
Cal Dietz knows how to take athletes all the way. And after strenuous workouts, he tells them to Refuel with Chocolate Milk. Lowfat chocolate milk has the right mix of protein and carbs to refuel exhausted muscles. Plus it naturally offers high-quality protein and key electrolytes like calcium, potassium, sodium and magnesium. Most sports drinks have to add those in the lab. But chocolate milk has always had what it takes. To learn more about the science behind Nature’s Recovery Drink, visit us at RefuelWithChocolateMilk.com.
For the Record

BOYS CROSS COUNTRY

Most State Championships, All Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Championships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wilmington Salesianum, DE</td>
<td>1969-2010</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providence LaSalle, RI</td>
<td>1933-83</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Ridge Episcopal, LA</td>
<td>1979-2010</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elmhurst York, IL</td>
<td>1962-2010</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It All Started Here

Michael Jordan

BY COLIN LIKAS

Michael Jordan is considered by many to be the greatest player in National Basketball Association (NBA) history. Things were not always easy for Jordan, however, during his rise to the top.

His family moved from Brooklyn, New York, to Wilmington, North Carolina, when Jordan was just a toddler. Throughout his pre-teen and teenage years, Jordan was interested primarily in baseball, with lesser interests in basketball and football. Jordan’s first taste of basketball was in one-on-one games against older brother Larry, who consistently defeated Michael, leading Michael to want to improve his game.

During his high school years, Jordan played baseball, basketball and football at Emsley A. Laney High School. As a sophomore, Jordan attempted to secure a spot on the varsity basketball team but was turned down, primarily because he was too short (5-foot-11). That rejection fueled Jordan and pushed him to prove his worth in the game.

“Whenever I was working out and got tired and figured I ought to stop, I’d close my eyes and see that list in the locker room without my name on it,” Jordan said some years later. “That usually got me going again.”

Jordan joined Laney’s junior varsity squad for the remainder of his sophomore year. At this time, he trained constantly and actually grew four inches. As a result, Jordan was the star of the junior varsity team, posting multiple 40-point efforts during the season. He was promoted to the varsity team during his junior year and averaged more than 20 points per game. As a senior, he averaged a triple-double (29.2 points, 11.6 rebounds and 10.1 assists) and was named a McDonald’s All-American.

The accolades did not stop there for Jordan, as he earned a basketball scholarship to the University of North Carolina in 1981. There, he hit the game-winning shot as a freshman in the 1982 NCAA Division I Basketball Championship game against Georgetown, was selected a first-team All-American during his sophomore and junior seasons and won Naismith and Wooden College Player of the Year Awards following his junior season.

In his three seasons at North Carolina, Jordan averaged 17.7 points per game on 54 percent shooting while also averaging five rebounds per game. Jordan also participated in the 1984 Summer Olympics, winning a gold medal as part of the United States basketball team.

Jordan’s illustrious career as a professional basketball player, minor league baseball player and professional basketball team majority owner would not have been nearly as great without his high school experiences. He won six NBA championships with the Chicago Bulls and captured five Most Valuable Player awards. Thanks to playing multiple sports before and during high school, Jordan was able to jump from basketball to baseball and then back to basketball with great success. His determination and leadership abilities developed through early-career struggles and rejection helped him to become the first former NBA player to be the majority owner of an NBA team, the Charlotte Bobcats.

Colin Likas is a fall intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. He is a sophomore at Butler (Indiana) University, majoring in journalism.
here appears to be unanimous agreement across the country that cheerleading is not a sport as it relates to Title IX purposes. Cheerleading’s primary purpose from its origin centuries ago has been to support the athletic teams and to lead the crowd. Cheerleading teams can add the elements of gymnastics, dance and stunting, but the main goal of their existence does not change.

With that being said, the confusion comes from the terms “competitive cheer” and “cheer.” If you enter “Is cheerleading or cheer a sport?” in an Internet search, literally thousands of articles or opinion papers appear. An association or an outside organization can refer to cheerleading any way it desires, but there is only one organization that can determine if the athletes meet the definition of sport and be considered in the school’s proportionality count for equitable opportunities offered.

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in the United States Department of Education has made it very clear in formal letters to and conversations with our office that it “cannot make blanket statements as to whether all participants in activities such as a spirit group are participants in a ‘sport’ that would count for Title IX compliance purposes.” In the event of an investigation, each school and/or district would be evaluated based on its total programs. Meeting compliance standards with or without spirit would be the responsibility of the individual school/district administration, not the association.

In the event of an investigation, the OCR looks at each interscholastic institution and its programs on an individual basis. The OCR evaluates schools based on the following criteria:

• Recognition by the state association.
• The primary purpose for preparing and engaging in athletic competition against other similar teams.
• A scheduled regular season with starting and ending dates set by the association and governed by a specific set of rules published by a state or national organization.

In addition, other criteria include:

• Preparing for and engaging its participants in competition the same way other teams in interscholastic athletic programs prepare and engage participants (doesn’t say just like football and basketball but in accordance with interscholastic standards of the institution).
• Requiring participants to receive coaching.
• Requiring team tryouts, regular practice sessions and regularly scheduled athletic competitions.
• Basing selection of the team on factors related primarily to athletic ability (doesn’t say that sideline cannot also be a competition team, but the competition team better have athletic qualities designed for competition when selected).
• Having assigned trained and certified officials/judges who have met a certification standard.
• Following competition structure like other sports to the state championship level (again not all association sports look like football and basketball).
• Standing alone as the primary event without being scheduled simultaneously with another event.

Unfortunately, too many interscholastic institutions have tried and failed to use cheer/competitive cheer/spirit numbers for proportionality without meeting all the criteria. Don’t be confused; the titles are not the problem, and the criteria and standards are not debatable.

Individuals in state association offices who have been invested in how this activity has evolved cannot lose sight of the primary responsibility by getting caught up in these debates. High school leaders have a duty to provide educationally based spirit programs under certified coaches following NFHS rules. Safety and education of those who oversee these programs has to be the primary focus. The NFHS has made a commitment to this vision, which is reflected in the number of spirit courses dedicated to coach education (www.nfhslearn.com).

Regardless of whether a state association recognizes spirit programs or not, these programs intertwine with every aspect of athletics. Emphasizing that spirit coaches understand they are coaches first and “spirit” coaches second cannot be ignored on behalf of the thousands of student participants actively involved on various levels.

State associations should be prepared to serve as a resource and provide leadership and direction to their member schools so that schools can meet Title IX criteria – based on OCR standards – with their spirit teams if they chose on an individual basis to meet all the standards.

Remember, it does not matter if the association calls it an activity or a sport. The only organization that determines if the opportunity meets interscholastic standards for Title IX accountability is the OCR. Administrators should be very clear in their role of providing safe and educationally based programs and not be confused by all the “rhetoric.”

Rhonda Blanford-Green is associate commissioner of the Colorado High School Activities Association. She is a former track and field athlete at Aurora (Colorado) Central High School and the University of Nebraska and is one of this country’s Title IX experts at the high school level.
WIAA v. Gannett Company, Inc.

In a case of interest for state athletic associations and school districts seeking to generate revenue from the sale of broadcasting rights to sports contests, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit (WI, IL, IN) has ruled that licensing contracts for exclusive rights to air live coverage of high school sports events do not violate the First Amendment freedom of the press rights of media thereby prevented from broadcasting competing live coverage of those contests.

The August 24, 2011 decision in Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association v. Gannett Company, Inc. and Wisconsin Newspaper Association concluded that the athletic association’s exclusive arrangement with a video production company to stream live coverage online of state football playoff games did not violate the First Amendment rights of other media outlets to cover and report on those games.

The ruling is a significant victory for state associations and school districts attempting to create additional sources of revenue from the broadcast of sports events to mitigate budget shortfalls in state and school athletics programs. The case also resolved important legal questions as to whether quasi-governmental entities such as state associations and school districts have ownership rights in what are arguably public sports events and whether such “state actors” should be permitted to monetize those events.

The Dispute

The WIAA has for decades been a party to exclusive broadcast deals. Since the 1950s, the association has had arrangements with radio stations across Wisconsin to broadcast state tournament events. Beginning in 1968, the WIAA entered into a series of rights deals with Quincy Newspapers to televise state tournaments in boys basketball, girls basketball and ice hockey. Since 2001, Fox Sports has had the exclusive rights to televise the Wisconsin state football finals.

In 2005, the WIAA entered into an exclusive licensing arrangement with American-HiFi (AHF) to stream state tournament events in a variety of sports online. If AHF chose not to stream a contest, other media could carry the event after obtaining permission and paying a fee.

The contract between the WIAA and AHF covered only complete-game, online broadcasts. It did not prohibit other media outlets, including television stations, radio stations, newspapers, magazines and digital media, from receiving media credentials for access to sports events, covering those events, taking still photographs and filming video footage to be used in news stories about the events, interviewing coaches and players at events, and reporting on those events.

In fact, pursuant to the WIAA’s “Media Policies Reference Guide,” media outlets were permitted to film entire contests and broadcast up to two minutes of a game as a backdrop to news coverage of the event, so long as no play-by-play was provided. No editorial control was exercised by the WIAA to regulate any media outlet’s editing of its game-length video into the allowable two-minute segment – the editorial process and video coverage choices were entirely within the discretion of each media outlet.

The dispute arose when one of Gannett’s newspapers, as an act of protest against what it perceived as a violation of its freedom of the press rights, deliberately streamed on its Web site four high school football playoff games in their entirety. The WIAA brought suit asserting the right to enter into exclusive licensing arrangements and a federal district court granted summary judgment in favor of the association. Gannett then appealed to the Seventh Circuit.

The Appeal

The primary argument asserted by Gannett on appeal was that the WIAA, a state actor, cannot enter into exclusive broadcast contracts with private companies for the purpose of raising revenue. In essence, Gannett was arguing that quasi-governmental entities like state athletic associations and public school districts do not have the ownership rights in or proprietary control over sports contests necessary to empower them to enter into licensing deals and make money from those deals.

Gannett claimed that sports events sponsored by state actors...
belong to the public and that any limitations on broadcasting such events was a violation of the First Amendment freedom of the press to cover public events in their entirety. Essentially, Gannett was arguing that public sports events are the equivalent of public political debates and that the media has a right to broadcast sports events in their entirety commensurate to its right to broadcast public debates in their entirety.

The Seventh Circuit disagreed, stating that “the implications of Gannett’s arguments are staggering: if it is correct, then no state actor may ever earn revenue from something that the press might want to broadcast in its entirety … Gannett overlooks the importance of the distinction between state-as-regulator and state-as-proprietor, which in turn leads it to fail to appreciate the fact that tournament games are a performance product of the WIAA that it has a right to control.”

Thus concluding that the WIAA does have ownership control over state tournament-level sports events and that it may legally function as the creator and disseminator of entertainment content, the Court of Appeals then referenced the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1977 decision in Zacchini v. Scripps-Howard Broadcasting. There, the Supreme Court ruled that First Amendment freedom of the press was not an appropriate defense for a television station that, claiming it had a right to cover newsworthy events at a state fair, televised the entire 15-second act of Hugo Zacchini, the “Human Cannonball,” as he was shot out of his cannon, flew 50 yards through the air and landed in a net.

The Seventh Circuit applied Zacchini to the WIAA case by stating, “[I]n short, Zacchini establishes two propositions that guide our resolution of this case. First, it distinguishes between the media’s First Amendment right to “report on” and “cover” an event and its lack of a right to broadcast an “entire act.”

Second, Zacchini makes clear that the producer of entertainment is entitled to charge a fee in exchange for consent to broadcast; the First Amendment does not give the media the right to appropriate, with consent or remuneration, the products of others … these principles apply to state actors as well as private actors.”

Media Credentialing Policy Suggestions

Although the Seventh Circuit ruled in favor of the WIAA and concluded that exclusive licensing arrangements by state actors do not violate the First Amendment rights of the media, state associations and public school districts must exercise caution when developing and implementing media credentialing policies to ensure that such policies are not so excessively restrictive as to inhibit the ability of media to cover and report on sports events – overbroad regulation of news coverage has been held by courts to be a violation of the freedom of the press.

The following are recommendations for crafting and implementing legally acceptable media credentialing policies:

• Ensure that each media outlet has the opportunity to receive the number of credentials reasonably necessary to cover and report on events (at least two or three per outlet and perhaps more if a justifiable need exists for the outlet to have additional photographers, film crew members or reporters present at a contest).

• Exercise caution in rejecting applications for media credentials; include specific criteria for rejecting applications and err on the side of granting credentials.

• Allow still photographs to be taken that will accompany news stories and include specific prohibitions on the sale or use of images for merchandising purposes.

• Facilitate the opportunity for media to interview players, coaches and other athletics personnel for the purposes of news coverage of the sports event.

• Allow media outlets to film entire events but specifically indicate a maximum time limit for broadcasting video clips of a single event (two to five minutes total per contest) and limit the use of those video segments to news story backdrops with no play-by-play permitted.

• Avoid any media policy regulations that limit the editorial control of the media over its coverage and news reporting regarding the event. Never require any form of advance approval of a broadcast or print media story about the event.

• Avoid any media policy restrictions that could be interpreted as interfering with any aspect of the media’s decision-making over the content of its news coverage or that could be interpreted as a prior restraint on the media’s ability to report on newsworthy events.

Lee Green is an attorney and a professor at Baker University in Baldwin City, Kansas, where he teaches courses in sports law, business law and constitutional law. He is a member of the High School Today Publications Committee. He may be contacted at Lee.Green@BakerU.Edu.
Every year, schools are faced with defending expenditures for athletics and other activity programs – particularly in the past few years with the downward spiral in the economy. In some cases, these programs have been seen as a “luxury” item in the overall educational offerings of a school.

Fortunately, however, success stories continue to unfold that document the value of these programs in the nation’s high schools. While those students currently involved in high school activity programs generally earn better grades, have fewer discipline problems and learn the skills of teamwork, perhaps the most significant benefit comes years later as productive citizens in successful careers.

Such is the case with members of the 1994 boys and girls cross country teams at Shawnee Mission (Kansas) Northwest High School (pictured above), a large-class school in suburban Kansas City. Today, 17 years after jump-starting one of the most successful runs of state championships in Kansas history, most of the 14 members of the Cougars’ boys and girls teams are engaged in successful careers and reflect favorably on their high school experiences.

Since 1994, the Cougars’ boys and girls cross country programs have won 21 Kansas State High School Activities Association state championships, including 14 consecutive titles by the boys program. And since 1977, Northwest has won 32 state titles, including the 2010 championship by the Cougars’ boys team.

“It is something that sticks with you your whole life,” said Melissa Cooley, a sophomore on the 1994 girls team. “I see the new runners out there, running the same routes we ran 15 years ago. It amazes me that we put all that hard work in at that age.”

“As a high school athlete, winning a state championship was what one would strive for,” said Dan Gruman, a sophomore on the 1994 boys team. “That was the end goal.”

Leading the program throughout the years has been Van Rose, a teacher and coach at Northwest for the past 43 years.

“In the early years of the streak, I was in awe that the boys could continue to win year after year,” said Brian Sumner, a junior on the 1994 boys team, “but when you really think about it, it shouldn’t be too surprising when you see the person who has been the one constant – coach Rose. You don’t win 14 straight state championships by being lucky. You need a lot of hard work and dedication, which are characteristics that easily describe coach Rose.”

“[Rose] has a way of getting the best performances out of people,
so he can take a group of talented athletes and take them to the next level,” Cooley said. “He has developed a formula that works.”

Although his runners believe that he holds the key to success, Rose points to the contributions of other individuals.

“I attribute our success to great assistant coaches and to the fantastic Northwest cross country parents,” Rose said. “They are involved and do so much. Without their help, we would be very ordinary.”

Sumner agrees.

“We had teammates, family and friends on every part of the course [in 1994],” Sumner said. “How could we not be motivated to run well when we heard ‘Go Northwest’ throughout the entire 5K?”

The 1994 championships seemed to mark the beginning of something special for the Northwest cross country teams. As a few underclassmen on the 1994 teams continued their high school careers and, in some cases, won two more state titles, others went on to college and started successful careers in the working world. They believe that their time as high school athletes was an experience that will stick with them for the rest of their lives.

Bryce Bell, a senior on the 1994 boys team who is currently an attorney who practices in real estate, corporate law and employment law, said, “I started my own firm last year but continue on as general counsel for several corporations. I think that [competitive] racing is an especially great metaphor for life. Anytime you see something that you want that you don’t have, you need to have the courage to go after it. Most of the time, it’s fear holding you back. If you don’t take that first step to get to where you want to go, [and] if you don’t have the courage to overcome those fears, then it’s not really possible to grow into the person you want to become and accomplish your goals.”

Sumner currently works at a Kansas City advertising agency as the Direct Marketing Department manager.

“Coach Rose’s emphasis on preparation is something I draw on just about every phase of my life, whether it’s work, running or coaching my daughter’s soccer team,” Sumner said. “Our teams were always going to be the most prepared and I make sure that I take the same approach when heading to a meeting, planning a local 5K or getting ready for one of my daughter’s games. You always want to go into any challenge as prepared as possible, and coach Rose made sure he left no stones unturned.”

Other members of the 1994 team have gone on to pursue careers in engineering and finance, as well as in the medical field as nurses, physicians and administrators.

Mark Toepfer, a junior on the 1994 boys team, is a real estate consultant assisting clients with home buying.

“[High school activities] taught me how to function successfully as part of a team,” Toepfer said, “[and] that with hard work, self-discipline and perseverance, just about anything can be achieved.”

Katie Messer, a junior on the 1994 girls team, is a financial advisor with Northwestern Mutual and has been self-employed for 12 years.

“Participating in sports taught me how to prepare, compete and challenge myself,” Messer said. “[High school athletics taught me] how to work with others, and how to handle defeat [and] disappointments; how to balance my life.”

Currently working as a business analyst for Ericsson, Inc., is Brian Schober, a sophomore on the 1994 boys team.

“I believe that my participation in high school sports helped to solidify my character in a way that you can’t easily learn through other activities,” Schober said. “It taught me how to achieve success through hard work, and how succeeding as a team often exceeds the feeling of accomplishment obtained by succeeding as an individual.”

Steve Fein, a senior and individual state champion on the 1994 boys team, and who is currently a tax partner at Moss Adams LLP, concurs.
“In a time of life that can be very challenging for some individuals as they’re learning about themselves and trying so hard to fit in with their peers, high school sports provided an opportunity to be involved in something with others, and to feel like you belonged with a group of people,” Fein said. “I think it plays a role today in my career from the standpoint that this was where much of the development of my personal interaction skills and manner of developing relationships occurred. That time of my life probably played as much importance as any other in shaping how I would go about developing relationships not only within my firm, but also with clients and others in my personal and business networks.”

Through the trials and tribulations of high school athletics, some members of the 1994 team see similarities between their high school careers and current occupations.

“I graduated in August with a bachelor’s degree in nursing [after a career change],” Cooley said. “I started a new job three weeks ago as a registered nurse on the Medical Intermediate Cardiac Care floor at St. Luke’s Hospital on the [Kansas City’s Country Club] Plaza. It is a little overwhelming right now, but I can already tell that I am going to love it. I see some parallels between my career change and cross country. With both, a lot of hard work paid off in the end.”

As more and more Northwest athletes become graduates and continue forward with their lives, new members of the cross country teams continue the tradition that began in 1994.

“If you get the opportunity to run for coach Rose, take advantage of what he is teaching you because it applies to more than just running,” Sumner said. “He has obviously built an incredible program, for both the boys and girls, but don’t base your legacy on what was accomplished before you arrived. Go out there and create your own legacy.”

Throughout it all, the legacy that Rose and the 1994 boys and girls cross country teams created for Northwest can be summed up into a simple philosophy.

“Consistency, having a plan and outworking your competition [equals] success,” Rose said. “Enjoy the moment. Work is not work when you do it with friends. [Know that] you can always get better. The pursuit of excellence has no finish line.”

It is a philosophy that helped members of the 1994 cross country teams use their high school participation as a springboard to the success they enjoy today.

Shane Monaghan is a fall intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications and Events Departments. Monaghan is a graduate of Ball State (Indiana) University, where he specialized in sports administration.
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Randall McDaniel Takes Lessons from Sports to the Classroom

An Avondale, Arizona native, Randall McDaniel is a 12-time National Football League (NFL) Pro Bowler and a 2011 inductee into the National High School Hall of Fame. In college, McDaniel was an All-American at Arizona State University (ASU) and went on to play 12 seasons with the Minnesota Vikings and two with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in the NFL. He started 202 consecutive games, including 13 straight playoff games at left guard for the Vikings, and is a member of both the College Football Hall of Fame and the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Today, he spends his time tutoring second-grade students at Hilltop Primary Elementary School in Westonka, Minnesota.

Q: What was your reaction to being inducted into the National High School Hall of Fame?

McDaniel: My first reaction was shock and disbelief. I never thought I was the best athlete at my high school. When you think about how many kids play high school sports, it’s amazing to be selected for this honor. I know there are hundreds – probably thousands – of athletes who deserve to be selected each year. I continued to be humbled by having my “name called.” I’m very proud to represent all Agua Fria athletes – past and present – in the National High School Hall of Fame.

Q: As a member of all three football Halls of Fame, what is your most cherished memory as an athlete?

McDaniel: In high school, we were a small school successfully competing with the big schools in Arizona. We were a tight-knit group who believed together we could conquer the world! I cherish the camaraderie I forged with my teammates during those years. In college, I would have to say being a part of the “Home Boys” offensive line – we were all born and raised in the state of Arizona – and being the first ASU team to win the Rose Bowl when we beat Michigan in 1987 were great moments. In the pros, there was nothing like the feeling the first time I ran out onto the field as a rookie. Most of all, I cherish all the people who made my journey possible and the lifelong friendships I have built along the way. I still consider myself just a kid from Avondale, Arizona, who was lucky enough to live his dream!

Q: How did your time spent as a student-athlete help prepare you for not only your professional career, but also life?

McDaniel: Outside of my family and my wife, the lessons I learned through sports have had the greatest impact on me. Playing sports gave me a focus and kept me too busy to get into trouble. My high school coaches helped me grow as an athlete and as a person. Mr. Fulton, my high school assistant principal, told me to take advantage of the opportunities sports had to offer – but never let it define me. As a direct result of these experiences, I received a scholarship to Arizona State and became the first in my family to earn a college degree. I believe the lessons you learn through sports are the foundation for success in life. I think well-run high school sports programs are critical in helping kids find their way to success on and off the field.

Q: Where did your inspiration to teach come from?

McDaniel: My senior year at ASU, I had a friend who was teaching elementary school in a lower socio-economic area of Phoenix, and I was doing my student teaching at the same school. She was having a tough time getting the boys in her class to read. In their world, reading was done by women and they considered it to be for “sissies.” So, she asked me to visit the class and read one day. From that point on, I would go to her room every day during Language Arts and read stories to the class. Slowly, but surely, the boys started to feel comfortable about reading. By the end of the semester, they were all coming to me wanting to read books. I was amazed! It was an unbelievable feeling. At that moment, I knew I wanted to work in the classroom.
Q: What values from your own education have you incorporated into your teaching?

McDaniel: I think the other reason I am drawn to the classroom is because school was very difficult for me. I did not fit into the traditional, rigid learning methods of my era. I thought I was stupid and tried to hide my feelings behind a tough “little bully” persona. In third grade, I met my match – Mrs. Pyle. She refused to let me push her away and even more importantly, she never gave up on me. She patiently battled with me until I let my guard down. She found different ways to teach a concept until I “got it.” I felt valued. She helped me to believe I could learn and discover I was not stupid. Every day, I’m motivated to be the “Mrs. Pyle” in the lives of my students. I want them to experience the success of mastering new concepts and believing they can do it. I absolutely love that “light bulb moment” when they look at you and you know they “get it.” There is no better feeling in the world! I think my competitive nature has been funneled into my work with students. I always say it’s the toughest job you will ever love.

Q: As an educator now, what would you like to see with high school athletics in the future?

McDaniel: While winning is important, I think we need to remember the primary function of high school sports should be to teach important life lessons. A very small percentage of high school athletes will ever play college sports and an even smaller number will ever get the opportunity to play professionally. I fear many young people who define themselves solely through their sports successes feel as if they are failures if and when they do not make the jump to the next level. In my view, the goal at the high school level should be to give students the tools to succeed in life. Coaches need to be teachers first and coaches second. In recent years, I think we have lost track of this.

Q: For kids looking to take their game to the next level, what advice do you have for handling the many pressures that come with being an athlete?

McDaniel: At every level, athletes are afforded some level of status or celebrity. I feel very strongly that great responsibility comes along with this. Whether in high school or in the pros, athletes are given opportunities others are not, and they are looked to as role models. In my opinion, this is a job all athletes should take very seriously. It should be used to make a positive impact on their families and their communities. I’m frustrated with the number of athletes who choose to use the opportunities afforded them to be self-centered and selfish – to be all about the fame, the money and the power. While many are celebrated for this behavior, it is my belief that our young athletes need to aspire to more. They need to remember where they came from and how fortunate they are to have the chance to play college or professional sports. They need to do something meaningful with it – something that will be there long after the bright lights have faded. My advice: work hard, dream big and stay humble. ☺

Eamonn Reynolds was the summer intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department and is a senior at Ohio University majoring in journalism and public relations.
The decision to embark on construction projects can be a difficult process for school administrators and communities for a variety of reasons. Modernizing or constructing educational facilities requires school administrators to critically evaluate needs, budgets, space and numerous other items.

As a result, schools often seek external guidance from consultants regarding educational facilities planning and infrastructures. While these services are quality resources for schools, they can become costly. In a time of tighter budgets, schools are seeking low-cost resources to guide decisions regarding educational facilities.

A quality resource, and a no-cost alternative for educational facilities guidance, is the American Clearinghouse on Educational Facilities (ACEF), the Educational Facilities Clearinghouse (EFC) funded by the United States Department of Education. ACEF is the continuation of an EFC initiative established in 1998 to provide public schools with resources on planning, design, finance, construction, improvement and maintenance of safe, healthy, high-performance schools. ACEF serves public early childhood schools, K-12 schools and institutions of higher education on virtually all issues related to educational facilities. ACEF is housed at the Texas Center for Educational Facilities at Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas.

ACEF provides timely information, trainings and assistance to public schools across the United States at no charge. In order to connect school administrators to facilities information, an online clearinghouse is available at www.acefacilities.org. The Web site gives school administrators access to a broad range of resources, and allows one to search the document repository.

The repository houses educational facilities-related literature that is virtually free from vendor influence. Furthermore, the repository allows the user to narrowly search for items of interest by filtering resources either by keyword, role, category or topic.

For instance, if users are solely interested in sustainability, finance, athletic facilities or fine arts facilities, they can select specified areas to review. Since ACEF desires to serve its user’s need, it encourages users to submit resources they find noteworthy; and if in the event ACEF does not have the resources needed, then a resources request form is available online.

The ACEF Journal, also located on the Web site, promotes nationwide leadership in educational facilities and is dedicated to the support and professional growth of all school administrators. The ACEF Journal is an exclusively online biannual publication for the dissemination of research on effective educational facilities practices. The journal welcomes original contributions with relevance to educational facilities and seeks to publish work that develops, tests and advances theory, research and practice of educational facilities.

The ACEF Journal considers articles from a wide variety of interest areas including, but not limited to:

- Environmentally Sound Practices
- Facility Planning
- Facility Design
- Facility Construction
- Facility Improvement
- Facility Operations
- Facility Maintenance
- Facility Safety
- Student Learning

School administrators are encouraged to submit manuscripts that reflect best practices, case studies or research related to educational facilities.

To further connect school administrators to current discussions regarding educational facilities, the ACEF Web site also provides a variety of social media outlets. School administrators who follow ACEF on Facebook stay abreast of upcoming educational facilities events and often discover new solutions for age-old problems.

In addition, the ACEF Blog allows followers to have informal...
discussions on a variety of topics. For example, the blog may provide direction on how to select an architect or suggest how to select green cleaning solutions. Regardless of the follower’s interest, multiple blogs are occurring simultaneously and a follower can seek guidance by posting questions through comments as well. For the social media users who prefer more succinct updates, ACEF provides informal posts via Twitter.

Finally, ACEF’s RSS feed allows users to avoid exhaustive searches for the latest educational facilities news and instead subscribe to the latest educational facilities news.

ACEF also provides training to guide, advise and support public school officials with facilities management. ACEF has an event to match any school’s need or schedule. School administrators are encouraged to participate in live Webinars allowing them to interact with presenters from across the nation. However, if school administrators are unable to attend the live Webinars, all ACEF Webinars are archived on the Learning Events section of the Website.

School administrators are likely to find a variety of topics presented through archived Webinars, podcasts and interactive lessons. While these trainings can be done remotely, cost-effectively, and at the user’s convenience, ACEF also provides on-site trainings. School administrators can complete an on-site training request. Upon approval of the U.S. Department of Education, a team of ACEF trainers would provide personalized training at no cost to the school. The school is responsible for completing the request and securing a location as well as an audience.

In an effort to provide convenient and prompt facilities support, school administrators can request facilities support through multiple avenues. ACEF facilities support is available from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. CST by calling 1-855-610-ACEF (2233). School administrators are encouraged to visit with the ACEF facility support team via live chat. For more traditional forms of communication, ACEF facilities support can always be reached by e-mail at acef@acefacilities.org.

Occasionally, schools need assistance on-site with educational facilities. Perhaps your school needs assistance in evaluating the security of athletic or fine arts complexes. When schools need personalized facilities support, ACEF can provide these services at no cost to the school. These on-site facility support visits can also be requested by completing the application on the ACEF Web site. Upon approval of the request by the U.S. Department of Education, an ACEF facility support team will work with the school to evaluate the educational facilities in question and provide a plan of action to address facilities needs.

The ACEF team, along with the U.S. Department of Education, desires to help schools across the nation with a variety of educational facilities concerns. As a result, ACEF provides multiple avenues to connect school administrators with the information they need to make effective educational facilities decisions. In an era of fiscal restraint, school administrators are encouraged to tap into this inexpensive avenue for facilities guidance and support. ACEF is here to serve the nation’s public schools. For additional information regarding ACEF, please feel free to contact the ACEF office at 1-855-610-ACEF (2233).

Dr. Denae Dorris serves as the project manager for the American Clearinghouse on Educational Facilities and currently manages the Texas Center for Educational Facilities at Tarleton State (Texas) University. Dorris has worked in the public education sector for 12 years and formerly served as a public school educator. Dorris may be reached at dorris@acefacilities.org or by phone at 254-968-9990.
This past summer’s Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA) Student Council Leadership Workshop provided Kansas students the opportunities to meet and exchange ideas with other student council members, learn about student council issues and discover their own leadership potential that will help to build a better world in which to live.

The Student Council Leadership Workshop, which was held July 17-22 at Emporia (Kansas) State University, also offered a special Advisor’s Council for any advisor wishing to attend. More than 300 students from 100 KSHSAA member schools attended the 48th annual event.

The KSHSAA Student Council Workshop has been rated as one of the best leadership training programs in the nation. Workshop delegates received instructions in goal-setting, organization skills, communication skills, service, meeting skills, leadership skills and many other leadership techniques. Bob Tryanski, a speaker and author who annually speaks to more than 5,000 students on student involvement and leadership, served as the keynote speaker.

All student delegates are immediately taken out of their comfort zone and placed in councils composed of 20 to 25 students they have never met — all from different high schools around Kansas. Each individual council is lead by a senior counselor, a teacher/sponsor from Kansas high schools with more than 250 combined years of experience and a junior counselor, a former delegate who just graduated from a Kansas high school.

Throughout the week, the bonds these student leaders develop are life-changing and lasting. Each day is packed with general and counsel sessions, team-building activities, special events as well as leadership discussions and opportunities as they prepare for an end-of-the-week performance and banquet presentation. Following are some of the events held during the week:

- **Swap Shop** – Organized issue and idea exchange.
- **Student Council Olympics** – Fun games and activities to bring the council together.
- **Officer Training Session** – All presidents, vice-presidents, secretaries, treasurers, class representatives are grouped together to work on their roles and job descriptions.
- **Leadership Move** – Lessons taught to watch movies looking for leadership qualities.
- **Special Olympics Event** – Host and work as the volunteers for Kansas Special Olympics track, soccer and other events.
- **Dance** – Disc jockey provides a wonderful evening of dancing fun.
- **Banquet** – Each council prepares table decorations, placemats with only $15 of purchased items for the entire project at a formal dinner.
- **Banner** – Each council prepares a banner piece that represents its council. All of the banners are placed together to make one quilt.
Gift Night – Each council prepares a presentation – using the entire council – on leadership lessons learned during the week.

Candle Lighting Ceremony – An opportunity to reflect on the process the students have gone through as a leader during the week, and to help them realize that just like one candle in the darkness, they can make a difference.

One of our delegates had the following comments:

“Student Council Workshop is an awesome experience for everyone who attends.”

While it may not seem like a great idea at first to go spend a week at camp talking about school during the middle of summer, it will actually be one of the student’s best weeks. Student Council Workshop is more than just fun too; it provides students with leadership training and ideas to implement in their own schools at home. Students are able to network with students from other schools around the state allowing them to continue learning new ideas for the years to come. Incredible friendships are made in just the one week that will last a lifetime. By the end of the week, students are excited for school to start and ready to kick off a great year of student council.

The 48th annual event was definitely different without our longtime leader, Dr. Earl Reum (left), who passed away last year. Dr. Reum had been the Kansas Student Council Leadership Workshop consultant since 1964. He had been the heart and soul of Student Council and leadership and was nationally known as “Mr. Student Council.”

As a speaker, author and magician, he annually would speak to thousands of students and adults on issues of student council, service and leadership. A longtime friend of Kansas Student Councils, Reum would make the Kansas Student Council Leadership Workshop “the single, most significant learning experiences” of a delegate’s life. He will always be missed, but his legacy will always live on in Kansas as we are all “Reum kids” and have been touched by his leadership training.

David Cherry is assistant executive director of the Kansas State High School Activities Association and has directed the KSHSAA Student Council Leadership Workshop for a number of years.
Never underestimate the power of high school students with a passion. The players on the East Surry High School softball team from Pilot Mountain, North Carolina, are those kind of students. Their dedication and hard work raised $2,100 for cancer research in just one night.

On April 6, 2011, the team participated in a fundraiser entitled “Beat Cancer with a Bat,” which benefits the National Foundation for Cancer Research (NFCR). The campaign invites softball teams across the country – whether high school, college or community teams – to participate by committing to donate proceeds from at least one game to NFCR.

“Our community has been hit hard with cancer,” said Andrea Kittrell, parent of East Surry player Jessica Barker. “Most recently my dad – Jessica's grandfather – has been diagnosed, and as of right now there is no cure. He has been fighting cancer for 18 months.”

With these thoughts as motivation, Kittrell and her daughter led the East Surry team to fight against the disease by participating in “Beat Cancer with a Bat.”

“All our players – junior varsity and varsity – rallied around them to make it a success,” said East Surry head coach Derrick Hill.

Not only did the softball team get involved, but the student body of East Surry also came together and showed its support by purchasing T-shirts the team had made and attending the game.

“The fans were beyond amazing,” Barker said. “Even after the event, people have been wearing their shirts randomly. It just brings back that amazing night all over again.”

The team also sold balloons at the event on which attendees could write the names of loved ones who have battled cancer. The East Surry players released the balloons in their honor at the game. Kittrell's father threw out the first pitch – a touching moment for many who participated.

“Catching for my grandpa, throwing out the first pitch brought tears to my eyes,” said Barker, whose usual position is shortstop.

An estimated 100 people attended the game against Starmount High School, but a victory over the opposing team was not the first priority of the players and fans that night.

“Going out on the field, we knew that night’s festivities were way more than just softball,” said East Surry left fielder Kelsey Wilson. “We had a real purpose.”

Joining hands to accomplish something beyond simply winning the game brought the team closer and strengthened its sense of community.

“All our players working toward one goal builds chemistry and unity,” Hill said. “It’s an outstanding team-building event.”

The money raised went directly to NFCR and will be used to fund life-saving research for all types of cancer.

“Whether we won or lost that night, in our hearts we truly knew either way we had won, no matter what the outcome,” Barker said.

To learn more about Beat Cancer with a Bat or to get involved, visit www.nfcr.org/beatcancerwithabat or call 1-800-321-CURE.
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Twitter — Real-time Communication Without Disruption

BY STEFFEN PARKER

Can a person have too many ways to communicate with individuals in a school community or group? Certainly, but one benefit of technology is that for each group in the community, there is likely one or two technological solutions that match each group’s abilities. And while Twitter may look and feel like a mini-version of Facebook, its ability to communicate through text-messaging on each individual’s phone makes it a solution for a broader spectrum of those communities.

Cell phones are a ubiquitous part of life, and while voice-based phone calls on those devices makes one-to-one contact clearer and often easier, text-messaging allows two individuals to communicate without the disruption of answering a call.

Since text messages can be read immediately, the ability to send one text message that reaches multiple individuals in a timely manner has a clear advantage over other forms of contact. This is where Twitter’s ability to do just that makes it more direct than Facebook or other Web-based communication tools. And with Twitter’s Web-based TimeLine, a record of those messages is kept chronologically and is available there for those who wish to connect through their computer or tablet.

Like most Web-based services, signing up for Twitter is simply a matter of providing your name, e-mail address and a user-created password. Users then develop a homepage and look for others with whom to “tweet” (a “tweet” is Twitter’s 140 or fewer character message). Most people start with their e-mail contacts or address book and invite people to “follow” them on Twitter (to “follow” means that you will receive all of the “tweets” sent out by the person being followed).

The initial setup directs your “tweets” to your homepage, but you can add your cell phone text-messaging to your Twitter account, which allows you to both read your incoming “tweets” and create them on your phone as needed.

Are there times that you want a certain group to receive a message promptly? Do you send out group e-mails knowing that some of the recipients will not read your information in a timely manner when you need them to read it now? Are only some people in your group actively using their Facebook account and the rest missing out on events, opportunities and changes being shared? Having a Twitter account followed by those who need to receive the messages may be your solution.

Twitter also provides ways to fine-tune the distribution of your “tweets” with lists and direct-messaging. Multiple types of messages (Normal, Mentions, Replies, ReTweets) allow you to further control who will see your “tweets” and where they will reside online. While Twitter is prominently a public site where anyone can search for your messages, you can set your account to more private settings so that only those for whom the “tweet” is intended will be able to read and respond.

Tweets can carry additional information beside your Twitter address and the 140 characters. Links, e-mail addresses and images can be entered within the body of the text, and for followers with the appropriate technology (laptop, Web-enabled phone, e-mail-enabled smartphone), a click on those links and they have the complete story. By using links to public documents, a 140-character tweet can carry a great deal of information to the recipients.

Twitter does have its limitations and is not a great way for dialogues between individuals or small groups, or for any collaborative effort. But if you wish to communicate to a specific group in real time – students on a band trip at a museum for example – Twitter works very well. And if you are going to use Twitter as a primary communication tool for connecting to your students, encouragement to follow you can be done simply by sending tweets to those who offer special rewards.

Twitter, while not as extensive as an e-mail, nor as broad-reaching as a Web site, Wiki or blog, is a tool worth considering in academia for a variety of communication challenges.

Steffen Parker has worked with computers since the mid-1970s and has been a Macintosh user since its introduction in 1984. Owner–operator of Music Festival Software Solutions, he develops online registration and information Web sites for music festivals, state organizations and professional societies. Serving as an IT support person for the Vermont Principals’ Association and the Data Coach for Addison Rutland Supervisory Union, Parker supports computer use for adults working in education, administration, finance and publications, including the NFHS High School Today Publications Committee serving as the performing arts representative.
After a highly successful first year with distributions of more than $1 million to 6,500 high schools, the NFHS Licensing Program, in partnership with the Licensing Resource Group (LRG), has started its second year with several new national and regional retailers and the option for an online fan shop for schools in the program.

The program was created to enable schools to have a new source of revenue by receiving royalties on merchandise sold at local retail stores. The merchandise contains the school’s name, logo and/or mascot and is identified by the distinctive NFHS hang-tag alerting consumers that the purchase benefits the school.

New retailers carrying NFHS high school licensed product this fall include Academy Sports, Menards and Lids. In addition, Kroger is expanding the number of participating stores, and regional grocer Bigg’s has joined the program as well. Finish Line will introduce a Student Section in 50 stores that will feature NFHS high school licensed product representing about 100 high schools.

Returning retailers include Hibbett’s, Dunham’s Dollar General, Walgreens, MC Sports, Meijer, Olympic Sporting Goods, Fred’s and Pamida, as well as Wal-Mart, which will carry NFHS high school licensed product of schools that have a signed agreement with LRG.

“We feel, for a first-year program to distribute checks to 6,500 schools is remarkable,” said Dick Welsh, LRG general manager.

LRG is signing agreements with individual schools on a daily basis. According to NFHS Director of Marketing Judy Shoemaker, the growth potential in the NFHS Licensing Program is tremendous.

“It’s all about creating new revenue for schools that continue to face drastic budget and program cuts,” Shoemaker said. “Expanding the program means greater revenue for the schools and that’s our goal.”

LRG’s ability to secure licensee and retail partners has been a key to the program’s success.

“The retailers involved wanted to tell the community that they were giving back to the community by directly supporting the schools in their local market,” Welsh said.

Another new part of the program this year is the agreement with Touchstone Merchandise Group (TMG) to be the exclusive e-commerce supplier of NFHS-licensed high school merchandise. Under the brand name Rokkitwear, TMG will provide an online fan shop for free to schools with a signed LRG licensing agreement. The customized online fan shop link will appear on the school’s Web site with no maintenance or administrative costs.

The school’s merchandise is then sold through the fan shop, with the school receiving revenue directly from sales, as well as from royalties. Merchandise can also be ordered in bulk by the school, thereby increasing revenue.

All product sold online through a school’s fan shop will be NFHS-licensed product, and the school will receive the same royalty revenue as that from the product sold at retail stores. In addition, participating schools also receive 15 percent of the revenue based on the price of a product sold online.

The online shops can be launched immediately for schools with an LRG licensing agreement. Each school’s online store is completely customized using the school’s marks, name, nicknames, colors and mascot. Schools can view examples or sign up for the Rokkitwear online fan shops at www.rokkitwear.com.

Member schools from Arizona, Arkansas, California, Michigan, Virginia and North Carolina are participating in the initial launch of the online stores this fall.

“We were overwhelmed in the first year, but we added the online shop to close the gap [with other online retailers],” Welsh said. “The future for the program is tremendous.”

Colin Likas is a fall intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. He is a sophomore at Butler (Indiana) University, majoring in journalism.
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Don’t Miss Another Year- Get in the Game!
Grant Opportunities for School Music Programs

BY STEFFEN PARKER

While administrators and school board members would like the to fully fund every school program, the reliance on public funding and the challenges of changing economies makes that dream just that – a dream. And while no decision-maker relishes making cuts in existing programs, fine arts programs – due to their subjective nature, limited participation numbers and non-required status – are often the programs most affected by budget reductions. To help fill this void, grants are becoming more available, and more are specifically targeted to provide additional funds for school music programs.

Some of these grants are one-time opportunities and draw considerable publicity because of their dollar value or connection to popular culture. The new grant program offered by the television show “Glee” through the National Association for Music Education (NAfME, formerly MENC) is an example of this type of grant and is worth the effort to read the requirements and complete an application.

These types of grants require a great deal of preparation and application material, however, for little long-term return and chance for success. There are many grant providers that, while they may not have the glamour of Glee nor the backing and connections of NAfME, annually provide funds for schools to meet their students’ ever-changing needs and allow even the smallest schools to have access to some of the latest technological advances in music education.

The variety of annual or long-term grants run the gamut from those supported by popular groups making a significant commitment to music education, such as the Mockingbird Foundation, to those sponsored by governmental entities such as the National Endowment for Humanities and National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities.

The dollar range of those grants varies, with awards going to schools, music educators, individual students for general use, equipment or specific projects. Because the application processes have some shared aspects and carry over from year to year, the effort made in preparing documentation for each grant is a better investment. Regardless of the specifics of each in terms of application requirements and areas to be funded, the approach to successful approval should be consistent.

Gather the Key Players: While the grant application process will likely start with a music educator, others need to be involved in the process. A committee of four to six people will be able to make all of the decisions necessary to provide the funding provider with necessary information for the selection process. The inclusion of an administrator brings a “big picture view” to the discussion. Having an active parent and a student leader involved bring the views of those important sections of the music community to the table. Additional members can be other teachers (fine arts or otherwise) and a community business leader.

Find the Leader and the Recorder: Every effort needs a leader, and your committee needs to have one person who is the point person. It may take a couple of meetings, but a leader will emerge. Match that person with a different member who will serve as the recorder, taking notes at meetings, keeping a folder with application material and tracking the completion of each part of the application process.

Determine Your Needs: Decide what needs will be addressed with this grant. Has the school wished for some significant equipment for years without being able to include it in any budget? Is there a special event that the music program would like to attend that is beyond the fund-raising ability of the students? Would the program be able to do something really innovative for the school community if it just had the money? A clear definition of what the expenditure will look like before any funding sources are identified and investigated will help focus the efforts of those involved in the application process, provide clarity for the completion of the application forms, and guarantee that if the grant is successfully obtained,
there will not be any issues about what to do with those special funds. Remember not to use the same provider for regular programming; grants should not be used to support regular budgetary items.

**Do Your Research:** Trying to force your idea on how the funds would be used by your music program into a grant application that is not designed to fund those ideas will not prove successful. Involve a technologically savvy person on your committee and ask the individual to do some searches on the Internet for grant opportunities. Check out the national music organizations and use some of their link pages to seek out the Web sites, looking for just the grant program that best fit your needs.

Local organizations (Lions, Kiwanis, American Legion, VFW, local trade unions, local companies) are another option and may fund a project within your state, region or community, and don’t limit your local search to music-specific opportunities. Many of these groups are more flexible in their application process and funding because of their connection to your community or school. Check out the application requirements and deadlines as part of this search and prepare a list of the top five that seem to match your needs.

**Establish a Timeline and Share Responsibilities:** Break the application requirements into smaller pieces and establish a timeline for completion. Divide the work among members of the committee (and other recruited volunteers) and ask for help when needed while providing support when asked.

**Communicate:** Having a shared place for information to be posted, edited, shared, reviewed and finalized will make this effort easier and more successful. Anything from a simple folder of documents in a central location that each member can access, review and edit, to a Wiki that everyone can access will allow for an ongoing collaborative effort.

Once this process is completed, the next grant application will be easier and, over time, your school can become quite successful in obtaining funding for a variety of needs and projects. While it may seem like a long shot to even consider applying for some of these grants, there has to be a recipient and it might as well be your school.

Steffen Parker, a ninth-generation Vermonter, has been an instrumental music educator for 31 years, with degrees in performance, education and conducting. Parker organizes several music events in his state and region, and is in his 17th year as the Vermont All State Music Festival Director. He started a computer company, Music Festival Software Solutions, to help other states move their data processing online and provides that type of service to several groups, including the Vermont Principals’ Association and the Vermont Superintendents’ Association. Parker is a member of the High School Today Publications Committee.
How to Market a Successful Athletics Program

BY LEE DOWNEY AND RICK LILLY, CAA

Participation in high school sports in the United States continues to grow as the article in the October issue of High School Today indicated. In the 2010-11 school year, high school participation in athletics reached more than 7.6 million students.

The value of education-based athletics and the role it plays in supporting the academic mission of school systems is well-documented and generally accepted. Yet, athletic programs across the nation are facing budget cuts and increasing pressure as school districts try to balance shrinking budgets.

Thus, the successful marketing of high school athletic programs has become increasingly important to support the mission of schools and develop community support.

If marketing is the act of connecting customers to products, the challenge for athletic administrators looking to market their programs is to connect stakeholders with the invaluable role high school athletics plays in the development of student-athletes and community support.

In the Charlottesville (Virginia) City Schools, the mission is to attain “personal and academic success” for all students. And in the Louisa County (Virginia) Public Schools, the mission is to “shape the future through education today.”

When assessing the appropriate “marketing mix” for your school’s athletic program, you want to consider your mission as it applies to the product, price, place and promotion of your program. In considering what is possible for your school, the mission will clearly define the limits in which you will have to work. The goal is to make decisions that “center the four P’s on the customers (stakeholders) in your target market in order to generate a positive response.”

The parameters are different for every high school program, and it is imperative that you use those limits positively in identifying your target market. For example, Charlottesville High School (CHS) is the lone city high school in a city with 10 square miles, while Louisa County High School (LCHS) is the lone county high school in a county that has almost 500 square miles.

In Louisa County, Friday Night Football in the Jungle (LCHS Football Stadium) is more than just two teams going to battle on a perfectly manicured field. It is a Louisa County community event where the entire county is committed in one form or another to LCHS football. For the price of admission, an entire family can have a night of fun and entertainment that can only be experienced at an LCHS football game.

Friday night festivities start around 5 p.m. when a local radio station broadcasts live from the pregame tailgate party that precedes every home game. Faculty, staff, students, parents and community members bring a dish to share that accompanies the provided main dish and drinks.

The tailgate party is a great way for all stakeholders to mingle, which in turn builds strong community relationships. When you see folks arriving in their recreational vehicles decked out in LC gear, you know it is a football Friday in Louisa. The gates open at 6 p.m. and the seats fill fast. By 7 p.m., most seats are filled, and what is often described as a “three-ring circus” really gets going.

Between 7 and 7:30 p.m., game sponsors are recognized, the inflatable tunnel is prepared, the fireworks are double-checked and the cannon crew gets ready. Next, the band plays the National Anthem with an elementary class holding a giant American flag on the field, skydivers bring in the district championship trophy, the 1971 state champion T.C. Williams Titans football team raises the 12th-man flag—all just in time for the team to run out of the tunnel with the cannon firing and fireworks blasting in the night’s sky.

The excitement lasts throughout the game as well. The live lion mascot roars on command, a 12th-man go-cart races up and down the track and gets the crowd excited as the district champion cheerleaders engage the fans. Students also have the chance to win “The Best Seat in the House” via a raffle during the school day. The winner and 10 friends get to sit close to the field and have pizza delivered to them at halftime. Yes, this is really a high school event and a football game does actually take place amid all the excitement.

How can Louisa manage such an extraordinary event? To sum it up in one word, teamwork. Just like the game plan for the team on the field, a script is created; everyone stays connected through regular communication and executes their role throughout the game. While
the games are accurately described as a three-ring circus, in order to actually make this happen it must be taken one step further. The four-ring circus is centered on the Louisa community, and it has found a marketing mix that effectively utilizes the four P’s for the community.

At the end of the night, for a community event of this nature it is not about how much money is made at the gate, but instead how much pride is taken within the community and the relationships that are formed. Everyone in the town of Louisa looks forward to Friday Nights in the Jungle.

When the little kids from the town football league can be seen on Saturday and their eyes light up when they say, “Hey did you see me in the stands last night? – go Lions,” you know it was worth the hard work necessary to make the event happen. LCHS has been able to effectively utilize the strengths of the community, and build sustainable relationships by targeting its stakeholders with an unparalleled product at the game.

On a Friday night at CHS, a relatively traditional high school football game environment exists. The pregame activities include staff and community tailgating, radio coverage, news broadcasts, recognition of local businesses that support the athletics program, the entrance of the CHS band and introduction of the teams on the field. The CHS band is one of the state’s top performing groups, has a sizable following and is one of the school’s target markets in football season.

In the city of Charlottesville, an individual may choose to go to a high school football game, go to an event at the University of Virginia or possibly enjoy the downtown pedestrian mall that has free music and numerous cultural arts exhibits. While these options provide a relatively attractive alternative to Friday night football games, these activities have set the stage for the school to achieve the highest levels in the academic and performing arts.

Additionally, there are city ordinances and facility limitations pertaining to noise levels that prohibit some of the activities that rural schools such as Louisa have.

For example, fireworks are not an option because the stadium is in a residential neighborhood. There are numerous power lines that surround the facility and limit skydivers access into the stadium. For CHS, the marketing of football games is challenged by the numerous options for activities in the city, but receive benefits from school groups like the band and choir.

The role athletics plays in supporting the mission of schools and building community support is critical. At the 2010 Virginia Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association conference, Aaron Davis said he felt that high school athletics is the great equalizer when it comes to race, socioeconomic status and other factors that have historically had an influence on student success.

Similarly, he stressed the important role that athletic programs play in bringing together communities across the nation. The key component in this process is building relationships by connecting customers with the amazing products high school athletics and activities offer.

In the process of developing a plan to market your program, it is important to follow coach John Wooden’s advice, “Don’t let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.” By being persistent and remaining positive, you too can identify the strengths of your community, build sustainable relationships with stakeholders and successfully market your athletics program.

1 http://www.nfhs.org/content.aspx?id=4208
2 http://www.web-strategist.com/blog/2008/03/01/my-definition-of-marketing/ 
3 http://www.netmba.com/marketing/mix/
4 http://www.aarondavisspeaks.com/

Lee Downey, M.Ed, is athletic director at Louisa County (Virginia) High School, and Rick Lilly, CAA, is athletic director at Charlottesville (Virginia) High School. They can be contacted at downeylc@lcps.k12.va.us and richard.lilly@ccs.k12.va.us, respectively.
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Girls Wrestling Makes Strides Throughout Nation

BY COLIN LIKAS

Until the mid-1990s, high school wrestling was a sport almost exclusively for boys, but the interest in the sport by girls continues to rise every year.

“It [girls wrestling] has come a long way in a short time,” said National Wrestling Coaches Association (NWCA) Executive Director Mike Moyer. “And it is going to keep growing.”

Twenty years ago, there were only 132 girls in the nation wrestling on boys high schools teams, according to the NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey. By 2000, that number had jumped to 3,032, and this past season there were 7,351 girls participating in the sport. Girls wrestling participation numbers have increased every year since 1990.

“We’re pleased to see the increase,” said Bob Colgate, staff liaison to the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee. “Girls wrestling is something we’re trying to further adopt.”

The greatest participation continues to be females wrestling on boys teams. As participation has grown, some states have taken the next step by providing a separate state championship. High school associations in California, Hawaii, Tennessee, Texas and Washington have all developed official state championships for girls wrestling teams.

The California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) created a sanctioned girls wrestling state championship last season after having an open invitational during the previous two seasons.

“The number of interested athletes dictated that it [girls wrestling] needed its own state championship,” said Brian Seymour, the CIF assistant director of championship events.

Trevor Keifer, girls wrestling coach at Steele Canyon High School in Spring Valley, California, might understand this better than anyone.

Keifer, in his fifth season with the Cougars, was actually recruited by the parents of some of the school’s female wrestlers. When he agreed to join the school, a girls wrestling program was quickly born.

“We’re lucky to have a strong, supportive school,” Keifer said. Before Keifer started his coaching duties at Steele Canyon, he worked throughout California to develop girls wrestling. At one point, he was able to put together a team of 31 girls in a non-school setting.

This doesn’t bother Moyer, who says the NWCA is looking “to stimulate growth at all levels.”

“The problem is there aren’t enough girls everywhere to get separate championships [for high school male and female wrestlers],” Moyer said.

The lack of separate championships in a majority of states has sometimes brought both attention and controversy to girls wrestling on boys teams.

In February 2011, home-schooled sophomore Joel Northrup ended his chance at a state title in the 112-pound weight class at the Iowa state meet by forfeiting his opening-round match against female wrestler Cassy Herkelman.

Northrup cited his religious beliefs as the reason for his decision, and it gave Herkelman the first victory for a girl in Iowa’s state tournament history.

Girls have also qualified for state tournaments in Nebraska (2000) and Ohio (2010).

Keifer said that a boy having to wrestle against a girl can pose potential problems, including differing wrestling styles.

 “[Girls] rely a lot more on technical than physical ability,” Keifer said. “Girls have more power in the lower body and have to adjust accordingly [during matches].”

Such issues will not stop groups like the NWCA from working to advance girls wrestling, however.

“Hopefully we can bring more awareness to girls wrestling,” Moyer said. ☺

Colin Likas is a fall intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. He is a sophomore at Butler (Indiana) University, majoring in journalism.
Surveillance Study Make Strides in Injury Research

BY SHANE MONAGHAN

The 2011-12 school year marks the sixth year that the annual National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) High School Sports-related Injury Surveillance Study has been conducted. Data compiled during this six-year period originated with nine sports (football, boys soccer, boys basketball, wrestling, baseball, girls soccer, volleyball, girls basketball and softball) from 100 randomly selected high schools in the United States. Since that time, the study has expanded to include nine additional sports (boys lacrosse, ice hockey, boys swimming and diving, boys track and field, girls field hockey, girls gymnastics, girls lacrosse, girls swimming and diving, and girls track and field), as well as including cheerleading and boys volleyball for the second year in a row.

The surveillance study was put into place to capture a large amount of detailed data on injuries, number of athletic exposures and injury event information. This year, the surveillance study’s findings showed that while injury rates varied by sport, competition injury rates were higher than practice injury rates for all but three (boys volleyball and swimming, and cheerleading) of the 20 sports studied. Patterns of injury also varied by sport, where the head/face, ankle and knee were commonly injured body sites in most sports, and strains/sprains were the most-common injury diagnoses in all but two sports (boys ice hockey and cheerleading). Across the 20 sports in the surveillance study, five to 19 percent of injuries kept student-athletes out of play for more than three weeks, and up to 15 percent of injuries required surgery.

Most injury patterns have remained relatively stable over time. However, concussions have increased during the first five years of the study from a low of 8.4 percent in 2006-07 to a high of 14 percent in 2009-10. In 2010-11, diagnoses of concussions have risen to 20 percent, which may reflect an increase in concussion incidence. However, it more likely might be due to the ongoing efforts of the NFHS and the sports medicine community across the nation in raising concussion awareness.

The data compiled from this study has been used in multiple forums in the past six years, including the rules committee review in continuing to evaluate the effectiveness of several rules changes, as well as publications in the scientific literature and presentations at national scientific conferences.

Shane Monaghan is a fall intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications and Events Departments. Monaghan is a graduate of Ball State (Indiana) University, where he specialized in sports administration.

Executive Director Cashman announces retirement

BY COLIN LIKAS

Brad Cashman, a member of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) administrative staff since 1980, has announced his retirement effective July 2012. He has served as executive director for the past 19 years.

The PIAA has experienced tremendous growth under Cashman’s leadership. Some of his major accomplishments include expanding membership to include Philadelphia public schools and private schools associated with the Philadelphia Catholic League, establishing and/or expanding state championships for 10 athletic teams, and increasing interscholastic athletic opportunities for female athletes with the addition of five new championships in girls sports since 1993.

Nationally, Cashman was the chair of the NFHS Football Rules Committee and was a member of the NFHS Board of Directors.

Before joining the PIAA, Cashman held the positions of business education teacher, head football coach, assistant basketball coach and assistant track and field coach at Northern York High School in Dillsburg, Pennsylvania. Cashman is also a PIAA-registered sports official and has officiated at football, basketball, and track and field events.

Colin Likas is a fall intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. He is a sophomore at Butler (Indiana) University, majoring in journalism.
**SPORTSMANSHIP IN ACTION**

*Editor’s Note: This column highlights sportsmanship programs at the local and state levels throughout the country.*

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**Louisiana High School Athletic Association**
**Baton Rouge, Louisiana**

The Louisiana High School Athletic Association’s (LHSAA) “Beyond the Game Sportsmanship” (BTGS) program is composed of four components: a Public-Service Announcement Contest, Essay Contest, the Sportsmanship Spotlight of the Month and the Spirit of Sportsmanship Award. The BTGS program involves everyone from the student-athletes, coaches, fans and boosters, to the faculty members, parents and officials. By including everyone in this movement, the LHSAA believes that “together, we will make a difference in the lives of others, and positively impact high schools and communities around the state.”

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**Illinois High School Association**
**Bloomington, Illinois**

The Illinois High School Association (IHSA) employs the multi-tiered “Do What’s Right Program” which rewards schools with banners for good sportsmanship throughout the school year. The program also honors Sportspersons of the Year and has established Sportsmanship Expectations and a Captains Handbook, thanks to the hard work of the Sportsmanship Advisory Committee and Student Advisory Committee (SAC). In addition, the “Do What’s Right Program” features sportsmanship mascot, Add A. Tude, who promotes good sportsmanship at IHSA state final events. Finally, the SAC held the inaugural IHSA Leadership Conference in September, attracting nearly 600 students from around the state.

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**Maine Principals’ Association**
**Augusta, Maine**

The Maine Principals’ Association (MPA) is recognizing schools at state championships this year. This fall, each school with a sanctioned field hockey team will vote at the conclusion of the season to determine the schools that best exemplify sportsmanship throughout the regular season. There is a list of criteria in order to be eligible. State sportsmanship banners will be presented at the state championship games in each classification. During the winter season, boys and girls ice hockey teams will be recognized, and the MPA will honor baseball and softball teams next spring.

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**Georgia High School Association**
**Thomaston, Georgia**

The Georgia High School Association (GHSA) is promoting sportsmanship on several levels. Before every GHSA-sanctioned event, a “sportsmanship statement” which emphasizes the importance of good sportsmanship by student-athletes, coaches and spectators is read. In addition, the GHSA teams with Georgia Electric Membership Corporation to sponsor team sportsmanship trophies in each of the 40 regions across the state. The behavior of players, coaches, cheerleaders and fans is taken into consideration for this award. On an individual basis, the GHSA works with “Athletes for a Better World” to present the “Vince Dooley Award” each year to honor a male or female student-athlete who exhibits the precepts of good sportsmanship and citizenship.

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VOICES OF THE NATION

Who has influenced you the most in your career – and how?

Dr. Chester Juroska
Superintendent of Schools
Alvarado (Texas) Independent School District

In 1978, Mel Crowley, who later became superintendent of the Splendora ISD, apparently saw something in me that made him think that I would be an excellent administrator. After appointing me as his assistant principal, he mentored and prepared me for a successful career in school leadership. The No. 1 thing that he stressed was to “take care of your people. A lot of others can do administrative work well, but it counts for nothing if your people feel neglected or unappreciated.” “Building relationships” currently is a popular buzzword in the education profession, but Mel Crowley was on top of that decades ago; he just had a different name for it. That has been and still is a top priority in Alvarado ISD.

Dr. Cheryl Floyd
Superintendent of Schools
Huckabay (Texas) Independent School District

Choosing education as my career was an easy choice. I had great teachers and coaches who inspired me to go into education, but my husband, Darrell, has actually had the greatest impact on me. He saw characteristics in me that would help me to be successful as an administrator, so he persuaded me to get my master’s in educational administration and eventually become a superintendent. It was an excellent choice for me, but he didn’t want me to stop there. I completed my doctorate a couple of years ago due to his unwavering confidence and pride in me. He is my inspiration.

Gayle Stinson
Superintendent of Schools
Lake Dallas (Texas) ISD

There are those who define our worlds as colleagues, friends and classmates. Then, there are those who truly BELIEVE in someone – in me. For me, these believers have come in various forms such as a “dad” who didn’t have to be, but chose to be; a superintendent, Dr. Darrell Floyd, who took the chance on me as a new assistant high school principal; a mentor superintendent, Dr. Larry Sullivan, who hired me as a high school principal; a college president, James H. Russell, and a current superintendent/colleague, Scott Niven, who have both provided endless encouragement and friendship; and a husband who understands the commitment it takes to be a reformer in public education. Life itself really is a cycle – it takes a village to raise a child and a team of mentors and friends to succeed professionally as an adult.

Rod Townsend
Superintendent of Schools
Decatur (Texas) Independent School District

Danny Bellah, a high school football coach in the 1970s in Rochester, Texas, was a person who always found the best in everyone. He provided the students in our high school a role model who everyone could look up to and strive to be like. He was a disciplinarian and a motivator all in one. After 35 years in education, he retired this year. In all the years I’ve known coach Bellah, I have never heard a negative comment about someone else come from his mouth. As a mentor, his advice was simple: Always do what is right and what is best for kids and you never have to worry about the consequences. That is what I have tried to do in my time as an administrator. ☺