FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wyoming High School Activities Association (WHSAA)
May 8, 2026 – Casper, Wyoming

WHSAA Board Discusses Activities Funding Shortfall Following Legislative Changes

The Wyoming High School Activities Association (WHSAA) Board convened in Casper on April 28, 2026. A significant portion of the meeting was dedicated to discussing the projected funding shortfall for student activities and athletics resulting from recent changes to Wyoming's school funding model.

Board members reviewed the impact of the 2026 legislative recalibration bill, which introduced a new "silo" approach to the state's block grant funding. Under this model, funding allocated for student activities and extra-duty responsibilities has decreased from $46.3 million to $42.4 million—a reduction of approximately 8.4% for school districts across Wyoming. Additionally, which will result in cuts requiring extreme restructuring of existing activities and athletic offerings for Wyoming students.

Immediate and Long-Term Impacts

District leaders, including athletic directors, superintendents, school board members, and a representative from the Wyoming Department of Education, shared plans for addressing the shortfall. Most districts indicated they will rely on cash carryover funds to support activities and athletics during the 2026–27 school year. However, this approach is widely viewed as a temporary, one-year solution rather than a sustainable path forward.

Potential Adjustments Under Consideration

The WHSAA Board discussed a range of potential strategies to help balance rising costs with reduced funding. These options are exploratory and intended to stimulate ongoing collaboration with school districts.

Possibilities include:

1. **Culminating Events**
    a. Eliminate Regional Tournaments
    b. Eliminate consolation games
    c. Limit # of teams qualifying for State Events from 8 to 4
    d. Limit number of individuals participating-2 Classes of Boys Wrestling; Top 16 times/marks in Track and Field
2. **Regular Season Events**
    a. Eliminate or reduce regular season tournaments
    b. Reduce number of contests in every sport
3. **Program Cuts-Based on # of schools/students participating, availability of a separate season, and cost to schools**
    a. Soccer
    b. Indoor Track and Field
    c. Nordic Skiing
    d. Alpine Skiing
    e. Swimming & Diving
    f. Spring Golf

g. Spring Tennis

4. **Activities**
    a. Reduce in person Speech and Debate events from 12 to 6 events
    b. Limit of 6 Speech and Debate workshop events, all workshop events to be 1 day with no overnight stays
    c. Centrally locate All-State Music event to provide for less travel
    d. Eliminate participation in national events, ie: Student Council Vision Conference, NSDA National Qualifying Speech Tournament, All-Northwest Music; Washington Leadership Institute (SkillsUSA), MidAmerica Conference (SkillsUSA), FCCLA National Leadership Institute, FCCLA Chapter Advisors Summit, FBLA National Fall Leadership Conference
    e. FFA and SkillsUSA eliminate overnight travel
5. **Recommendations to schools**
    a. Limit number of teams (possibly eliminate FR, SO, JV or 'C' teams)
    b. Use fewer officials for contests
    c. Set limits to the number of players on a team
    d. No funding of National Travel
    e. Contests should be played on Friday and Saturday to minimize substitute teacher costs to districts
    f. Increase gate admission
    g. Implement or increase a student participation fee

Importance of Activities and Broader Impacts

Board members emphasized that activities and athletics play a critical role in student success. These programs foster leadership, teamwork, character development, and a sense of belonging. For many students, participation in activities is a key factor in their engagement with school and their path to graduation.

The Board also noted that reductions in activities could have broader economic consequences for communities across Wyoming, including decreased travel-related revenue for local businesses such as hotels and restaurants.

Commitment to Collaboration

The WHSAA remains committed to supporting Wyoming students and will continue working closely with school districts to identify solutions. This includes exploring cost-saving measures, forming a collaborative committee, and engaging with parents, communities, and policymakers.

WHSAA also encourages continued dialogue with state legislators to ensure that funding decisions reflect the value and impact of student activities and athletics throughout Wyoming.