



OSAA Equity and Diversity Newsletter

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S.T.A.R. School Application Available

To meet the S.T.A.R. school standards set by the OSAA, a school must implement event management strategies with the intention of providing the safest and most welcoming environment to all who attend OSAA sanctioned events. If there is a discriminatory incident that occurs, the school must also have a plan prepared for how to both interrupt the behaviors that occur, as well as follow through with all who are involved. The application process asks school administrators to reflect on current practices for event management as well as assess areas where improvements can be made to create the best environment for all to thrive. S.T.A.R. Schools will be indicated by a S.T.A.R. logo on their school's page on the OSAA website. Those schools who qualify will also earn 100 OSAA Cup points. The OSAA plans to provide a banner for official S.T.A.R. Schools beginning the 2022-23 Association Year as well.

S.T.A.R schools will also receive \$1,000 from the OSAA Foundation Equity and Diversity Fund to support ongoing trainings and education along with a banner representing they are a S.T.A.R school.

[S.T.A.R. School Application](#)



OSAA Foundation Equity and Diversity Fund

OSAA Foundation Equity and Diversity Fund

» [Grant Application](#)

The OSAA Foundation Board has established an Equity and Diversity Fund that schools can apply for to support their efforts. From literature, to guest speakers, to additional training beyond what's provided by the OSAA- the OSAA Foundation is looking for innovative ideas from schools about the engagement of Equity and Diversity training with their students, their staff and their communities.

2022-23 Grant Recipients:

Mountain West League, \$1,700. Used for a sportsmanship and equity summit for league schools.

Creating a Positive Parent Spectator Environment In Your School

By: Dr. Steve Amaro, CMAA 12/20/2022

It's the fourth quarter of the game that everyone thought was going to be a home team victory, yet the scoreboard shows exactly the opposite. The home team's players are visibly frustrated, the coaches are trying to focus the students on tactical adjustments, and a group of parents from the stands starts to yell over the coach's instructions to get the attention of their players. This is not the optimal learning environment that everyone wants to experience.

Too often, student-athletes and coaches face these scenarios as they play out across many high schools, but the variable that may cause the most harm is unruly crowd behavior. Spectator frustration is understandable as we see it in our society every day; however, school leaders are responsible for maintaining positive environments where students can grow. With a little planning and creativity, school leaders can give appropriate direction, support and perspective so that everyone has a positive experience.

Success Defined with Purpose, Philosophy and Expectation Statements

Early season parent meetings can sometimes be uncomfortable as any coach can feel the pressure from parents who may try to pass judgment on coach competency. However, it is during these meetings that coaches can reveal themselves as leaders who promote school and athletic department missions. It's important that coaches be transparent in their goals of what they hope to accomplish in each season, but time should also be devoted to providing common definitions of success, purpose and philosophy so that parents better understand high school athletics.

One of the first steps is for coaches to define what they feel is a "successful season" and explain the criteria that creates success. For example, coaches may want to emphasize the importance of learning by emphasizing the process of practice, games and effort over game outcomes. When the focus turns to what a student or team does leading up to a game and how a student or team performs during the game, the opposing team and game outcome become less important.

In addition, this type of environment is one where students and coaches are free to focus on collective improvement by looking at data and experimenting with technique. With just this key clarification, parents gain a better understanding of how the focus of high school athletics is about learning rather than reacting.



At early season meetings, coaches also have opportunities to share their purpose and philosophy. A simple statement that answers, “Why do you coach?” and “What role do parents play in creating success?” can be a strong starting point to build successful, supportive parent relationships. There will always be a few individuals at the meetings who may not agree with coach purpose and philosophy; however, if coach mission and vision are aligned with school mission and vision, the coach becomes empowered to re-emphasize that athletic participation is a choice of the student-athlete rather than an educational right.

Explicitly stating and sharing a program’s purpose might seem to be a given; however, the danger of not addressing such a basic premise cannot be underestimated. Without stating the purpose, parents are left to try to impose their own philosophies, which may include equal participation of all players, winning at all costs, and a misbalanced emphasis that places athletics above academics.

It’s important that parents understand that the athletic field is an extension of the classroom where learning and experimentation are rewarded so that students can acquire key critical-thinking skills. It’s equally important to let parents know that students are not going to be experts in their decision-making and mistakes are bound to happen; however, negative parent response to student mistakes may influence students and create barriers against learning that can impede improvement and weaken trust on a team.

Leverage Technology to Promote Positivity and Recognition

In today’s digital world, there are many ways to publicize student and spectator behavior expectations long before an event begins. School websites vary in effectiveness, but they are great spaces to publicize information regarding student and spectator expectations. Team pages can draw attention to collective school values, promote the mission of the school and program, and list the expectations for those who choose to attend events.

With the digital ticketing era, most ticket platforms also have space for schools to write disclaimers that must be read before ticket purchase. It is in this space that schools can promote and clarify expectations so that even visiting team spectators are better able to understand host school expectations.

Just as coaches must become certified to coach high school sports, the NFHS also offers supportive parent classes that lead to a National Parent Credential. With this opportunity, schools can design creative promotions to recognize those parents who complete the battery of courses.

As an example, schools can give away a limited number of free entries to games for those who bring verification of their credential. Schools can also partner with rival schools to see how many credentialed parent certificates they can verify at a select game and give out rewards from local businesses or even create league-wide certification awards that can be publicized on social media and local press outlets.

Amplify Student-Athlete Voice in Promotions

Messages that schools send to parents are key to success; however, just as important is who delivers the message. Utilizing coaches, athletic directors and principals as people to deliver messages are great, but one stakeholder that is routinely overlooked is the possibilities created when we amplify the voices of student-athletes.

Public-address announcer scripts should be written and approved long before games begin, but a school leader can also identify a student-athlete who could appropriately read parts of the script pertaining to positive environments.

For example, after warmups a team captain could be given the microphone to thank everyone for coming, and remind everyone that all the athletes are there to do their best, and would appreciate that everyone in attendance be positive with their words directed towards players, coaches, officials and staff. It's these types of opportunities that allow school leaders to build collective ownership in all stakeholders, give students a more prominent role in leadership of a program, and remind spectators of why they should attend and support high schools in a way that promotes physical, intellectual and psychological growth.

Final Thoughts

Even with the best planning and implementation, eventually there will be spectators who will detract from the educational environment. Some may even need to be removed from events, and leaders should work through scenarios with their administrative teams to determine what crosses the line and what actions should be taken.

The games students play are exciting events that can bring out the best and worst in everyone and can challenge even the most disciplined to maintain perspective; however, when school leaders embrace the challenge of sharing expectations and proper perspective, they are more likely to see improved behaviors that support positive school culture.

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