



**MINUTES
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
January 20, 2026**

In accordance with Article 6, Section 3, Paragraph 1 of the Arizona Interscholastic Association, Inc. (AIA) Constitution, a regular meeting of the Executive Board was held on Tuesday, January 20, 2026, at the AIA Office located at 7007 N 18th Street, Phoenix, AZ 85020.

President Missy Townsend called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

Members in Attendance:

William Duarte, 1A Conference (Superior Jr./Sr. High School)
Tiarra Yazzie, 2A Conference (Hopi High School)
Greg Haagsma, 3A Conference (Valley Christian High School)
William Wright, 4A Conference (Estrella Foothills High School)
Corey Newland, 5A Conference (Paradise Valley School District)
Jennifer Burks, 6A Conference (Perry High School)
Tim Carter, Cognia (Yavapai County School Superintendent, Retired)
Steve Johnson, Arizona School Boards Association (CAVIT)
David Verdugo, Arizona School Administrators (Santa Cruz Valley School District – Rio Rico)
Missy Townsend, Arizona Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (Prescott High School)
Jim Dean, Ed.D, AIA Executive Director

AIA Staff Present:

Toni Corona, Associate Executive Director
Nathan Slater, Associate Executive Director
Erin Coy, Assistant Executive Director
Tayler Coady, Executive Administrative Assistant
Brian Gessner, Commissioner of Officials
Amy Richmond, Director of Finance
Dan Nero, Director of Athletics
Tyler Cerimeli, Director of Athletics and Officials

ADOPTION OF AGENDA – JANUARY 20, 2026

On a motion made, seconded and carried the Executive Board approved the adoption of the January 20, 2026 agenda.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion duly made, seconded and carried, President Townsend, in accordance with Article 6, Section 3, Paragraph 3, Subparagraph 2 of the AIA Constitution, called for the following Executive Sessions:

- ✓ 8:30 am – 8:42 am

REGULAR MEETING:**MEMBERSHIP COMMENTS**

None.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

The NFHS Winter Executive Director's meeting was held in Newport Beach earlier this month. Discussions surrounding student transfers, eligibility and competitions continue to take place. The Summer Meeting will be held in Salt Lake City at the end of June this year.

Traditional Spiritline Championships concluded last weekend at the Veterans Memorial Coliseum. Congratulations to all the participants – it was an exciting weekend!

AZP365 Podcast has launched! There are currently two episodes out with a new one launching every Thursday at noon. The Podcast can be found on the AzPreps365 YouTube Channel.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**FINANCIAL REPORT**

In accordance with Article 6, Section 5, Paragraph 15 of the AIA Bylaws, the Executive Board approved the following financial reports:

- ✓ Financial Report for November 2025
- ✓ Financial Report for December 2025

FUTURE DATES

January 26, 2026	4A Conference Meeting 6A Conference Meeting Spring Coaches Courses Open on AIA Dashboard
January 28, 2026	District AD / Conference Leadership Meeting
January 29, 2026	Sports Medicine Advisory Committee Meeting
February 4, 2026	Student Leadership Advisory Committee Meeting
February 5, 2026	5A Conference Meeting
February 7, 2026	Spring Coaches Course Deadline
February 16, 2026	AIA Office Closed – Holiday
February 17, 2026	AIA Executive Board Meeting Spring Hardship Appeal Submission Deadline

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

On a motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, the Executive Board approved the following consent agenda items:

Approval of Minutes

- Executive Board Meeting – December 8, 2025

AIA Lifetime Passes

1. Jason Girnius	Mountain Ridge
2. Rick McCutcheon	Paradise Valley
3. Monti Martinez	Florence Unified School District
4. Karen Crane	McClintock
5. Christopher Chacon	Alhambra

Request for AIA Sanction/Intrastate and Interstate Activities – 2025-26 Master Calendar

In accordance with Article 10, Section 1 of the AIA Bylaws, the Executive Board approved the sanction requests for the intrastate and interstate activities reflected in the 2025-2026 Master Calendar. The master calendar is posted online at <http://www.aiaonline.org/calendar/?id=5>.

The Master Calendar, which is prepared by the AIA for its member schools, reflects activities (events) that have been sanctioned by the AIA Executive Board. It is the responsibility of each member school to limit its participation in these sanctioned activities to the maximum number of contests set forth in the AIA Bylaws.

ACTION ITEMS:**SCHOOL VIOLATIONS****INDEPENDENCE HIGH SCHOOL** – Glendale Union High School District

Rule: Article 15. Student Eligibility Rules, Section 7 Physical Examination Rule (15.7.1)

Reported Violation:

1. Student participated during wrestling tryouts before being cleared.
2. Student participated in cheer practice without a cleared Physical Form. Student was marked not cleared due to needing glasses. Student did not participate in any competitions.

Schools Corrective Action:

Independence High School administration and coaches are reviewing current procedures for notifying students and coaches of clearing process and will make changes that will further guard issues such as this from happening in the future. The coach has been contacted regarding this situation. There will be a mandatory wait period for students who are cleared to allow for proper communication to coaches on athletes' status.

Executive Board Action:

The Executive Board, in accordance with Article 16, Section 1 of the AIA Bylaws, placed the Independence High School **Activities Program** on Warning for one year 1/20/26-1/20/27.

SCHOOL VIOLATIONS – Cont'd**DESERT VIEW HIGH SCHOOL** – Sunnyside Unified School District

Rule: Article 14. General Provisions, Section 3 Maximum Teams Per Sport/Student Grade Level (14.3.2.1)

Reported Violation:

Flag football coach played a girl in the 12th grade in a junior varsity game.

Schools Corrective Action:

Contest forfeited. Flag football coach was directed not to play girls in the 12th grade on junior varsity contests. In our second season of girls' flag football, we re-educated our coach on the AIA bylaws.

Executive Board Action:

The Executive Board, in accordance with Article 16, Section 1 of the AIA Bylaws, placed the Desert View High School **Flag Football Program** on Advisement for one year 1/20/26-1/20/27.

KOFA HIGH SCHOOL – Yuma Union School District

Rule: Article 15. Student Eligibility Rules, Section 10 Transfer Rule (15.10.2)

Reported Violation:

Student transferred to Kofa High School in May of 2025. In June of 2025 student filled out the 550 form for the 25/26 school year. She was marked according to this rule as sit out 50% of the season. On Tuesday December 9th the AD of Kofa received a phone call from the AD of Yuma stating that this student played during the girls' varsity basketball game. Kofa's head coach misinterpreted the bylaw as to this only being applicable to students who played at the varsity level.

Schools Corrective Action:

Contest forfeited. The coach responsible for this violation has received in service regarding relevant bylaws. The Kofa High School AD will require all programs/coaches to meet with the AD prior to the season of spot to review an updated transfer/clearance lists. The coaching staff will continue to receive additional in services provided by the AD during monthly head coaches meetings on AIA bylaws to prevent future violations.

Executive Board Action:

The Executive Board, in accordance with Article 16, Section 1 of the AIA Bylaws, placed the Kofa High School **Girls' Basketball Program** on Advisement for one year 1/20/26-1/20/27.

SCHOOL VIOLATIONS – Cont'd**ESTRELLA FOOTHILLS HIGH SCHOOL** – *Buckeye Union High School District*Rule: Article 16. Penalties and Appeals, Section 2 Ineligible Player (16.2.1)**Reported Violation:**

EFHS head freshman football coach did not use the eligibility monitoring platform (RANKONE) to keep accurate or update team roster for determining students eligibility. Once students began to pay for athletic fees in late October, it was determined several students were not on the roster and had not completed their Brainbook or Opioid video requirements.

EFHS Fr/So football team played five ineligible players in eight games total. The ineligible students had no completed the Brainbook or Opioid requirements.

Schools Corrective Action:

Contests forfeited. Head Fr/So coach is terminated. Once the new coach is hired and the new coaching staff is identified, there will be an in-service and training on the eligibility process to ensure all requirements are met and followed throughout the entire season. Notice has been sent to each school notifying them the contests are forfeited.

Executive Board Action:

The Executive Board, in accordance with Article 16, Section 1 of the AIA Bylaws, placed the Estrella Foothills High School **Football Program** on **Warning** for one year 1/20/26-1/20/27.

Bill Wright - abstain

CIBOLA HIGH SCHOOL – *Yuma Union School District*Rule: Article 14. General Provisions, Section 4 Nonschool Participation (14.4.1)**Reported Violation:**

On December 14 a freshman male basketball student-athlete from Cibola participated in an unsanctioned basketball tournament outside of the US during the AIA basketball season. Participation occurred while the student-athlete was an active member of the Cibola boys' basketball program. The student-athlete competed in a weekend tournament held in Mexico on December 14th playing for Duke Mexicali basketball Club, which constitutes outside competition during the high school season and is a violation of AIA eligibility rules.

Schools Corrective Action:

Contest forfeited. There will be additional training to all coaches involving Article 14 of the AIA bylaws. The matter involving the coach has been referred to Human Resources for investigation. The student-athlete has been declared ineligible for the remainder of the 2025-2026 basketball season.

Executive Board Action:

The Executive Board, in accordance with Article 16, Section 1 of the AIA Bylaws, placed the Cibola High School **Boys' Basketball Program** on **Advisement** for one year 1/20/26-1/20/27.

CANCELLATION REQUESTS – CONTEST AND/OR PROGRAMS

In accordance with Article 11, Section 4, Paragraph 3, Subparagraph 1 of the AIA Bylaws, the Executive Board approved the following cancellation request for a varsity, junior varsity, freshman program(s) that could have a bearing on regional or state playoffs:

<u>SCHOOL REQUESTING:</u>	<u>HEREBY CONSENT:</u>
1. Mayer	VAR Girls' Wrestling Program
2. Valley Sanders	VAR Girls/Boys Wrestling programs
3. San Simon	VAR Softball Program
4. Mountainside	VAR Girls' Basketball Program

SUB VARSITY PROGRAM CANCELLATIONS – 20

CONTEST(S) Cancelled: 187 total contests cancelled (VAR/JV/FR/SO)

REQUEST TO RESCIND NONCONSENT FINE

Marana High School is requesting to rescind the fine for the VAR/JV boys' basketball contests against Amphitheater.

Based on the information provided, on a motion made, seconded and carried the Executive Board rescinded the varsity cancellation fine and upheld the JV cancellation fine.

ADDITIONAL GAME REQUESTS

On a motion made, seconded and carried the Executive Board approved the following requests:

- A. **Benjamin Franklin** – additional VAR girls' soccer game to help fill **Thatcher's** schedule.
- B. **Crismont** – additional VAR softball games to help fill **Valley Christian's** schedule.
- C. **Northland Prep** – additional VAR girls' basketball game to help fill **Mohave Accelerated's** schedule.
- D. **Payson** – additional VAR/JV baseball games to help fill **ALA Mesa North's** schedule.
- E. **San Luis** – additional VAR/JV baseball games to help fill **Somerton's** schedule.
- F. **ALA Ironwood** – additional VAR/JV baseball games to help fill **ALA Mesa North's** schedule.
- G. **Flagstaff** – additional VAR/JV/FRSo boys' basketball games to help fill **Northland Prep's** schedule.

NEW MEMBER SCHOOL APPLICATION

- Heritage Academy Maricopa
- Heritage Academy Mesa
- Heritage Academy Gateway
- American Leadership Academy – Sierra Vista
- American Leadership Academy – Radiance
- Franklin High School (Mesa District)
- Shepherd College Prep (Mesa District)

On a motion made, seconded and carried the Executive Board approved the above new member school applications after receiving balloting information from membership.

REQUEST – CO OP – SOFTBALL

Fredonia and El Capitan are requesting to combine softball programs for the 2026 season. This is due to the low numbers and not being able to field individual teams at each school.

On a motion made, seconded and carried the Executive Board **approved** the co-op for Fredonia and El Capitan softball for the 2026 season with the understanding that they would be eligible to participate in post-season.

AMENDMENT – SPORTS MEDICINE

At the recommendation of the Sports Medicine Advisory Committee amendments have been provided to update the Heat Acclimatization Policy.

On a motion made, seconded and carried the Executive Board **approved** the recommendations from SMAC with the amendment to remove the fall baseball/softball practice recommendations for heat acclimatization as the AIA does not govern those sports outside the season of sport.

DIVISION PLACEMENT APPEAL

<u>School/Appeal</u>	<u>Granted/Denied</u>	<u>Placement for 2026-28 Block</u>
Alchesay	Granted	Wrestling – Division IV

SECTION PLACEMENT APPEALS

The following representatives entered the meeting for a placement appeal and left upon completion of their presentations.

<u>Casa Grande</u>	Randy Robbins – Athletic Director
<u>Marana</u>	Amie Cromell – Athletic Director, Shaun Lara – Coach
<u>Maricopa</u>	Matt Mayo – District Athletic Director
<u>Salpointe Catholic</u>	Phil Gruensfelder – Athletic Director, Martin Chavez – Coach
<u>Desert Sunrise</u>	Jim Bradford – Athletic Director, Matt Mayo – District Athletic Director

Following review and discussion of the written and oral information presented, the Executive Board, in accordance with Article 8, Section 6 of the AIA Bylaws, **granted / denied** the following placement appeal(s):

<u>School/Appeal</u>	<u>Granted/Denied</u>	<u>Placement for 2026-28 Block</u>
Casa Grande	Granted	Boys/Girls Tennis – Division I Desert Southwest
Marana	Denied	Girls' Wrestling – Division I Section IV
Maricopa	Granted	Girls' Wrestling – Division I Section III
Maricopa	Granted	Girls' Beach Volleyball – Division I East Valley
Maricopa	Granted	Boys/Girls Tennis – Division I Metro
Salpointe Catholic	Denied	Boys' Wrestling – Division II Section IV
Salpointe Catholic	Denied	Girls' Wrestling – Division I Section IV
Peoria	Denied	Boys' Wrestling – Division III Section I
Desert Sunrise	Granted	Boys' Wrestling – Division III Section III
Desert Sunrise	Granted	Girls' Wrestling – Division II Section II
Desert Sunrise	Granted	Girls' Tennis – Division II Section IV

REGION PLACEMENT APPEAL

The following representatives entered the meeting for a placement appeal and left upon completion of their presentations.

Apollo

Tiffany Fain – Athletic Director, Ben White – Principal, Matt Belden – Superintendent

Following review and discussion of the written and oral information presented, the Executive Board, in accordance with Article 8, Section 2 of the AIA Bylaws, granted / denied the following placement appeal(s):

School/Appeal

Apollo

Granted/Denied

Denied

Placement for 2026-28 Block

6A Central

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY APPEALS

The following representatives entered the meeting for an eligibility appeal and left upon completion of their presentations.

Canyon View

Andrea Hudson – Athletic Director, Parent, Student

Paradise Honors

Ben Clark – Athletic Director, Parents, Student

Following review and discussion of the written and oral information presented, the Executive Board, in accordance with Article 15, Section 14 of the AIA Bylaws, granted / denied the following hardship eligibility requests:

School/Appeal

Canyon View

Granted/Denied

Denied

Paradise Honors

Denied

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on a motion made, seconded, and carried, the meeting adjourned at 12:47 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Dean Ed., D.
AIA Executive Director