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## National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association

Message for State Athletic Administrator Association:

Board Presidents  
Membership Chairs  
State Liaisons  
Executive Directors  
Board of Directors

From: Mike Blackburn, NIAAA Executive Director

Date: August 31, 2021

I truly hope that the new school year, fall athletic season and planning of athletic administrator association events are all progressing well for each of you. Hopefully the variant that is now challenging efforts, will subside quickly.

While our strategic plan items over the years have most commonly been measurable by NIAAA efforts, allow me to bring two items to your attention that rely a great deal on the initiative of our partner state athletic administrator association. The NIAAA 5<sup>th</sup> **Strategic Plan** was instituted in 2021 after being developed by an ad hoc committee or members representing 28 state associations equally divided among our 8 sections. **Item #6** of the plan calls for increasing NIAAA membership by 3% annually, or by over 16% over the life of the 5 year plan. This initiative would put NIAAA membership at 14,622 by the year 2025. That calculation is based upon the June 30, 2020, record total of 12,605.

Most of the past 12 months have been primarily within the period of COVID, and the first count on June 30, 2021 fiscal year experienced an overall membership reduction of 2.3%. We are confident that with your assistance and working together in 2021-22, we are capable of gaining back those members that slipped away last year, and also gain the 3% growth called for in the strategic plan. We sincerely appreciate your emphasis toward this effort and growth to 13,000 by the June 30, 2022, count date. I am sure as well, that our dual states are anxious to restore those members that allowed their state and national membership laps.

If this sounds like a tall order, please be aware that among the 19 states that enjoyed record membership in 2020, those that decreased in June 2021 were anywhere between 1 member and 27% of its members. If these states had retained their 2020 numbers and combined with states that grew during the full COVID year, it would have taken us well over 13,500 in 2021. It is interesting to consider that if all states were at their all-time record membership level at the same time, it would equal over 14,000 members. I am very confident in your commitment to reach out and bring back into the fold anyone who did not re-up during the past membership year, as well as pledge to grow new professionals within your respective state. With all states reaching out to their athletic administrators simultaneously, the sky is the limit, and a larger goal of 15,000 members will be in view. As a broader view for you....I want you to realize that the NIAAA has grown from 5,100 in 2004, to the numbers that we are now discussing.

During the past 19 months of you battling within your programs the challenges of the pandemic, you have proven that it is our members' desire to grow as professionals. You hold close your state athletic administrator association and NIAAA efforts to promote new methods of networking, gaining training and opportunity to learn. We are grateful for your dedication, as well as the desire to expose all those who lead in the field of interscholastic athletics to the necessary avenues that will assist them as they serve their student-athletes, staffs, schools, and communities.

Let's acknowledge those states that during difficult months for school athletic programs, struggles by individual directors, and setbacks experienced by state athletic administrator associations, who continued to grow membership. During the membership year that ended this past June there were 20 states that grew including the Arkansas HSADA, Missouri IAAA, Illinois ADA, Florida IAAA,

Oklahoma IAAA, Oregon ADA, Iowa HSADA, Utah IAAA, Maine IAAA, New Jersey DAA, Nevada ADA, California SADA, New Mexico IAAA, Kansas IAAA, Wisconsin ADA, Washington SSAAA, Alabama HSADCA, Tennessee IAAA, Alaska IAAA, and Massachusetts SSADA.

There are also many states that have been very diligent over many years at building and maintaining membership, and even though membership slipped a bit the past year, were able to continue at a high level of accumulative recognition. They will be acknowledged in the Fall issue of *Interscholastic Athletic Administration* magazine and include 16 states at over 100% membership, 13 aspired to new record membership, 29 have maintained membership from 70% to as high as 165% of the number of high schools in their state, and 21 states had a single year increase including 8 with between 10% and over 180% gain. Amid strife, so many states continued to excel.

Arkansas, during its second year as a Dual Member, grew to a record state and national membership with a 187% increase in one cycle. Missouri IAAA was not far behind growing by 86 members this past year, and by over 368 members and 152% in the past 5 years! The 5<sup>th</sup> **Strategic Plan** item #7 seeks to continue the efforts to work toward full Dual Member State representation. There are currently 32 Dual Member States. The Oregon ADA is the most recent to declare and over the past three years Iowa, Idaho, Kansas, and Arkansas have stepped forward. Remember that no state has decreased by moving to dual status, they have only increased their state member numbers. I hope that non-dual states will make this topic an item for upcoming board of directors to seriously consider.

Reaching all directors of athletics is vital with the opportunity and message of an association that exists for them and their profession. The NIAAA is the organization...for athletic administrators...by athletic administrators. I encourage you to be passionate not only about your own professional involvement, but to be at forefront of leading colleagues to the cutting-edge information that will benefit them. Vested in grassroots involvement and volunteerism, the NIAAA is your organization. I challenge you to take the message to the school district, high school, and middle school directors in your state to help them understand the benefits of membership. I often reference the athletic director who shared with me that he thought all was going well during the first year as AD, until he took LTC 504, and became aware of 16 legal duties. He realized that he had been putting himself, student-athletes, his coaching staff and his school district in potential unsafe and libelous situations.

All our accumulative efforts are for the cause of providing student-athletes with safe and challenging opportunities, growing coaches as leaders while exposing school communities to best practices within their education-based athletic program. I ask that you take it upon yourself to bring these requests before your state leadership and discuss the opportunity make 2021-22 a banner year for reaching out to current, new and past members. To do so will benefit our programs at many levels and help the director of athletics who do not know, what they do not know.

Thank you so much.  
Mike