



Bishop Fenwick High School

Mr. Robert Baldwin
Executive Director, MIAA
33 Forge Parkway
Franklin, MA 02038

August 7, 2023

Dear Executive Director Baldwin and Members of the MIAA Board of Directors,

At the suggestion of MIAA counsel Garret Gee, we are grateful for this opportunity to write to you. We hope that what we share with you today is received in the conciliatory manner in which it is offered, and that it reveals the depth of our concern for our students. We hope, too, that it demonstrates how sorry we are about this entire ordeal, and how committed we are to getting things right.

The MIAA decision sent to Bishop Fenwick on June 8 centers on Rule 87.6, which is focused on Accountability. Our understanding of the ruling is that the MIAA has respectfully asked Bishop Fenwick to address accountability in two specific areas:

- **For errors and discrepancies in the 5th-year Waiver Application for one student**
- **For violations related to Fenwick's relationship with St. Mary's (Danvers)**

Regarding the Waiver Application:

- The Principal who oversaw the application, wrote the letter, and responded to the questions at the appeals concluded her tenure at Bishop Fenwick in June, 2023.
- The former Athletic Director who gathered the materials for the 5th-year waiver application is currently the Assistant Athletic Director.
- We take responsibility for the two errors cited by the MIAA in the application, and we apologize for any inaccuracies regarding the portrayal of the student's athletic ability.
- Our new Principal, Mr. Chris Canniff, is the lead administrator, per the MIAA Handbook, regarding all matters related to the MIAA. Bishop Fenwick affirms that Principal Canniff will be responsible for the athletic program at the school going forward.
- Mr. Scott Connolly, appointed as AD in the summer of 2022, is the point person for all matters regarding the MIAA. A veteran AD who also oversees the MIAA Wrestling Tournament, Mr. Connolly will ensure compliance with all MIAA regulations.
- Mr. Canniff, Mr. Connolly, and Mr. Nunan will attend the MIAA Orientation/Induction Workshop for Principals and Athletic Directors at the MIAA Offices on Wednesday, August 23. We are also available to attend additional trainings if that would be helpful.

Regarding the St. Mary's Partnership:

- The Principal at the time of the creation of the partnership with St. Mary's (Danvers) completed his tenure at Bishop Fenwick in June, 2019.
- Based on the documents that Bishop Fenwick signed with the Archdiocese of Boston, it was our understanding that Fenwick and St. Mary's were considered one entity. In retrospect, it is clear that the leadership at Fenwick should have consulted with the MIAA prior to any student from St. Mary's playing on any Fenwick athletic team.



- We see this as an honest misunderstanding, and we take responsibility for this error. We accepted the penalty imposed by the MIAA, who deemed the student in question to be ineligible. We forfeited the required games, removed the handful of St. Mary's students from Fenwick teams, and will not seek middle school waivers for any St. Mary's students.

We remain committed to doing whatever is necessary to assure compliance with all MIAA rules and regulations. Our Board has given a clear and certain directive to Principal Canniff, AD Connolly, and President Nunan that all communication with the MIAA regarding compliance must be written, comprehensive, and transparent. In fact, Fenwick's Board will now have a designated member overseeing all interactions with the MIAA, demanding total and complete accountability for the School's administrative team with regard to the MIAA.

Regardless of what occurs with your response to this letter, we are seeking clarity and specificity, in writing, regarding the following matters:

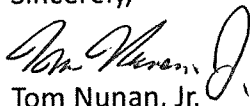
- Co-op teams: We are looking for clarity on how the current sanction would impact our co-op teams. Currently, Fenwick "hosts" the Girls Hockey co-op with Essex Tech. Fenwick is also part of a co-op for Wrestling that is "hosted" by Northeast Regional.
- Cheerleading: We understand that the sport of Competitive Cheer is not exactly under the auspices of the MIAA. Still, we want to be certain of how the current ruling might affect our Cheerleading Team.
- Form 200: While we do not anticipate students transferring from Fenwick because of this sanction, a couple of families have inquired. We need to hear from the MIAA regarding the Form 200, particularly part 3d: *We have no knowledge that transfer was related to athletics which would cause our objection to eligibility.* Any transfer request made by a student under the present circumstances would, almost undoubtedly, be "related to athletics." In this case, the School cannot sign the form. We are not sure what "which would cause our objection to eligibility" means, and we want to be sure we follow the rules. This matter is time sensitive.

Finally, and most importantly, we are writing to you on behalf of our nearly 400 student-athletes. These young people are entrusted to our care – and to yours. They are neither the subject of nor the cause for these infractions. For their health and wellbeing, we implore you to put them first in whatever decision you make. Our senior student-athletes are particularly impacted, as this is the second time they will be without a post-season in their four-year careers, through no fault of their own.

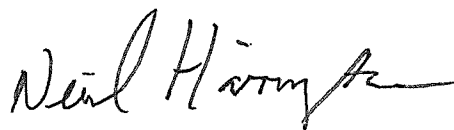
To that end, we are more than willing to meet with you and the MIAA's Board of Directors in order to seek a different outcome for our students. We hope that a meeting can be scheduled and that alternative sanctions can be considered that will satisfy the MIAA's demand for accountability from the school's administration while preserving our students' ability to compete in the MIAA's post-season tournaments during the 2023-24 school year.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Tom Nunan, Jr.
President



Neil Harrington
Board Chair