

# WISCONSIN ATHLETIC DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION



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Happy Spring to my Athletic Director Colleagues. Last week, we hosted two indoor Track and Field Invitationals in Marshfield. As we prepared and then ran around thinking about all the things we have forgotten, we came to the realization as a staff that we haven't run an indoor track and field meet since April of 2019. Now, to some that may not seem like a big issue, but when you think about it, it really was like starting over from a logistics standpoint, plus the stress of two years of COVID. However, once all things were up and running, it was like riding your bike. Get back on, get your balance and ride like you have a hundred or a thousand times.

For many years, the Spring Caucus is much like riding your bike. We nominate our DSA, Athletic Director, of the Year, and we discuss the upcoming WIAA Annual Meeting, amongst other items. This year will be similar, however there will be a slight agenda change as begin a new process with district representation elections to serve the WADA organization, as the District Representative, Gender Representative, and Scholarship Committee members. This is an even year (2022), therefore we will hold elections in Districts 2, 4, and 6. There may be additional Special Elections that will need to take place in the odd numbered districts, but your current District Rep. will communicate that with you ahead of time. Individuals elected will begin their terms on July 1<sup>st</sup> of this year and serve their two years terms as outlined in the WADA Bylaws. I applaud the Board and our membership for analyzing our processes, listening to the rationale for change, and then making the decision for such a change. We do recognize this is a change and there may be a few bumps in the road along the way. If you would like to be involved in your organization, please reach out to any of the WADA Board members, myself, Jeff Sitz, or Greg Smith and we will be happy to help answer any questions you may have.

I want to thank the WIAA Staff, Stephanie Hauser, Executive Director, and Tom Shafranski, WADA Liaison, for agreeing to partner with us to provide monthly topics and communication opportunities to our members. In February, we began talking about Football Playoffs and Competitive Balance Committee work and in March we discussed the WIAA Transfer Rule and Scott Swid provided guidance on Athletic Director contracts. For each session, we averaged 135 attendees. We are all pleased with the support, and we will continue to have monthly opportunities for desired topics and feedback for our members. This month's opportunities will come from the WADA Caucuses and the WIAA Annual Meeting. Based on the feedback from both venues, we will establish the two to three topics and schedule our final virtual meeting of the school year sometime in May.

Speaking of the conversation on the Football Playoffs, your District Representative should have emailed you a brief survey from Tom Shafranski, as a follow-up to the February conversation. If you have not seen it or got lost in the shuffle, here is the [LINK](#) for the survey. Please take the time to complete this survey.

## WADA SPRING CAUCUS AND ELECTIONS

APRIL MEETINGS  
[CLICK HERE FOR LIST](#)

## WIAA ANNUAL MEETING

APRIL 27<sup>TH</sup>

WADA GOLF OUTING  
JULY 13<sup>TH</sup>  
TRAPPERS TURN- WISCONSIN  
DELLS

WADA AT AMERICAN  
FAMILY FIELD  
JULY 27<sup>TH</sup> V. TWINS

This newsletter will contain messages from Todd Sobrilsky, Jim Langkamp, and Scott Swid. Greg Smith will provide a separate email which will include Brewer Ticket information, payment, and pick-up options either from Greg Smith's letter or in a future email from WADA. Be well this Spring and we will see you this month at a Caucus Meeting or the WIAA Annual Meeting.

Yours in Sport,



## **Title IX - 50th Celebration**

Growing up in Milwaukee with two older sisters, my parents encouraged us to play anything. I remember riding my big wheel, playing in my sandbox with my dump trucks, playing baseball in the alley with my neighbors and yes, playing with dolls....sometimes. My parents wanted us to experience anything with no barriers. As I got older, I saw my sisters participate in volleyball, softball and track and field. I definitely loved playing all types of sports and activities. Reaching 5th grade for me was the best. My school just added a girls basketball team. We had volleyball and softball already and I participated in those sports as my sisters did, but basketball was my sport. Being 5'11 in 8th grade certainly helped. I went on to play in an era at my high school, Pius XI, where girls sports was top in the state. That experience led me to receive an athletic scholarship to play college basketball. Then I moved into coaching college basketball, then became a college administrator and now I'm here as a high school AD.



I grew up from the hard work of the women, and yes men, that worked their butts off to get girls more and equal athletic opportunities. Females had already been showing their great athletic accomplishments, Billie Jean King, Wilma Rudolph, Babe Didrikson Zaharias, Sonja Henie, etc. It certainly didn't come all at once, but we deserved more opportunity, availability and recognition to take it to the next level. The next generation of female athletes proved what we can do with more. I feel very fortunate to have been given that type of opportunity; it literally put me on a path in athletics for my professional life.

The young ladies we get to interact with on a daily basis know nothing but having athletics as part of their life from day one. The opportunity has always been there for them to have fair access, means and facilities to participate in any sport they choose. I hope to continue the work of those that came before and provide those opportunities for girls and boys, show them men and women can be involved in sports, no matter the gender. We are just ATHLETES.

Michelle Guyant-Holloway, CAA  
District 7 Representative

## **Student-Athlete and Parent Surveys**

With the winter season now wrapped up, I am spending time reviewing our programs. Working with my head varsity coaches to identify strengths and weaknesses, we determine how we can best move our programs forward. An important part of this process for me is gathering feedback from varsity athletes and parents through surveys. Over the years I have heard fellow athletic directors caution others that this is a dangerous practice that should be avoided, as it gives too much power to parents. Having conducted these surveys for 12 years, I have found the opposite. I believe it is one of the most beneficial and supportive activities I do with our coaches. It has helped me support coaches far more often than it has led me to move to dismiss a coach.



Every team and program has a small number of upset parents/athletes. Instead of only receiving angry emails from these parents, surveys allow me to get a complete picture which includes the large majority of students and parents who are having a positive experience. When coaches read the positive praise from students and parents it is very reaffirming, and provides the reinforcement they do not hear often enough.

When parents know there is a process for them to provide input, they are less likely to go to the principal, district administrator and/or school board. Make sure your principal, district administrator and school board know that you send

a survey at the end of each season. This gives them the opportunity to redirect parents to provide feedback through the established process.

Student surveys carry much more weight with me than parent surveys. Students are there every minute of every day. My goal is to have our student-athletes have a positive experience. This allows me to measure our progress in reaching that goal. Similar to teacher observations, I believe that when a coach knows the AD is watching their practice or game they will be on their best behavior. Student surveys give me a good idea of what happens when I am not around.

I have found the most important aspect to keeping surveys productive and meaningful is to require names. This keeps the data I am gathering valid and reliable. In my email to parents I explain my rationale for this:

1. It gives me the ability to follow up with an individual to get further clarification, if needed.
2. Ensures that people taking the survey are approved to take the survey (not friends, neighbors, relatives, etc.).
3. Prevents duplicate surveys from the same person, which would skew the data.

I highly recommend incorporating student-athlete and parent surveys into your program. I would be happy to go into more detail with you and answer your questions through a phone call 608-355-3945 or email at [jlangkamp@barabooschools.net](mailto:jlangkamp@barabooschools.net). Good luck in the spring!

Jim Langkamp, CAA  
District 3 Representative

## What is Leadership?

### Perception vs Reality . . . Belief and Intentionality

Happy Spring WADA Members!!

I hope this newsletter finds you having had some time to relax and recharge from the long days and nights of the winter sports season?

As you gear up and get ready for Wisconsin's always challenging spring athletic season I want to take a minute to discuss LEADERSHIP, specifically, how those in the public feel about the topic - with a little too much sugar on the topic for me. Meaning, leadership is spoken about in such a pollyanna way . . . And, as those involved in the day to day grind as LEADERS - you know this is not true. Leadership is a battle. Whether you are leading others, or leading yourself, it is tough. One of the hardest things in the world. So, when leadership is spoken of in such "gentle" terms it gets me a bit fried up.

Whether leading a large team, small group, or yourself, the same rules apply for success or failure in our leadership. Over the past 35+ years serving in various roles as a leader in education based athletics I have found that many struggle and fail for a variety of reasons in their leadership. Based on those experiences and observations I offer the following thoughts for you to be the best leader you can be.

**Let me share WHY most leaders struggle to be great....**

- **Leaders need immense clarity**
- **Leaders must be able to articulate a vision**
- **Leaders that are too conceptual will always lose**
- **Leaders that are half-in can never succeed**
- **Leaders that are afraid of making a mistake will always be bad leaders**
- **Leaders that are all about pleasing people will please nobody**

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## *Those who serve*

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*Awards Presentations*  
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DeSoto  
Dwayne Gronning

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Josh Boyer  
Greg Lucas  
Kyle LeMieux

## • **Leaders with no guts and courage will always fall short of their goals**

You see - leadership is a skill that takes work and practice - it takes a **BELIEF!** Belief is what drives the commitment. Belief makes your leadership, your culture and your vision come alive. Belief is what drives you to not just develop good habits, but to maintain them. When you believe in the vision, believe in your team and believe in yourself, you'll show up. You'll commit to the habits, you'll commit to the culture, you'll commit to getting better. That belief will drive you through difficult days, over unexpected obstacles.

For some people, it is much more natural. For others, it takes work. And for others, it is just not for them and that is OK. Not everyone has to be Vince Lombardi. But, we all need to lead ourselves- there are no exceptions there.

When I read the list above- the 2-points that stick out the most to me are:

**Leaders that are people pleasers will struggle leading and ultimately please nobody.** (btw- pleasing is not what leadership is about- challenging others to push their limits- and breakthrough limitations is).

AND...

**Leaders with no guts and courage will always fall short of their goals.** It takes guts and courage to not be a people pleaser, to go against the grain, to stand-up for something. That all takes guts and courage.

This is why some of the greatest leaders in history- or, the ones in your inner circle that you truly admire stand out. They do things differently and are not afraid to go to battle for you, others, themselves, and what they believe in, and what is right.

So look at that list above and ask yourself if you have fallen victim to any of the above items that lead to leadership struggles and failure.

If you have - it is ok. That position is temporary if you want it to be, BUT that can only happen through daily, scheduled, focused work. Life is the same way for most of us. If we're not intentional, we can go through our days without any intentionality. We get on the hamster wheel of going through the motions. We don't pursue a higher standard, we don't activate our potential, we don't become who we were meant to be. Today, whether it's walking in the doors of the office, entering the locker room, hopping on that first Zoom call or whatever the beginning of the day looks like, do more than just go through the motions. Live the standard, bring your best, care more. Be intentional about improving your leadership.

When you **INTENTIONALLY** commit to excellence - over time you will achieve it.

- Be aware of your **PURPOSE** - The desirable but difficult to achieve future that you help make real for those that follow you.
- Be **PRACTICAL**
- Show up and be **PERSONAL**
- Do the work
- **GOYA**

You've got a Leadership vision that's compelling. You've developed some good habits. Your culture feels like it's in the right spot. As a leader, you're committed to growing and learning. It feels like all the boxes have been checked. This will be good enough for a season. But there's one thing that makes it last. One thing that keeps it on track. One thing that flows through it all that holds it together. When you believe in the vision, believe in your team and believe in yourself, you'll show up. You'll commit to the habits, you'll commit to the culture, you'll commit to getting better. That belief will drive you through difficult days, over unexpected obstacles.

Stir up belief today. In yourself and in others.

Todd Sobrilsky, CMAA  
WADA Past President

## Administration Employment Contracts



A new position in administration – such as an athletic director - requires new duties, increased pay and more responsibilities. It also may place an athletic director in a position of uncertainty, as it relates to their fellow (or superior) administrators. To correct this, in order to clearly set expectations, newly hired (or renewed) athletic directors should seek to negotiate and put in place a proper written contract for their position.

First, it is important to note that Wisconsin law does not require a written employment contract to be signed by the parties. However, courts favor a written contract when a potential dispute in employment terms arise.

Second, in addition to a written employment contract, in most cases provisions in a school district's employee handbook (or benefits manual) will also apply.

Third, if the school district does not “typically” provide a written contract, does not mean that it cannot, and should not, be done. Prior to accepting the position, the athletic director should insist on having a written contract.

With those caveats in mind, when negotiating an employment contract with a school district, the following basic terms should be considered:

- Describe the job title and description of duties.
- Define the term of the contract. What is its length? How is the contract renewed, if at all?
- Define pay and pay periods. Also include other benefits and additional pay if the job description and duties increase.
- As an administrator, who do you report to as your superior? In other words, who is your direct boss. Also define if you need to provide any reports, including any reports (such as monthly) to your school board. Are these reports in writing, or verbal?
- Specifically list days of vacation and sick or personal days. Do these carry over or do they expire? Are there any black-out periods that you are not allowed to use them?
- Require a review by your supervisor, at least annually. Without having a review, meaningful input and improvement is unlikely to occur.
- If you are terminated, does it need to be for cause? This is an important term. Further, will salary be paid out for the remaining contractual term?

When an athletic director is first hired, there is a flurry of activity to onboard that person for their position. However, all too often the negotiating and review of the employment contract is overlooked. This is a paramount process that needs to be carefully and deliberately discussed between the athletic director, and the school district. Doing so will define clear expectations for the parties, and provide a good road map to guide the parties through the employment process.

Scott Swid  
WADA Legal Liaison