



## NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION

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### Rich Bechard of Kansas to Receive NIAAA Award of Merit

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (November 30, 2015) — Rich Bechard, CMAA, district athletic director for Lee's Summit (Missouri) R-7 Schools and a former longtime athletic director in Kansas, is the 2015 recipient of the Award of Merit presented by the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA).

Bechard will receive his award December 15 in Orlando, Florida, during banquet festivities at the 46<sup>th</sup> annual National Athletic Directors Conference conducted jointly by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and the NIAAA.

The Award of Merit is the most prestigious award presented by the NIAAA to an individual who has shown outstanding leadership in interscholastic athletics or related areas. Rich Bechard's, long and storied career in athletic administration began 28 years ago, during which he has proven to be one of the best school leaders in the nation.

Bechard currently works as the district athletic director for Lee's Summit (Missouri) R-7 Schools. He joined the school district in 2014 after 24 years as an athletic director in Kansas.

Bechard spent eight years as athletic director of the Blue Valley Schools in Overland Park, Kansas, after 16 years as athletic director at Holton (Kansas) High School. He began his career at Stockton (Kansas) High School as a coach for basketball, football and track and field, and two years as athletic director.

Bechard was a longtime member of the Kansas Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (KIAAA), and served on its board of directors from 1993 to 2012. Bechard served as KIAAA President in 2001 and was named KIAAA State Athletic Director of the Year in 2003.

Before moving to Missouri, Bechard served on the KIAAA's Leadership Training State Faculty and was a presenter at the KIAAA state conference.

Also at the state level, Bechard served on the Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA) Football Playoff Study Committee in 2000, and was a member of the KSHSAA Strategic Planning Committee in 2009.

Bechard's service to the NIAAA is extensive as well. He earned his CAA distinction in 1997 and, in 2001, became the first athletic administrator in Kansas to receive his CMAA certification. From 2010 to 2013, Bechard served a term on the NIAAA Board of Directors, which included a year as the organization's president in 2012. Most recently, he was the general chair for the fourth NIAAA Strategic Plan.

Since 2008, Bechard has been on the national faculty for the NIAAA Leadership Training Institute, and on three occasions, he has presented workshops at the National Athletic Directors Conference. In addition, Bechard has been an NIAAA state delegate and from 2008 to 2010, he was co-chair of the NIAAA Sports Turf Committee.

Also at the national level, Bechard served on the NFHS Citizenship Committee from 2004 to 2007, and has been a NAIA Champions of Character presenter for the past 13 years. In 2013, Bechard was awarded the NFHS Citation.

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#### About the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA)

The NIAAA is the largest national organization for high school athletic administrators with more than 8,500 individual members. The NIAAA consists of athletic directors organizations in the 50 states plus the District of Columbia and provides an efficient system for exchange of ideas between the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and state athletic administrators organizations as well as individual athletic administrators. The NIAAA, located in Indianapolis, Indiana, strives to preserve the educational nature of interscholastic athletics and the place of these programs in the curricula of schools. The NIAAA is a full and equal partner with the NFHS. For more information, visit the NIAAA website at [www.niaaa.org](http://www.niaaa.org).

### About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 16 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.8 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, speech and debate coaches, and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS website at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org).

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