

An Analysis of the Performance, Governance, and Authority of the
Virginia High School League, Inc.

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ABSTRACT

The Virginia High School League is a private, non-profit organization whose member schools include public high schools and one private school in the Commonwealth of Virginia (Virginia High School League Organization, 2015). This organization manages and supervises athletics and other extracurricular activities such as forensics, debate, drama and publications (Polakiewicz, 1985). The mission statement of the Virginia High School League is "The Virginia High School League is an alliance of Virginia's public and approved non-boarding, non-public high schools that promotes education, leadership, sportsmanship, character and citizenship for students by establishing and maintaining high standards for school activities and competitions" (Virginia High School League Handbook, 2016, p. 13).

Since each state is responsible for establishing a system of supervision and oversight for regulating interscholastic athletics and activities, differences in the administrative structures among each state's athletic associations are inevitable. This dissertation contains court cases regarding interscholastic athletics, and their impact on state athletic associations. Current issues facing not only the Virginia High School League, but all state athletic associations are also examined in this dissertation.

The survey results suggest that participants support the VHSL's authority to impose probation which would prohibit the participation of coaches and sponsors, member schools, and participants. Additionally, the survey results suggest that the majority of participants believe the VHSL is performing well and that home-schooled students should not be able to participate in VHSL athletics and activities. Moreover, survey participants identify the major issues they believe the VHSL will face in the next five to ten years, while also identifying organizational changes that the VHSL should make.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

The Virginia High School League (VHSL) is a private, non-profit organization in the Commonwealth of Virginia that manages and supervises athletics and other extracurricular activities for its member schools. This study focuses on court cases involving the Virginia High School League, and current issues impacting not only the VHSL, but all state athletic associations. A survey instrument was developed which included survey questions modeled after a study conducted in 1985 by Dr. Frank J. Polakiewicz titled 'A Legal and Descriptive Analysis of the Authority, Governance, and Performance of the Virginia High School League, Inc.' The survey instrument was distributed to all high school principals, high school athletic/activities directors, public school superintendents, public school board chairs, and selected legislators in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The survey results suggest that state educators are satisfied with the performance of the VHSL. The survey results also suggest recommendations for the VHSL to consider.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Throughout its existence, the Virginia High School League (VHSL) has been the subject of various studies completed by agencies and individuals, including the Virginia State Department of Education, the Virginia School Board Association, and the Virginia Congress of Parents and Teachers. Frank Polakiewicz, completed a doctoral dissertation in 1985, titled “A Legal and Descriptive Analysis of the Authority, Governance and Performance of the VHSL, Inc.” This research, entitled “An Analysis of the Performance, Governance and Authority of the Virginia High School League, Inc.”, will re-examine, by modeling the Polakiewicz dissertation, the perceptions of both athletic and school administrators in Virginia regarding the statutes of the Virginia High School League.

High school athletics and student-athlete participation have been the subject of studies that highlight the importance and relevancy of interscholastic athletics. Data from a study of 140,000 high school students in Kansas, which was from the Kansas High School Athletic Association and the Kansas State Department of Education, reported that student-athletes earned higher grades, graduated at a higher rate, dropped out of school less frequently, and scored higher on state assessments than non-participants (Lumpkin & Favor, 2012).

A study examining the physical activity and academic performance of younger students found that those who participated in vigorous physical activity scored approximately 10% better overall in math, science, English, and social studies than students who did little or no vigorous physical activity (Coe, Pivarnik, Womack, Reeves & Malina, 2006). Two national longitudinal education cohort studies (conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics) showed that students in school-sponsored activities earned higher math achievement test scores and had higher expectations for attending college (Dumais, 2008). The relationship among physical activity, sports team participation, and grade point average suggests that participation in sports may be a major route for adolescent students to achieve higher academic success. In essence, adolescent students who are physically active and participate in team sports are likely to be academically successful (Fox, Barr-Anderson, Neumark-Sztainer, & Wall, 2010).

When examining the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities in high school and positive school outcomes, one study reported that socioeconomically

disadvantaged students benefited as much, or more than those students who were not disadvantaged (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002). A survey of 300 Minnesota high schools by the Minnesota State High School League found that student-athletes had an average grade point average of 2.84, which was higher than the average grade point average of 2.68 for non-participating students (Overton, 2001).

Data drawn from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health concluded that extracurricular activities in high schools were uniquely poised to promote friendships because they allow adolescents to engage and interact with their peers (Schaefer, Simpkins, Vest, & Price, 2011). Another study examining the transition from middle school to high school found that involvement in extracurricular sports helped students develop friendships during the transition period (Bohnert, Aikins, & Arola, 2013).

The number of student-athletes who participated in interscholastic athletics in Virginia for the 2015-2016 school year was 177,523 (National Federation of State High School Athletic Associations Participation Data, 2016), which placed Virginia 15th among the total number of participants in the United States. While students in Virginia have the ability to participate in activities such as debate, forensics, and one-act play, participation numbers for these and other extracurricular activities are not maintained by the NFHS. Recent interscholastic athletic participation in Virginia is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Total Number of Participants in High School Athletics/Activities in Virginia

	2012/ 2013	2012/ 2013	2013/ 2014	2013/ 2014	2014/ 2015	2014/ 2015	2015/ 2016	2015/ 2016
Sport	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Baseball	9,290	3	9,362	1	9,317	7	9,275	18
Basketball	9,553	7,571	9,325	7,784	9,221	7,569	9,333	7,730
Competitive Spirit Squad	114	4,956	117	5,007	90	4,814	122	4,515
Crew	1,022	921	1,022	950	989	912	1,082	1,052
Cross Country	6,116	4,845	6,180	4,922	6,373	5,010	6,344	5,086
Field Hockey	0	4,782	0	4,746	0	4,754	0	4,686
Football	25,965	28	24,954	36	24,152	37	24,394	59
Golf	2,718	373	2,780	457	2,768	471	2,706	471
Gymnastics	0	935	0	900	9	935	17	878
Lacrosse	3,828	2,806	4,067	3,258	4,409	3,400	4,720	3,684
Soccer	9,863	8,773	10,009	9,130	10,187	8,822	10,550	9,104
Softball	0	7,655	0	7,478	0	7,415	0	7,535
Swimming & Diving	3,684	4,191	3,592	4,238	3,778	4,161	3,571	4,271
Tennis	3,079	3,502	2,923	3,448	2,819	3,378	2,912	3,600
Track - Indoor	6,934	5,652	7,099	6,001	7,099	5,682	7,370	6,283
Track – Outdoor	10,913	8,669	11,081	8,860	10,639	8,513	11,495	8,867
Volleyball	1,272	7,692	1,237	7,885	1,185	7,849	1,208	8,033
Wrestling	6,730	83	6,877	87	6,440	79	6,415	137
Total in all Athletics/Activities	101,081	73,437	100,625	75,188	99,475	73,808	101,514	76,009

Source: National Federation of State High School Athletic Associations Participation Data, 2016

With the number of student-athletes in Virginia at approximately 175,000 over the past four years, and with the last dissertation study performed on the VHSL occurring in 1985, an updated analysis of the VHSL is overdue and necessary. Similar to the Polakiewicz study, the outcomes of this study will identify and summarize the perceptions high school principals, division superintendents, school board chairs, members of Virginia House of Delegates and Virginia Senate, and high school athletic/activities directors have regarding the authority, governance, and performance of the VHSL. In addition, the study will also compare and contrast the perceptions to those identified in the Polakiewicz study (Polakiewicz, 1985).

Purpose of the Study

In Virginia, athletics, and other extracurricular activities, including forensics, debate, drama and publications, are presently supervised by the Virginia High School League, Inc. (VHSL) (Polakiewicz, 1985, p. 7). The Virginia High School League is a private, non-profit organization whose member schools are the public and private high schools geographically located in the Commonwealth of Virginia (Virginia High School League Organization, 2015).

Prior to 1977, the VHSL experienced little or no conflict, such as court cases and inquiries regarding the organization (Polakiewicz, 1985, p. 16). Since 1977, VHSL studies were conducted by organizations such as the Virginia School Boards Association (Committee to Study the VHSL, 1997) and the Virginia State Board of Education (State Board of Education, 1984). Additionally, the Virginia General Assembly and the Office of the Secretary of Education either passed resolutions and/or received requests to conduct studies regarding the VHSL (Polakiewicz, 1985). These resolutions or requests addressed the following categories:

1. Issues dealing with the scope of the VHSL's authority over local school boards pursuant to the imposition of penalties, the nature and operation of the VHSL affecting local school boards in Virginia;
2. Requests to determine who should govern the VHSL, eligibility for membership on the governing board, procedures for participation by citizens in the regulatory process, and the supervising agency that oversees the VHSL;
3. Requests to establish procedures and appellate processes to protect the interests, and rights of member schools, school board members, students, employees, and citizens (Polakiewicz, 1985, p. 30-32).

The purpose of the Polakiewicz study was to answer the following primary and secondary questions:

1. What is the legal source and basis of the VHSL's authority?
 - a. How does the VHSL's authority compare to that of other state athletic associations?
 - b. How do VHSL rules and regulations compare to existing case law?

- c. How do educators, such as high school principals, division superintendents, and athletic directors evaluate or perceive the authority of the VHSL?
2. Who presently governs the VHSL?
 - a. How does the governing body and the governing process of the VHSL compare to other state athletic associations?
 - b. What alternatives are available to the existing structure?
 - c. What is the opinion of high school principals, division superintendents, and athletic directors concerning the governance of the VHSL?
3. Does the VHSL provide adequate due process to member schools, school boards, employees, and participants?
4. Are high school principals, division superintendents, and athletic directors dissatisfied with the performance of the VHSL?
 - a. What is the source of any dissatisfaction that does exist?
 - b. How can the dissatisfaction be reduced or resolved? (Polakiewicz, p. 32-33)

Since the Polakiewicz study, the VHSL has faced numerous changes and challenges. These include, but are not limited to, issues surrounding private school participation, home-schooled student participation, concussion protocols, transgender students, special education, and membership realignment. The purpose of this study is to answer the following questions:

1. How do high school principals, division superintendents, school board chairs, members of Virginia House of Delegates and Virginia Senate, and high school athletic/activities directors perceive the authority of the VHSL?
2. What are the opinions of high school principals, division superintendents, and school board chairs, members of Virginia House of Delegates and Virginia Senate, and high school athletic/activities directors concerning the governance of the VHSL?
3. Are high school principals, division superintendents, school board chairs, members of Virginia House of Delegates and Virginia Senate, and high school athletic/activities directors satisfied with the performance of the VHSL?
 - a. What is the source of any dissatisfaction that does exist?
 - b. How can the dissatisfaction be reduced or resolved?

4. How do the results of the *Polakiewicz Study* compare to the results obtained in this study?
5. Do the same groups surveyed in the two studies express similar concerns?
6. Do the groups surveyed in this study raise concerns not identified by the *Polakiewicz Study*?

Limitations

This study does not include a search of state board rules and regulations or state athletic association handbooks. This study is limited to the review and analysis of court cases in Virginia pertaining to the Virginia High School League, and court cases pertaining to other state athletic associations. This study is also limited to a historical review of state athletic associations in close geographical proximity to Virginia, rather than a review of all state athletic associations. Additionally, the study is limited to the rules and regulations of the VHSL, as they appear in the 2016-2017 VHSL Handbook.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 contains an introduction, the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the justification for the study. It also describes the limitations to the study, a description of the organization of the study, and definitions of key terms pertaining to this study.

Chapter 2 contains the history of the VHSL, information regarding recent case law involving the VHSL and other state athletic associations, and a brief history of high school athletics and activities in the United States. This chapter will also provide insight on some recent events and issues surrounding the VHSL since the Polakiewicz study.

Chapter 3 contains the research design and the instrumentation utilized for this study. It will also describe the data gathering process, details on data analysis, and information regarding the target population for this study.

Chapter 4 contains the results of the survey instrument and detail the opinions of educators concerning the performance, governance, and authority of the VHSL.

Chapter 5 contains a conclusion of the study, subsequent implications rendered by the study, and recommendations for future research. It will also include any major trends or patterns found in the survey data.

Definitions

Association – Congeries of high schools within a state, which unite for the purpose of administering interscholastic athletics (Polakiewicz, 1985, p. 35).

Eligibility – Rules that limit student participation in extracurricular activities based on age, academic standing, or residence (Polakiewicz, 1985, p. 37).

Hardship Rule – Rules promulgated by athletic associations that allow students to protest the enforcement of an eligibility rule on the grounds that the rule harms the student (Polakiewicz, 1985, p. 38).

Semester Rule – Association rules which allow students to be eligible for eight consecutive semesters starting when the student enters the ninth grade for the first time, or when they pass a specified number of eighth grade subjects (Polakiewicz, 1985, p. 41).

Transfer Rule – Rule requiring students who move from one school district to another or from one school to another, within a district, to forfeit eligibility for a specified period of time (Polakiewicz, 1985, p. 43).

Transgender – Used to describe someone who feels that they are not the same gender as the physical body they were born with, or who does not fit easily into being either a male or a female (Transgender, n.d.)

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND

This dissertation, “An Analysis of the Performance, Governance and Authority of the Virginia High School League, Inc.”, examines the perception of athletic administrators and school administrators in Virginia. This study was motivated by a dissertation completed in 1985 by Frank Polakiewicz, entitled “A Legal and Descriptive Analysis of the Authority, Governance and Performance of the VHSL, Inc.”

Athletics and extracurricular activities are major components in the lives of many high school students. In 2013, an estimated 7.7 million students participated on high school sports teams, according to the National Federation of State High School Associations (Friedman, 2013). Students participating in athletics and activities date back to the 19th century, with the commencement of mandatory school attendance in Massachusetts in 1852. Concurrent with the enactment of compulsory school attendance across the nation came increased amounts of leisure time in public schools, which led to the development of competitive sports. In 1903, the first public school athletic association, the “Public School Athletic League for Boys”, was established in New York City, and formal athletic contests emerged as a primary strategy to maintain school enrollment of boys (Friedman, 2013). By 1910, a total of 17 other cities in the United States had formed their own competitive athletic associations, commonly entitled “Leagues”. These leagues formed by cities served as a foundation for states to form their own athletic associations.

In 1920, The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) was founded, leading to the development of education-based interscholastic sports and activities (National Federation of State High School Associations Annual Report 2013-2014, 2014). By 1930, 28 athletic leagues were members of the NFHS and by 1940, the membership had increased to 35. Finally in 1969, all 50 state athletic leagues plus the District of Columbia had joined the NFHS (National Federation of State High School Associations Handbook, 2015). The NFHS establishes standards and rules for competition and provides guidance and assistance to the administrators who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS, from its home office in Indianapolis, Indiana, serves its member state high school athletic/activity associations and leagues. Specifically, the mission of the NFHS is to “serve its members, related professional organizations and student by providing leadership for the administration of education-based interscholastic activities, which support academic achievement, good citizenship and equitable

opportunity” (National Federation of State High School Association Brochure, 2015). The NFHS publishes rules for 16 sports and actively administers fine arts programs in speech, theater, debate and music. It also provides a variety of program initiatives that reach the 18,500 high schools and over 11 million students involved in athletic and activity programs (National Federation of State High School Associations Annual Report 2013-2014, 2014).

Each state has established a system of supervision and oversight in regard to regulating interscholastic athletics and activities. Consequently inevitable differences in the administrative structures exist among the state athletic associations. For example, three state associations (Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association, North Carolina High School Athletic Association, and Texas University Interscholastic League), and the District of Columbia allow only public school membership (Howard, 2015; Hunt, 1999). Gender is another example of how individual state associations differ. The State of Iowa has two separate state athletic associations, with the Iowa High School Athletic Association responsible for the supervision of boys’ athletics only and the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union responsible for the supervision of girls’ sports (Howard, 2015; Hunt, 1999). Still another example is provided by the number of state associations within individual states. Texas, Iowa, New York, Alabama, Mississippi and Georgia all have more than one athletic association that govern interscholastic activities (Howard, 2015; Hunt, 1999).

The Virginia High School League (VHSL) was established in 1913 (Virginia High School League Handbook, 2016). States that are located in the same geographical region as Virginia also implemented athletic associations similar to the VHSL during a comparable time frame. The Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association, Inc. (PIAA) was founded in Pittsburgh in 1913 (Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association Brochure, 2015). The PIAA commenced as a group of high school principals who wanted to eliminate abuses, establish uniform rules, and place interscholastic athletics in the overall context of secondary education (Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association Brochure, 2015). The Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA) was established in 1925. The TSSAA was organized by school people (teachers, principals, superintendents) and administered by members to manage the programs (Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association Brochure, 2015). Although not formally organized until November 9, 1907, the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) dates back to 1887 (Hudak, 2011). The Board of Directors of the Round Table of the

Central Ohio Teacher's Association, formally made interscholastic athletics a part of Ohio's high school landscape at their first meeting in 1907. The Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association was founded in 1946, and operates currently in partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education (Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association Brochure, 2016). The West Virginia High School Athletic Association was organized in 1916 with only 11 schools as charter members. In 1952, the organization changed its name to the West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission (West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission Handbook, 2016). In conclusion, the North Carolina High School Athletic Association was founded in 1912 (North Carolina High School Athletic Association Brochure, 2016).

The VHSL

In Virginia, athletics, and other extracurricular activities such as forensics, debate, drama and publications, are presently supervised by the Virginia High School League, Inc. (Polakiewicz, 1985). The Virginia High School League is a private, non-profit organization whose member schools are public high schools, and one private school (Virginia High School League Organization, 2015). Until 2015, only public high schools were eligible for membership in the VHSL. The mission statement of the Virginia High School League, which was amended in 2015 to include private school participation, is "The Virginia High School League is an alliance of Virginia's public and approved non-boarding, non-public high schools that promotes education, leadership, sportsmanship, character and citizenship for students by establishing and maintaining high standards for school activities and competitions" (Virginia High School League Handbook, 2016).

The VHSL originated as a student activity of the Washington and Jefferson Societies at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia. In 1913, debating was sponsored in some 20 nearby schools (Virginia High School League Handbook, 2016). The initial membership grew and in 1914 the Virginia High School Literacy League (VHSL) was formed (Polakiewicz, 1985, p. 7). During 1914-1915, the VHSL sponsored statewide competitions in baseball, basketball, and track, in conjunction with the University of Virginia's General Athletic Association (Polakiewicz, 1985, p. 7). As a result of the addition of these sports, the VHSL was renamed the Virginia High School Literacy and Athletic League (Polakiewicz, 1985, p. 7). This

new league was governed by an executive committee composed of one professor of secondary education, one representative from each literary society and one representative from the athletic association (Polakiewicz, 1985, p. 7). Ultimately, the responsibility for maintaining this new organization was assigned to the Extension Division of the University of Virginia (Polakiewicz, 1985, p. 7). By 1926, the VHSL determined the legislative responsibilities of the League should be vested in representatives of member high schools. During the course of the VHSL's evolution, it experienced several changes due to growth and reorganization (Polakiewicz, 1985, p. 7).

In 1946, "The Virginia High School Literary and Athletic League" changed their name to the "Virginia High School League" in order to suggest a larger field of interest (Virginia High School League Handbook, 2016). The growth of athletic programs for girls also prompted the VHSL, in 1968, to begin coordinating athletic activities for girls. This control was further expanded in 1972 when the VHSL adopted the Girls' Sports Committee to provide assistance in the leadership of girls' athletic programs. A desire for greater legislative autonomy and an increased desire for fiscal independence motivated the VHSL to seek further refinement of its program, so in 1981, the VHSL was incorporated, thus becoming the Virginia High School League, Inc. Governance of the VHSL was restructured in 1995 to make the Executive Committee the chief legislative body with its actions only subject to review by its membership (Virginia High School League Handbook, 2016).

The member schools in the VHSL are classified into six Groups based on their total student enrollment. The Groups are 1A, 2A, 3A, 4A, 5A, and 6A, with 1A containing the schools with the smallest student enrollment and 6A containing the schools with the largest student enrollment. Within each Group, the member schools are organized into Districts, and the Districts are organized into Regions, for the purpose of conducting VHSL programs on a geographical basis (Virginia High School League Organization, 2015). The organization consists of the member schools, an Executive Committee, six Group Boards (1A, 2A, 3A, 4A, 5A, and 6A), a Group Committee for each group, a Regional Council for each region, and a District Council and a District Committee for each district (VHSL Organization, 2015).

The VHSL Executive Committee is made up of 31 voting members including:

- One principal from each region, at each Group level (1A East, 1A West, 2A East, 2A West, 3A East, 3A West, 4A East, 4A West, 5A North, 5A South, 6A North, 6A South) for a total of 12 principals;

- One representative from the Virginia Department of Education;
- Eight school division superintendents of schools, appointed by each of the eight superintendents' regions (I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII) in Virginia;
- One representative from the Virginia School Boards Association;
- One Virginia citizen appointed by the Executive Committee from the PTA Board of Managers;
- Six supervisors of athletics/activities, one from each Group level (1A, 2A, 3A, 4A, 5A, 6A); and
- Two members of the Virginia General Assembly (Virginia High School League Organization, 2015).

The Executive Director of the VHSL also serves as a non-voting member of the Executive Committee (Virginia High School League Organization, 2015).

For comparison, the Executive Committee of the VHSL in 1985, when the Polakiewicz study was concluded, consisted of 25 voting members including:

- Chairman of the Virginia High School League;
- Chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, and delegate-at-large of each group (A, AA, and AAA);
- Executive Secretary of the VHSL;
- Two representatives from the State Department of Education;
- Two division superintendents;
- Two representatives from the Virginia School Boards Association;
- One Virginia citizen appointed by the VHSL Executive Committee;
- Two supervisors of athletics;
- One principal of any VHSL member school who is serving on the Executive Committee of the National Federation of State High School Associations; and
- The immediate past chairman of the VHSL if they remain in an administrative position in public education (Polakiewicz, 1985, p. 11).

The current structure of the Executive Committee has changed when compared to the 1985 structure, but most of the changes reflect the current classification model and equal

representation from each of the 6 groups currently in the VHSL. However, there are fewer representatives from the Virginia School Boards Association and the Virginia Department of Education on the current Executive Committee when compared to 1985. Additionally, there are more superintendents, principals, and supervisors of athletics/activities on the current Executive Committee when compared to 1985.

After three years of re-alignment in the VHSL that placed schools in six different groups based on student population, with two separate regions within each group, the VHSL is returning to a 24-region alignment plan beginning in the 2017-2018 school year (Virginia High School League Recommended Final 24-Region Alignment Plan, 2017-18 and 2018-19, 2016). Table 2 illustrates the 24-region alignment plan that the VHSL will adopt beginning in the fall of 2017.

Table 2

VHSL Re-alignment Plan by Region and School Population 2017-2018 and 2018-2019

Group Name	Number of Schools	Student Population Range of Schools	Region Name/ Number of Schools in Region	Region Name/ Number of Schools in Region	Region Name/ Number of Schools in Region	Region Name/ Number of Schools in Region
6A	55 Schools	3,515-1,843	Region 1 12 Schools	Region 2 8 Schools	Region 3 18 Schools	Region 4 17 Schools
5A	55 Schools	1,926-1,450	Eastern Region 15 Schools	Central Region 15 Schools	North Region 13 Schools	West Region 12 Schools
4A	52 Schools	1,522-1,125	East Region 13 Schools	Central Region 13 Schools	North Region 14 Schools	West Region 12 Schools
3A	48 Schools	1,168-607	Southeast 10 Schools	Northeast 14 Schools	Region 3 13 Schools	Region 4 11 Schools
2A	52 Schools	787-490	South 14 Schools	North 12 Schools	Central 13 Schools	West 13 Schools
1A	54 Schools	474-58	East 17 Schools	Mid East 10 Schools	Mid West 12 Schools	Far West 15 Schools

Source: Virginia High School League March 31, 2016 ADM Figures For 2017-18 and 2018-19 Alignment Cycle, 2016

To gain membership in the Virginia High School League during the 2015-2016 school year, schools had to first pay a \$700 basic membership fee (Virginia High School League Membership Application, 2015). Each school then paid \$30 for every varsity activity they offered students the prior year. Lastly, the VHSL added the insurance premium for each school, determined by multiplying \$5.75 times the total number of participants a school enrolled in the activities offered the previous school year. The total of these three amounts is remitted to the VHSL prior to August 1st of the current school year (Virginia High School League Membership

Application, 2015). For the 2015-2016 school year, there were 315 member schools in the VHSL (Virginia High School League Classification, 2015).

The VHSL recently faced a period of transition in its executive leadership, with the announcement in September 2015 that their long serving Executive Director, Mr. Ken Tilley, would be retiring on June 30, 2016 (Virginia High School League Retirement News Release, 2015). The VHSL announced on March 30, 2016 that Dr. John ‘Billy’ Haun had been named the new Executive Director of the VHSL (Virginia High School League Executive Director Release, 2016). Dr. Haun assumed this leadership position on July 1, 2016, following the retirement of Mr. Ken Tilley.

The VHSL also has an endowment established to help fund non-revenue sports and other scholastic activities. The VHSL Foundation, established in 1997, was designed to create an endowment where funds would be invested to support existing programs (Virginia High School League Foundation Brochure, 2016). This fund, as of August 31, 2016, totaled \$1,468,739.44, and is used to reimburse schools for travel to region and state events in activities such as debate and cross-country (Virginia High School League Foundation Brochure, 2016).

Court Cases

From 1938 to 1960, only four court cases across the nation involved state athletic associations (Polakiewicz, 1985). From 1960 to the present, the number of cases involving state athletic associations increased significantly (Polakiewicz, 1985, p. 4). A main issue surrounding some of these court cases is student-athlete eligibility concerns.

Student-Athlete Eligibility

Every state is responsible for providing governance and establishing policies regarding high school athletics and activities. A major policy on which every state athletic association must provide clear expectations is student-athlete eligibility. This study will explore court cases relating to student-athlete eligibility based on residency (p. 24), undue influence (p. 26), special education (p. 27), and transfer rules (p. 30). The results of some of these court cases helped to shape policies regarding student-athlete eligibility across the nation.

The term student-athlete implies that the student involved with athletics and education is both a good student and an active participant in athletics (Bukowski, 2008). Efforts to reform

academic eligibility for student-athletes has been a task for state and local athletic associations for decades. Charles E. Forsythe (1954) identified six reasons why student-athlete eligibility rules were necessary for state athletic associations:

1. They provide standards for all schools to meet.
2. The rules will be clearly known to all involved.
3. They relieve individual schools from potential criticism.
4. Individual administrators will not make rules.
5. They establish minimum academic standards.
6. They aid in maintaining positive relationships among schools.

In the 1930s, almost all states had a minimal rule for the academic eligibility of athletes (Forsythe, 1954). In the 1950's, a total of 46 states had policies in place that required student-athletes to pass three major academic subjects in order to be eligible (Forsythe, 1954). As the eligibility standards were becoming more prevalent, so was corresponding litigation.

In *Mitchell v. Louisiana High School Athletic Association* (1970), the ruling held that Louisiana had a legitimate interest in the regulation of high school sports, and that policies can be established in order to promote fair and level competition between schools. In *Dallam v. Cumberland Valley School District* (1975), the rules surrounding the eligibility of transfer rules established in Pennsylvania were found not to violate the due process and equal protection rights of student-athletes. In *Moreland v. Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic League* (1978), the appeals judge ruled that Pennsylvania had an interest in establishing minimum standards for student-athletes. Results from court cases like these established that state athletic associations have the authority to establish rules and policies regarding student-athlete eligibility.

In 1983, the Los Angeles Unified School District created a rule that stated “to be eligible for participation in extracurricular activities, students must maintain a C average in four subjects and have no failures” (Eitzen & Sage, 1989). In June, 1984, the state of Texas passed House Bill 72, which would later be named ‘no pass/no play’ (Flygare, 1985). This House Bill stated that if a student-athlete is failing any class, they are ineligible to participate in sports for a period of six weeks. While the academic eligibility policies across states continued to develop, eligibility in interscholastic athletics has also evolved to take into consideration residency, transfers, and age

limits. Court cases across the United States have shown that student-athlete eligibility has its complexities.

Rules that are put into place by state athletic associations, such as four-year rules, eight-semester rules, or age rules, are enacted to restrict eligibility for a certain time period. In most cases, plaintiffs who challenge age rules put in place by state athletic associations are usually not successful. Courts have consistently held that a student-athlete does not have a constitutional right to participate in interscholastic athletics and activities (Champion, W.T., 2015).

Residency

In *H. R. v. The Minnesota State High School League* (MSHSL) (2013), a student was found ineligible for varsity competition for the 2012-2013 school year due to residency. During his middle school years, this student attended Hutchinson Middle School in Hutchinson, Minnesota. He alleged that during his time there, he experienced harassment and was threatened and assaulted. After middle school, the student moved in with grandparents and attended Woodbury High School in Woodbury, Minnesota. The student entered Woodbury as a freshman and did not participate in sports that year. At the conclusion of his freshman year, as a result of his grandmother's failing health, the student moved back with his parents in Hutchinson; however, he did not enroll in Hutchinson High School. Rather, he enrolled at Holy Family Catholic High in Victoria, Minnesota. While there during his sophomore year, he tried out and earned a spot on their varsity hockey team. After checking his eligibility, Holy Family Catholic High ruled the student ineligible because of MSHSL Bylaw 111.00 (Minnesota State High School League Official Handbook, 2015). This bylaw states that a student is ineligible for a period of one calendar year unless the student meets one of the following criteria:

- A. The student is enrolling in the 9th grade for the first time.
- B. The student's family has a change of residency and occupancy in Minnesota.
- C. The student's residence is changed pursuant a child protection order, placement in a foster home, or a juvenile court disposition order.
- D. The student's parents are divorced and student moves from one custodial parent to the other custodial parent.
- E. The student's parents moved to Minnesota from a state or country outside of Minnesota and establish residency in a Minnesota public school district.

Holy Family Catholic High determined that this student did not meet any of the criteria described in MSHSL Bylaw 111.00, so they deemed him ineligible for competition for the 2012-2013 school year. The student appealed to the MSHSL but was not granted a waiver. The student then requested an eligibility hearing before an Independent Hearing Officer, retired Judge Michael T. DeCourcy, Sr. (*H. R. v. The Minnesota State High School League*, 2013). The Judge affirmed the ineligible decision. Then, on January 2, 2013, the student filed suit alleging due process and equal protection violations and sought a preliminary injunction, which was ultimately denied. Additionally, the MSHSL suffered no violations of due process or equal protection rights.

Undue Influence

A court of appeals determined that the Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) acted arbitrarily and capriciously when they determined a high school basketball player ineligible based on alleged violations of the IHSAA's undue influence rule (*Indiana High School Athletic Association, Inc. v. Watson*, 2009). The court examined evidence showing that coaches from a new school, alleged to be recruiting this student, did not offer bribes or any inducements. In contrast, evidence was produced to show the student's coaching staff at his current high school offered the student's family a home with a reduced rent, living quarters at an assistant coach's home, and transportation. The appeals court stated that while the IHSAA determined the coach at the new school to be in violation of the undue influence rule, it was ignoring the far more egregious conduct of the coaches at the current school (*Indiana High School Athletic Association, Inc. v. Watson*, 2009).

Another case, *Brentwood v. Tennessee Secondary Schools Athletic Association*, also involved accusations of a school using undue influence to recruit student-athletes (*Brentwood v. Tennessee Secondary Schools Athletic Association*, 2001). Brentwood Academy, a private high school, was fined and placed on probation by the Tennessee Secondary Schools Athletic Association (TSSAA) for violating the TSSAA's recruitment rule. The TSSAA claimed that Brentwood provided game tickets to a middle school team, held impermissible off-season practices, and urged students who enrolled at Brentwood to attend their spring football practice (*Brentwood v. Tennessee Secondary Schools Athletic Association*, 2001). The TSSAA also placed Brentwood on a postseason ban and declared some students ineligible. Brentwood

appealed on the grounds the TSSAA violated their First Amendment rights and their right for substantive and procedural due process. This case went all the way to the Supreme Court of the United States which determined that the TSSAA is allowed to impose limitations on the free speech of its members as long as these restrictions are necessary for its purposes as an athletic league, and Brentwood would not be excused from abiding by them (*Brentwood v. Tennessee Secondary Schools Athletic Association*, 2001).

Special Education

A high school student diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder in Oregon sought injunctive relief against the Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (*Bingham v. Ediger*, 2001). The student was ruled ineligible during his senior year under the OSAA's Eight Semester Rule, as the student needed to repeat his sophomore year of high school. The student claimed that his disability caused him to repeat his sophomore year, so he filed for a hardship waiver. The OSAA denied the waiver request, and the matter went to court. The Federal District Court granted the student injunctive relief and even awarded the plaintiff attorney's fees and costs, stating that the student is a 'qualified individual' under the ADA and a hardship waiver would be a reasonable modification.

In 1944 the US Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit ruled in another case involving a student declared ineligible and who challenged the decision under the ADA (*Pottgen v. Missouri State High School Athletic Association*, 1994). The Missouri State High School Athletic Association (MSHSAA) declared the student in this case, who had learning disabilities, ineligible because of their age. The Eighth Circuit court concluded that a change to the MSHSAA's age rule decision would not be reasonable based on the student's condition, and the court denied the student's claim (*Pottgen v. Missouri State High School Athletic Association*, 1994).

In *Starego v. New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association* (2013), an autistic student sought a fifth year of eligibility. Anthony Starego, a student at Brick Township High School, was denied a waiver to participate in the fall of 2013 because of the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association's (NJSIAA) age and eight semester rules. The NJSIAA age rule states that an athlete becomes ineligible for high school athletics if he or she reaches the age of 19 prior to September 1 of the current school year, and the NJSIAA eight semester rule states

that starting with the 9th grade, a student shall have eligibility for four consecutive years (New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association Constitution, Bylaws, Rules and Regulations, 2015).

Starego was hoping to participate in the fall of 2013, but this would have been his fifth year of eligibility, and he would also be over the age limit. However, Starego brought this case to court under the Americans with Disabilities Act, challenging the decision to deny him the opportunity to play. The judge ruled that the NJSIAA provided the student with equal access and opportunity and denied the plaintiff's motion for a preliminary injunction, which would have allowed him to play the season (*Starego v. New Jersey Interscholastic Athletic Association*, 2013).

The West Virginia Secondary Schools Activities Commission (WVSSAC) petitioned the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia for a ruling that prohibited them from enforcing their age rule against a 19 year-old who wished to play high school football (*Baisden v. West Virginia Secondary Schools Activities Commission*, 2002). The judge in this case stated that while the age rule may be waived for students whose disabilities have delayed their progression through the education process and are able to show that their participation would not alter the quality of the competition; however, the age rule would not be waived as an accommodation for a high school student whose disability resulted in repeating two years of education and who sought to play high school sports (*Baisden v. West Virginia Secondary Schools Activities Commission*, 2002).

Two students, who were diagnosed with learning disabilities, spent additional time in elementary school as a result of their disabilities. Subsequently, they were found to be ineligible for participation their last year in high school by the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) (*Sandison v. Michigan High School Athletic Association, Inc.*, 1995). Both students, who turned 19 before September 1 of their school year, were found to be ineligible under the MHSAA's age rule. The students appealed the decision. The District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan held that the plaintiffs were disabled and discriminated against solely on the basis of their disabilities under the Rehabilitation Act and the ADA. However, the Sixth Circuit court ended up reversing the district court's decision, concluding that the age regulation did not violate the Rehabilitation Act because the regulation disqualifies all overage students, both non-disabled and disabled students (*Sandison v. Michigan High School Athletic Association, Inc.*,

1995). Further, the Sixth Circuit held that the age regulation does not violate the ADA, as the age rule does not prevent the students from accessing their interscholastic sports program (*Sandison v. Michigan High School Athletic Association, Inc.*, 1995).

The United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit heard a case involving a student who was declared ineligible under the eight-semester rule of the Michigan High School Athletic Association (*McPherson v. Michigan High School Athletic Association*, 1997). The student in this case was repeating his junior year, and played basketball during what was his seventh and eighth semester of eligibility. At the conclusion of his repeated junior year, the student was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and a seizure disorder. While the lower court granted the student a preliminary injunction, the Sixth Circuit reversed the preliminary injunction and supported the Michigan High School Athletic Association's ruling of ineligibility. The Sixth Circuit based their decision to support the ruling of ineligibility was not because of the student's disability, but because of his age (*McPherson v. Michigan High School Athletic Association*, 1997).

In *Mann v. Louisiana High School Athletic Association*, a student transferred to a different school that could better accommodate the student's anxiety disorder (*Mann v. Louisiana High School Athletic Association*, 2013). After the Louisiana High School Athletic Association (LHSAA) denied the student's request for an exemption to their transfer rule, the student appealed to the Federal District Court of Louisiana seeking declaratory and injunctive relief alleging a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (*Mann v. Louisiana High School Athletic Association*, 2013). As a result, the court granted a preliminary injunction which prevented the LHSAA from declaring the student ineligible and allowed the student to participate in the upcoming football season. When the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit received the case, they reversed and vacated the grant of the preliminary injunction, stating that the student would likely not succeed on the merits of his claim of being disabled under the ADA (*Mann v. Louisiana High School Athletic Association*, 2013).

Transfer Rule

State athletic associations develop transfer rules to govern the regulations of interscholastic sports (Bui, 2011). While they vary from state to state, transfer rules essentially prohibit students from participating in certain sports and activities unless they fall under certain

exemptions after transferring. The state athletic associations establish uniform procedures and regulations for interscholastic activities to protect the welfare of the students, and to establish sensible and educationally sound controls (Trichka, R. & Sawyer, T., 1998). Transfer rules often place students and their families in the position of having to decide between participation in interscholastic sports and choosing a school for other personal or academic reasons (Bui, 2011). Students, parents, and even schools have challenged transfer rules on grounds ranging from freedom of religion violations to procedural and substantive due process violations (Bui, 2011).

The case of *Barnhorst v. Missouri State High School Activities Association* involved a student with an outstanding academic record who had transferred from one private high school to another private high school (*Barnhorst v. Missouri State High School Activities Association*, 1980). The family chose to transfer to the new school to improve the student's chances of attending a better college or university. The student had participated in track, volleyball and basketball at her former school. The Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHAA) ruled the student ineligible for a period of 365 days because she transferred from one MSHAA member school to another. After appeals to the MSHAA, the case ultimately went to Federal District Court. While the court acknowledged the receiving school in this case was not an athletic power and was better known for its academic program, and the student was not recruited for athletic purposes, the student's appeal was denied just the same (*Barnhorst v. Missouri State High School Activities Association*, 1980).

Another case, *Indiana High School Athletic Association v. Carlberg*, involved a student transferring to another school for academic reasons (*Indiana High School Athletic Association v. Carlberg*, 1997). Because the student did not transfer as a result of a change of residency, the Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) declared the student ineligible for a period of 365 days. While the IHSAA conceded that the student did not transfer for athletic reasons, the Indiana Supreme Court held that the IHSAA's transfer rule was rationally related to a legitimate interest (*Indiana High School Athletic Association v. Carlberg*, 1997).

In *Robbins v. Indiana High School Athletic Association*, a student who played volleyball transferred from a public school to a parochial school (*Robbins v. Indiana High School Athletic Association*, 1996). The student provided the district court evidence that she recently converted to Catholicism and therefore had a desire to take courses not available to her in public schools. Nonetheless, the district court upheld the IHSAA's decision to declare the student ineligible. The

Federal District Court acknowledged that the transfer rule in question was imperfect but noted that the rule should be changed through the IHSAA and not through the courts (Bui, 2011).

The case of *Mancuso v. Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association, Inc.* (2009), also examines the topic of students transferring schools. In the fall of 1999, Elizabeth Mancuso entered Austin Preparatory School, a private school, as a freshman. While at Austin, she did not participate on their swim team, rather she participated as a member of a private swimming club. After her freshman year, Mancuso transferred to Andover High School, repeated her freshman year, and joined the swim team. She competed over her next three years and helped Andover earn three state championships (Wolohan, 2009). Shortly before her senior year, the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) deemed her ineligible to compete because of their fifth-year student rule. The school appealed and requested a waiver on the grounds that she had not competed in her sport for a school for five years. The appeal went through the MIAA's internal review process, and was heard before a three-member subcommittee of the MIAA's Eligibility Review Board (*Mancuso v. Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association, Inc.*, 2009). The appeal for a waiver was denied. Subsequently, the family appealed to the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Council, which was the final reviewing entity in the MIAA's waiver appeals process. This final appeal for a waiver was also denied, and on October 10, 2003, the student commenced action in State Court where she filed a motion for a temporary restraining order to allow her to compete during her senior year (*Mancuso v. Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association, Inc.*, 2009).

Her complaint was to seek relief from the MIAA's ineligibility decision and claim a civil rights violation. On October 23, 2003, a Superior Court judge granted a preliminary injunction, and she was allowed to swim her senior year (*Mancuso v. Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association, Inc.*, 2009). The Superior Court also heard Mancuso's argument that the MIAA's decision not to grant the waiver infringed on her property interest in participating in interscholastic athletics, and that the MIAA deprived her of that property interest without due process (Wolohan, 2009). The judge submitted the issue to the jury, and they returned a verdict in favor of Mancuso. The jury decided that the MIAA did not provide her with due process and ultimately awarded her compensatory damages in the amount of \$10,000 (Wolohan, 2009).

The MIAA then appealed to the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts. Mancuso needed to prove to the court that the MIAA deprived her of a right provided to her by the

constitution in order to recover any damages. The court ruled that while all children in Massachusetts have a constitutional right to a public education, that right is not synonymous with the right to participate in extracurricular activities (Wolohan, 2009). This decision reconfirms that unless states are willing to enact laws or regulations that specifically grant students the right to participate in extracurricular activities, those activities will continue to be deemed a privilege and not protected under federal or state law (Wolohan, 2009).

Virginia Court Cases

For approximately 30 years, the VHSL has been involved in court cases which have helped reshape prior policies and procedures and established new policies that are being utilized today. Court cases involving the VHSL regarding student-athlete eligibility (p. 34), VHSL Age Rule (p. 37), player ejection (p. 40), VHSL classification (p. 40), Title IX (p. 41), and liability (p. 42) will be discussed in this section.

Student-Athlete Eligibility

The Circuit Court of Loudoun County heard a case regarding student eligibility, *Loudoun County High School v. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, in November 1994. This case involved a football player who was found ineligible initially. Subsequently, the student appealed on the basis of a hardship but was required to demonstrate exceptional reasons for such a waiver to be granted. Through the VHSL appeals process, he was later found eligible by the Appeals Committee and was granted a waiver on September 20, 1994 (*Loudoun County High School v. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, 1994).

However, the waiver was granted 18 days after the first football game against Park View High School, a game in which the student in question participated. Loudoun County High School was looking for the waiver to be retroactive, thus reversing the forfeiture that resulted in playing an ineligible player. The reversal of the forfeiture would have allowed Loudoun County High School to participate in post-season playoffs (*Loudoun County High School v. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, 1994).

The decision to grant the student a waiver was still subject to more levels of appeal, and eventually made its way to the Executive Appeals Subcommittee of the Executive Committee of the VHSL on September 30, 1994. The Executive Appeals Subcommittee denied the appeal,

concluding that the student participated as a result of a failure on the part of the principal and the athletic director to notice a violation of the Semester Rule of the VHSL (*Loudoun County High School v. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, 1994). The Semester Rule states that student participation in VHSL activities is limited to eight consecutive semesters beginning when a student first entered the ninth grade.

The student's eligibility was not retroactive, rather it was effective on September 20, 1994. The judge in the case agreed with the Executive Appeals Subcommittee in their conclusion that while they did indeed find a hardship to exist, the waiver should not be retroactive because of the school's actions of allowing the violation to occur in the first place (*Loudoun County High School v. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, 1994). The judge concluded by stating:

The Committee was not required to make the waiver retroactive. It was submitted after a game was played and the automatic forfeiture provisions become operative. However, the Committee having acted upon the request for retroactive application must do so within the rules and the powers granted to the committee and may not substitute a sanction for a ruling on a hardship waiver (*Loudoun County High School v. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, 1994, p. 3).

The case of *Chesterfield County School Board v. Virginia High School League* was heard in November of 1994 and involved the eligibility of a foreign exchange student who was attending Thomas Dale High School. At the time of this case, The Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) set the policies and procedures for foreign exchange students in the Commonwealth of Virginia. If a student was enrolled in a public school in Virginia through any program other than CSIET, they were not eligible to participate in VHSL sanctioned activities. The organization that was responsible for bringing the aforementioned student to the United States was not the CSIET. The student ended up playing for a short time in one football game that year. As a result, Thomas Dale had to forfeit the game, which unfortunately cost them a playoff berth that year. The school system was seeking a petition for injunction, but the court denied the request.

The Transfer Rule of the VHSL applies whenever a student enrolled in one school transfers to another school without a corresponding change in the residence of the student's parents or guardians (Virginia High School League Handbook, 2016). The parents of students in the Big Stone Gap Division, whose school was closed under a school consolidation plan,

challenged the applicability of Transfer Rule to their children. The plaintiffs claimed it violated substantive and procedural due process, equal protection, and the Virginia Constitution. The case went before the Federal District Court in 2011 (*McGee v. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, 2011).

St. Paul High School in Wise County was one of the closed schools. Residents from Russell County who had been attending St. Paul High School had the option to go to their home school in Russell County or remain in Wise County in the newly designed school. Either way, the Russell County students would not lose a year of eligibility under the Transfer Rule of the VHSL. However, residents of Wise County who attended the school in Wise County but wished to attend school in Russell County would have to sit out a year under the Transfer Rule. Some Wise County families sued the VHSL, arguing they had the right as parents to choose the school their child would attend, and the Transfer Rule denied them of this right. Additionally, they claimed that they were denied equal protection when compared to the students in Russell County. The judge added:

Again, the fact that there are obvious consequences to the choice of school does not implicate a constitutional issue. Moreover, VHSL is a voluntary association, and such associations are traditionally granted significant deference as to their internal affairs, rules, and bylaws unless enforcement would be arbitrary, capricious, or an abuse of discretion. For these reasons, I find that the plaintiffs have not demonstrated a likelihood of success on the merits. Apart from this deficiency, the plaintiffs have also failed to show irreparable harm (*McGee v. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, 2011, p. 3).

Although the VHSL persevered in the *McGee* case, the VHSL did, in fact, amend their handbook to allow for a Transfer Rule exception. It states the following:

For the start of the 2011- 12 school year only, a one-time transfer eligibility exception applies only to those students attending a Wise County school that closes due to consolidation and the student wishes to return to the school serving his/her parents' out-of-county residence. Students whose parents live in Wise County but who choose to transfer out of county without a corresponding move by their parents, or those who fail to meet the prescribed VHSL Transfer Rule or one of its Exceptions, would not be eligible and would need to file an application for VHSL Transfer Rule Waiver with the

appropriate district committee. All necessary forms, appeals procedures and criteria for considering appeals are available on the VHSL website. No appeal will be heard in advance on a presumptive basis but only after a student becomes ineligible (Virginia High School League Handbook, 2016, p. 83).

In *Bailey v. Virginia High School League, Inc.* (2012), the plaintiffs challenged the VHSL's Transfer Rule. The family claimed that the Transfer Rule interfered with their fundamental rights to make decisions in the best interest of their son. Prior to this appeal, the United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia granted the VHSL's motion to dismiss this claim, and this ruling was ultimately affirmed (*Bailey v. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, 2012). The parents' right to control individual components of their son's education, including his participation in interscholastic sports and other activities, was not protected. The court ruled in favor of the VHSL, ascertaining the Transfer Rule was a legitimate state interest in discouraging athletic and academic recruiting and encouraging students to attend school in their parents' resident district (*Bailey v. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, 2012).

VHSL Age Rule

The case of *Thompson v. Virginia High School League, Inc.* involved a student who was attending Granby High School in Norfolk, Virginia, and was found ineligible by the Age Rule established by the VHSL (*Thompson v. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, 1994). The Age Rule states that no student can reach his/her 19th birthday on or before the first day of August of the current school year (VHSL Handbook, 2016). The family of the student, who wanted to play football, filed a suit claiming that the VHSL requirement deprived the student of privileges and rights secured by the United States Constitution. The basis of the claim was that other students were granted eligibility waivers in similar circumstances, so the school's denial of a waiver was unjustified. The court concluded that the rule did not follow any standard and was not equal to all students. The court also ruled that the VHSL had no reasons to support their decisions, and any rules or decisions made by the VHSL were not known to the public.

This was an important outcome, as the court informed the VHSL they had the ability to grant waivers to students as long as they came to conclusions according to a standard that wasn't going to take away a benefit from students in Virginia. The result of this case prompted the VHSL to adopt processes regarding Age, Scholarship, Transfer Rule and Semester appeals.

An additional case involving the Age Rule of the VHSL was heard in 1997 in the Circuit Court for the City of Hampton and eventually in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia (*William Perry v. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, 1997). This case involved a student who had a learning disability. The student claimed that his learning disability caused him to be over age, but the student failed to show that he experienced a delayed start or interruption in his educational progression due to an identified profound disability. The student was found to be treated fairly and afforded due process by the VHSL as they went through the waiver process. The judge in the Federal Court found that the VHSL made a good faith effort to apply the criteria for appeals evenly across the board, adding that the plaintiff not only received due process but received more than he was technically entitled to receive throughout the appeals process (*William Perry vs. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, 1997).

Another court case, *Sisson v. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, dealing with the VHSL Age Rule was heard by a U.S. District Court in Roanoke, Virginia in 2010. In this case, the plaintiff, a senior in high school, was one-day too old to participate in League-sponsored athletic activities because he turned 19 on July 31, 2010 (*Sisson v. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, 2010). The student suffered from a mild learning disability but was behind in school because the student repeated a grade in elementary school due to his parents' voluntary decision. The student did not fail the grade, although the school did recommend that the student repeat the grade. The court denied the motion for a temporary injunction and set the case for trial. The court concluded that:

In closing, the court is not unsympathetic to Sisson's plight and likely would have granted him a waiver if it had been responsible for making the decision. However, in light of the legal standards governing Sisson's federal claims and the instant motion, the court is unable to conclude that he is entitled to the extraordinary remedy of preliminary injunctive relief. Accordingly, his motion for temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction must be denied (*Sisson v. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, 2010, p. 8).

As a result of the injunction being denied, the student voluntarily dropped the case, and it never went to trial.

In 2011, a Circuit Court in Norfolk, Virginia heard the case of *Dean v. Virginia High School League, Inc.* In this case, the plaintiff questioned the VHSL's use of its Age Rule in terms of student-athlete eligibility. A 19 year-old senior was seeking a waiver to the Age Rule, alleging

a disability related to lead poisoning as a child. While being able to show documentation of lead poisoning as a 4 year-old, the family was unable to show his medical condition was the reason why the child repeated two grades. As such, the judge ruled in favor of the VHSL and stated that the VHSL provides a more than adequate appeals process. The judge added:

The VHSL establishes rules that govern eligibility for thousands of high school athletes across Virginia. In the absence of the violation of a constitutional, statutory, or common law right, it ought to be allowed to adopt, interpret, and apply its own rules without interference from the courts (*Dean v. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, 2011, p. 7).

Player Ejection

A case involving a student who was ejected from a football game was heard in November 1994. The case *Harris v. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, involved a student who was a football player at Thomas Walker High School. The student was ejected from a football game after an official on the field witnessed the student punch an opposing player. Under the Sportsmanship Rule established by the VHSL, the student would have to sit out the next game following the one-game suspension for ejections. After learning of the suspension, the student sought and received an injunction against the one-game suspension from being enforced (*Harris v. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, 1994). Thereafter, the student filed a lawsuit that challenged the constitutionality of the VHSL's procedures for appeals.

The principal of Thomas Walker High School conducted an investigation, and provided the student his appropriate procedural rights. Interviews were conducted with the student and relevant witnesses. As a result of the investigation, the principal determined that the ejection and one-game suspension would stand. The court ruled in favor of the VHSL, concluding that the VHSL appeals process was constitutional and the one-game suspension would be upheld (*Harris v. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, 1994).

VHSL Classification

A case regarding reclassifying and redistricting of schools was heard in the Circuit Court of Wise County, Virginia in November of 1996 (*Virginia High School League, Inc. v. J. J. Kelly High School*, 1997). The issue centered on J. J. Kelly High School, Wise County Public Schools, that was reclassified from Group A to Group AA. In March of 1995, the Redistricting and

Reclassification Committee of the VHSL was appointed to gather data and devise a plan for redistricting and reclassifying. On July 29, 1995, the committee submitted tentative redistricting and reclassification plans to member school principals in anticipation of the plan going into effect in 1996 (*Virginia High School League, Inc. v. J. J. Kelly High School*, 1997).

Classification sizes were determined as follows: schools with 500 or fewer students were placed in Group A, schools with student populations between 501 and 1,000 were placed in Group AA, and schools with over 1,001 students were placed in Group AAA. However, instead of determining school membership using attendance figures of tenth through twelfth graders in the September 30, 1995 report as stated in their own bylaws, the committee used attendance figures of ninth through twelfth graders from the March 31, 1995 report (*Virginia High School League, Inc. v. J. J. Kelly High School*, 1997). This resulted in J. J. Kelly High School having a total school membership of 512 students, thus placing them from Group A to Group AA.

The court ruled that the VHSL did not follow their own process to amend bylaws. The VHSL appealed, and the case ended in the Virginia Supreme Court, who ruled the VHSL acted in violation of their own bylaws. The judge in the case determined that the language of the bylaw tells the League exactly how the student membership of each member high school must be determined, and their action was in violation of their own bylaws (*Virginia High School League, Inc. v. J. J. Kelly High School*, 1997). As a result of this case, the VHSL amended their bylaws to prevent such a situation from occurring in the future.

Title IX

The United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia heard the case of *Alston vs. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, in September of 1997 (*Alston v. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, 1997). This case involved the season of play for girls' basketball, girls' volleyball and girls' tennis. The plaintiffs claimed that the defendants, the VHSL, denied certain female athletes in the Commonwealth of Virginia's public high schools equal treatment, opportunities and benefits based on their sex in violation of Title IX and the Equal Protection Clause of Amendment XIV of the United States Constitution (*Alston v. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, 1997).

Specifically, the plaintiffs claimed that the scheduling practices of the VHSL treated boys' sports differently than girls' sports, thus forcing some girls to stop playing sports they

previously were able to play while no boys were forced to stop playing any sports (*Alston v. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, 1997). Historically, the VHSL had been scheduling boys' sports in a way that each sport is played in the same season for all classification levels in Groups A, AA and AAA. However, the scheduling of girls' sports varied depending on the classification level. For example, girls' basketball was played in the fall for Groups A and AA, but in the winter for Group AAA (*Alston v. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, 1999). The plaintiffs alleged that the combined effects of VHSL's scheduling of girls' and boys' sports were discriminatory.

The VHSL was in violation of Title IX and the equal protection clause under the U. S. Constitution. The VHSL was ordered to align girls' basketball, girls' volleyball and girls' tennis with the boys' teams in the same seasons in all group classifications and to have the aforementioned alignment completed by the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year.

Liability

In November 1996, the Circuit Court of the County of Madison, Virginia heard the case of *Breeden, et al v. Virginia High School League, Inc.* This case involved a state football game between Sussex Central High School and Madison County High School. It was a semifinal playoff game in which the support rail on a back row of bleachers collapsed during the game, resulting in injuries to four spectators in attendance. While the jury reached a verdict to award the injured spectators \$215,000, the judge decided no evidence presented showed the VHSL had breached any duty or responsibility (*Breeden, et al v. Virginia High School League, Inc.*, 1996). Consequently, the judge set aside the verdicts and ruled in favor of the VHSL. Although Breeden, et al. attempted to appeal to the Virginia Supreme Court, they were denied their petition.

Current Issues

The VHSL has been involved in litigation regarding policies and procedures for decades. The Virginia High School League and other state associations face new issues that are resulting in new policies. Current issues that have emerged and potential litigated topics such as private school participation (p. 43), home-schooled students (p. 45), concussions (p. 48), and transgender

students (p. 51) will be discussed in this chapter. Additionally, some of these current issues were utilized in the development of the survey instrument for this study.

Private School Participation

A recent court case involving Liberty Christian Academy (LCA) was settled in spring 2015. The VHSL and LCA reached a settlement in May 2015 on their antitrust lawsuit. The agreement resulted in action taken by the VHSL Executive Committee on May 7 (Virginia High School League Settlement News Release, 2015). Similar action was then taken by the full membership of the VHSL and the LCA Board of Trustees to approve the agreement (Virginia High School League Settlement News Release, 2015).

The resulting agreement allows all non-boarding private schools in Virginia to apply for membership to the VHSL. Any private school that desires to join the VHSL must meet the same participant eligibility requirements and regulations as public school students. New regulations were approved by the VHSL Executive Committee in May 2015 that provided updated language and guidelines in the VHSL Handbook to accommodate for the inclusion of private schools (Virginia High School League Settlement News Release, 2015).

For the 2015-2016 school year, the only private school to obtain VHSL membership was Liberty Christian Academy (Virginia High School League Master Football Schedule, 2015). Prior to joining the VHSL, LCA was a part of the Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association. (VISAA). The VISAA was established in 1997, has over 90 member schools, and provides information, advocacy, professional development, and state championship tournaments for the independent schools in Virginia (Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association Who We Are, 2015).

As a result of the inclusion of private schools to the VHSL, a policy was established to create a public and private school division. The policy, entitled Formation of Private and Public School Divisions, states that the

VHSL will seek from the Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association ("VISAA") an agreement to incorporate and include VISAA in VHSL as a private school division, which will have its own autonomous rules, governance, finances, and management, but will have VHSL member status (hereafter, the "private school division"). The private school division will exist alongside the current VHSL membership (hereafter, the "public school division"). In interscholastic sports, the private school division may have regular

season and post-season playoff schedules that are separate from those of the public school division, but shall be treated equally for competitive purposes as provided in the VHSL Football Rating Scale (Virginia High School League Handbook, 2016, p. 13).

Some states have implemented policies to address competitive balance of private school participation, while others are weighing options or have not implemented a system as of yet (Dyer, 2015). The Indiana High School Athletic Association is in its third year of competition which classifies schools based on their previous year's tournament success. The Georgia High School Association passed a play-up penalty for all public or private member schools, which advances schools one level of classification if that school takes more than three percent of its students from outside the county in which the school is physically located (Dyer, 2015). The Illinois High School Association uses a multiplier (1.65) for private schools to determine their postseason class. (Dyer, 2015).

Home-schooled Students

The VHSL continues to prevail in the highly contested battle to allow home-schooled students the ability to participate in VHSL sanctioned activities at the school located where the home-schooled student resides. The "Tebow Bill", named after for University of Florida quarterback, Tim Tebow, has already been enacted in 29 states, allowing home-schooled students to play sports (Staff, 2015). In April 2015, the Virginia House of Delegates failed to override a veto by Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe. The bill required a two-thirds majority vote to override, but the vote was only 60-39, thus allowing the veto of House Bill 1626 by Gov. McAuliffe. Originally, the bill passed the Virginia House of Delegates by a vote of 57-41 and the Virginia Senate by a 22-13 vote (Staff, 2015). Similarly, Gov. McAuliffe vetoed legislation that would have allowed home-schooled students to participate in VHSL sanctioned activities on February 20, 2017 (Freeman, 2017).

According to an article on the *National Federation of State High School Associations'* website (Sieck, 2015), approximately 1.7 million students are home-schooled in the United States. This number has more than doubled since a home-school study was first conducted by the U. S. Department of Education's National Center for Education back in 1999. During the 2015-2016 school year an estimated 33,000 students in Virginia, aged 5-17, were home-schooled (Ziese, 2015).

Two other states that do not allow home-school participation are New York and West Virginia. The New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHAA) requires student-athletes to be bona-fide students at the public schools they represent (Sieck, 2015). Additionally, the West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission (WVSSAC), does not permit home-schooled students to participate on school teams. However, the WVSSAC does allow for home-schooled students who attend at least half of every school day at their school to participate in athletics (West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission Handbook, 2016).

One state that does allow home-school participation is Iowa. The Iowa High School Athletic Association (IHSSAA) has permitted home-schooled students to participate on interscholastic sports teams since 1997 (Sieck, 2015). The IHSAA requires all home-schooled athletes to meet eligibility requirements set by the state association as well as any additional requirements the schools have where they will be playing (Sieck, 2015).

Two other states have recently approved home-schooled student participation, Tennessee and Ohio. In Tennessee, the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association passed a policy in 2011 that requires home-schooled students to meet 10 eligibility requirements in order to participate in extracurricular activities (Sieck, 2015). In Ohio, the Ohio High School Athletic Association established policy in 2013 that home-schooled students were held to the same eligibility requirements as regular students, except for being enrolled in their local school (Sieck, 2015).

Parents who have decided to have their children home-schooled have not been successful in litigation over whether their children can participate in extracurricular activities (Osborne, A. & Russo, C., 2014). Rather than litigation, the focus has now shifted to legislative action.

A rule prohibiting home-schooled students from participating in interscholastic athletics in West Virginia did not violate equal protection under the West Virginia state constitution (*Jones v. West Virginia State Board of Education*, 2005). When families made the voluntary decision not to have their children enroll in the public school system, they were not entitled to the privileges incidental to public education. This rule was determined to support the state's interest in promoting academics over athletics, as students enrolled in public schools had to maintain a minimum grade point average to participate (*Jones v. West Virginia State Board of Education*, 2005).

A family in Pennsylvania sued the Midd-West School District for its refusal to permit their daughter to participate in interscholastic basketball (*Angstadt v. Midd-West School District*, 2004). The student was home-schooled from the third grade through the eighth grade, and had never been enrolled in the Midd-West School District, which is where the family resided. In 2001, she stopped home-schooling and began attending Western Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School (WPCCS) as a ninth grade student (*Angstadt v. Midd-West School District*, 2004). The WPCCS is an independent public school and not associated with the Midd-West School District. When the student attempted to play basketball for Midd-West at the beginning of the 2001 school year, the student was not permitted to play because she was not enrolled in the Midd-West School District. The court determined that the student did not have the right to participate in interscholastic basketball because she failed to establish the claim of a property interest to play (Osborne, A. & Russo, C., 2014).

Similarly, the parents of home-schooled students in Michigan failed in their challenge to allow their children to participate in interscholastic athletics (*Reid v. Kenowa Hills Public Schools*, 2004). The appellate court in this case affirmed that the students in this case lacked a right to participate because interscholastic athletics are not required of students in Kenowa Hills Public Schools (Osborne, A. & Russo, C., 2014).

Concussions

Among individuals 15 to 24 years of age, an estimated 300,000 sports-related concussions occur annually (Marar, McIlvain, Fields & Comstock, 2012). While interest in sports-related concussions is usually focused on full-contact sports like football and ice hockey, concussions occur across a wide variety of high school sports. This study captured data from 20 sports during the 2008-2010 academic years (Marar, et al, 2012). During this study, 1936 concussions were reported in total. The majority (47.1%) of the reported concussions occurred in football, followed by girls' soccer (8.2%), boys' wrestling (5.8%), and then girls' basketball (5.5%) (Marar, et al, 2012).

A recent concussion suit in Tampa, Florida was settled in October, 2015 (Dawson & Williams, 2015). A former football player for Wharton High School received a \$2 million settlement from the Hillsborough County School Board. In this unusual situation, the plaintiff was playing catch before practice and hit his head on the paint machine left on the field used to

line the football field. He was not wearing a helmet, and both the trainer and coaches evaluated him after the incident. They allowed him to drive home after the incident, even though he lived more than five miles away from the school (Dawson & Williams, 2015). His father recognized the seriousness of his condition upon his arrival home and rushed him to the hospital. He was found to have a fracture in his skull. In addition to providing the family with the largest settlement in the school district's history, the school district will also provide \$1 million in insurance coverage for every high school athlete beginning in the 2015-2016 school year (Dawson & Williams, 2015). Furthermore, a policy has been created in the school district for staff members to follow if they suspect a student sustained a head injury.

In California, former high school football player John Enloe III filed a lawsuit against the San Diego Unified School District, claiming he suffered "traumatic and catastrophic brain injuries from which he is still recovering, and from which he may never recover" as a result of multiple hits during a football game last year that resulted in a "serious concussion" (Mohney, 2015). According to the lawsuit, the teen attempted to leave the field after the first hit left him confused and feeling nauseous. However, an assistant coach told the teen to re-enter the game whereupon he was hit again (Mohney, 2015).

In July 2014, a 24-member task force of medical doctors, high school coaches, athletic trainers, and key national leaders in high school sports met to create recommendations for minimizing head impact exposure and concussion risk in football (National Federation of State High School Associations Annual Report 2013-2014, 2014). This task force developed a list of fundamentals for reducing the risk of concussions in high school football which the NFHS Board of Directors and the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee approved (National Federation of State High School Associations Annual Report 2013-2014, 2014). The recommendations and guidelines presented by the task force are as follows:

1. Full-contact should be limited during the regular season, as well as during activity outside of the traditional fall football season. For purposes of these recommendations and guidelines, full-contact consists of both "Thud" and "Live Action" using the USA Football definitions of Levels of Contact.
2. Member state associations should consider a variety of options for limiting contact in practices. The task force strongly recommends full-contact be allowed in no more than 2-3 practices per week. Consideration should also be given to limiting full-

- contact on consecutive days and limiting full-contact time to no more than 30 minutes per day and no more than 60-90 minutes per week.
3. Pre-season practices may require more full-contact time than practices occurring later in the regular season, to allow for teaching fundamentals with sufficient repetition.
 4. During pre-season twice-daily practices, only one session per day should include full contact.
 5. Each member state association should review its current policies regarding total quarters or games played during a one-week time frame.
 6. Consistent with efforts to minimize total exposure to full-contact, head impact exposure, and concussion risk, member state associations with jurisdiction over football outside of the traditional fall football season should review their current policies to assess if those policies stand in alignment with the Fundamentals discussed within this report and, if needed, modify the policies accordingly.
 7. Each member state association should reach out to its respective state coaches' association on designing and implementing a coach education program that appropriately integrates youth, middle school, and high school football programs in every community. USA Football and the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching courses should be the primary education resources for all coaches. Education for coaches should also include the proper fitting and care of helmets.
 8. Each member state association should regularly educate its schools on current state concussion law and policies and encourage schools to have a written Concussion Management Protocol. Schools should also be encouraged to share this information with coaches, parents, and students annually.
 9. An Emergency Action Plan (EAP) with clearly defined written and practiced protocols should be developed and in place at every high school. When possible, an athletic trainer should be present at all practices and games (National Federation of State High School Associations Recommendations and Guidelines for Minimizing Head Impact and Concussions Risk in Football, 2014, p. 1-4).

The recommendations were designed to allow flexibility for state associations that collectively oversee the more than 15,000 high schools across the country that have football programs. As a result, each state association will be tasked with developing its own policies and

procedures for implementation (National Federation of State High School Associations Annual Report 2013-2014, 2014).

In 2011, the Virginia Board of Education passed guidelines that directs each school division to develop policies and procedures regarding the identification and handling of suspected concussions in student-athletes (Student-Athlete Protection Act, 2011). Additionally, the guidelines suggest that consideration should also be given to addressing the academic needs and gradual reintroduction of cognitive demands for students with diagnosed concussions (Student-Athlete Protection Act, 2011).

Transgender Students

State athletic associations are dealing with policies regarding transgender students and athletic participation. The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) found that Township High School District 211 in Palatine, Ill., unfairly denied a transgender teenager, who was undergoing hormone therapy but had not undergone gender reassignment surgery, access to school facilities in violation of Title IX, which bars discrimination in federally funded education programs (Miller, 2015). The Nebraska State Activities Association (NSAA), which governs high school sports in Nebraska, is planning to draft a policy on participation of transgender students following a failed policy attempt two years prior (Reist, 2015). Current NSAA policy requires student-athletes to participate in activities according to their biological gender. Although, based on Title IX requirements, girls are able to participate on boys' teams where there are no corresponding girls' teams, such as wrestling and football (Reist, 2015).

In South Dakota, a policy adopted by the state association allowing students to play on sports teams based on the gender with which they identify faced numerous attempts by state legislators to overturn the policy (Reist, 2015) Now, one state legislator plans to introduce a bill that would eliminate that choice, relying instead on birth certificates and "visual inspections" (Reist, 2015). Now, at least 38 states have policies addressing transgender students, with policies ranging from those that allow students to participate according to their identified gender, to policies that require students to provide evidence that they have had hormone treatments or surgery (Reist, 2015).

The Virginia High School League adopted a new transgender policy in an Executive Committee Meeting in February 2014. The organization approved the measure to allow students

who have undergone sex re-assignment surgery or hormone therapy to participate in athletics and activities with their identified gender. The new policy states:

When a school identifies a transgender student who seeks to participate in VHSL sports or activities, the school should submit a letter requesting an appeal to the district chairman and the VHSL executive director. The letter should be responsive to the conditions in the policy below.

Privacy Statement: All discussions and documents at all levels of the process either by a member school, appeals panel, and/or the VHSL shall be kept confidential unless specifically requested by the student and family.

VHSL rules and regulations allow transgender student-athlete participation under the following conditions:

- A. A student-athlete will compete in the gender of their birth certificate unless they have undergone sex reassignment.
- B. A student-athlete who has undergone sex reassignment is eligible to compete in the reassigned gender when:
 - 1. The student-athlete has undergone sex reassignment before puberty, OR
 - 2. The student-athlete has undergone sex reassignment after puberty under all of the following conditions:
 - a. Surgical anatomical changes have been completed, including external genitalia changes and gonadectomy.
 - b. Hormonal therapy appropriate for the assigned sex has been administered in a verifiable manner and for a sufficient length of time to minimize gender-related advantages in sports competition.
 - c. If a student-athlete stops taking hormonal treatment, they will be required to participate in the sport consistent with their birth gender.
- C. A student-athlete seeking to participate as a result of sex reassignment must access the VHSL eligibility appeals process.

Note: VHSL honors and respects all individuals based on gender, race, sexual orientation and creed while striving to provide safe and equitable competition (Virginia High School League Handbook, 2016, p. 115-117).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The dissertation by Dr. Frank Polakiewicz, completed in 1985, was utilized as a resource for this study and portions of the survey instrument used were used. Dr. Polakiewicz granted verbal permission to conduct a study modeled after his study in September 2014 which he followed with a letter of support in September 2015. Specifically, survey questions dealing with the overall performance of the VHSL and any relevant topics the VHSL is currently facing were utilized, thus providing a comparison to the results from 1985. In addition to the survey, an examination of recent legal cases and state legislature involving the Virginia High School League was completed. In general, the ‘state’ of the Virginia High School League was examined.

The study completed by Dr. Frank Polakiewicz in 1985 included a sample totaling 246 educators and policy-makers. The sample included 100 principals, 50 superintendents, 50 school board members and 46 members of the General Assembly (Polakiewicz, 1985). The sample of principals was drawn at random from an alphabetical listing of all public, accredited high schools in the Commonwealth (Polakiewicz, 1985, p. 56). A number was assigned to each school, and a random number generator was utilized to produce the sample size. Superintendents were randomly chosen using the same method previously described. State legislators were selected by identifying members of the House Committee on Education and Health, members of the Senate Committee on Education, and the remaining legislators were selected at random following the aforementioned process. School Board members who were officers in the Virginia School Board Association were selected because of their participation in VHSL affairs (Polakiewicz, 1985, p. 57). The other School Board members that made up the sample size were all School Board Chairs, and were selected at random using the same procedures described previously in selecting principals and superintendents.

This study was conducted in the fall/winter of 2016. The survey instrument was distributed to all public high school principals, public school division superintendents, public school board chairs, members of the Education Committee in the Virginia House of Delegates, members of the Education and Health Committee in the Virginia Senate, and high school athletic/activities directors in Virginia. High school athletic/activities directors were added to this

study because they play a more prominent role in high school athletic/activities administration now when compared to their role in 1985.

The survey instrument included questions pertaining to the performance and recent topics of interest regarding the VHSL. Only relevant survey questions from the 1985 study were utilized, and questions pertaining to current events and issues were added to complete the survey. Surveys and follow-up reminders were emailed to all participants. Additionally, surveys were mailed to the Virginia Delegates and Senators who were included in the study. The results of the survey instrument were analyzed, and a comparison to the results from the Polakiewicz study was conducted. In addition to the comparison of the results, a qualitative study was conducted as comments and feedback from the participants were sorted and analyzed.

Research Design and Development of the Survey Instrument

The research design of this study consisted of two phases. The first involved research and analysis of recent events and case law related to VHSL regulations and other selected state athletic associations. The second phase involved survey research to determine the opinions of high school principals, public school division superintendents, public school board chairs, members of Virginia House of Delegates and Virginia Senate, and high school athletic/activities directors concerning the authority, governance and performance of the VHSL. The opinions of educators concerning these topics was gathered utilizing 7 questions, which are relevant to interscholastic athletic/activities administration today, from the survey instrument used in the Polakiewicz study.

The survey instrument used in the Polakiewicz study consisted of twenty questions based on the issues raised in resolutions critical of the VHSL and an open-ended section for respondents to express any concerns relating to the VHSL (Polakiewicz, 1985, p. 58). The first section of the questionnaire dealt with the authority of the VHSL, and the specific issues included follow:

1. VHSL authority to pass binding rules upon local school boards;
2. VHSL authority to limit membership to public schools;
3. VHSL authority to impose penalties (fines, probation, and prohibition of participation) upon schools, coaches, and students;

4. VHSL authority to determine the eligibility standards of students;
5. VHSL authority to require the attendance of medical assistance at specific events; and
6. The preferred agency to hear final appeals in the procedural due process provided by the VHSL (Polakiewicz, 1985, p. 58).

The first section composed of eleven questions and the survey respondents were asked to agree or disagree with several statements, identify individuals or institutions which should have penalties imposed upon them and identify a preferred agency to provide oversight of the VHSL (Polakiewicz, 1985, p. 59).

The second section of the survey instrument, consisting of 4 questions, dealt with the performance of the VHSL. Survey respondents were asked to recall the number of complaints concerning the VHSL they received from patrons or constituents, to express their satisfactions or dissatisfaction with the VHSL, to grade the VHSL on their performance, and to express their opinion on the need to study the VHSL to determine the need for re-organization (Polakiewicz, 1985, p. 59).

The third section of the survey instrument dealt with the governance of the VHSL and included five questions. Survey respondents were asked to select an organization to oversee the VHSL and to express their opinion concerning VHSL affiliation with a university or college (Polakiewicz, 1985, p. 59). Survey respondents were also asked in this section to rate the current input athletic directors, citizens, coaches, legislators, local school boards, state department of education, and local superintendents have in the governance of the VHSL, as opposed to the input each group should have (Polakiewicz, 1985, p. 59).

Survey Procedures

The survey procedure for this study was different than the procedure used in 1985. The entire population was emailed and the survey instrument was distributed using the survey program provided by the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Additionally, the survey instrument was mailed to the Virginia legislators asked to participate in this study. The initial email contained information regarding the study, a request to complete the survey instrument, and directions on how to complete the survey instrument. After two weeks passed,

another email request to complete the survey instrument was sent to the entire population along with the link to the survey instrument.

Analysis of Survey Data

The surveys were collected using the survey program provided by the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and a goal of 40% participation rate was set. The tools available on this online survey program make it possible to determine the total number of respondents in each category and the appropriate cumulative percentages. The survey instrument design also allows for a determination of the percentage of each group responding and the opinion that the respective groups held. Open-ended responses, concerns, and opinions offered by survey participants will be categorized and reported.

Potential Outcomes

This study aspires to provide a summary of current thoughts and perceptions regarding the authority, governance, and performance of the VHSL. It will present a comparison to the results gathered in the Polakiewicz study as well (Polakiewicz, 1985). Potentially, feelings on the performance of the VHSL could change, and this study will provide a comparison of survey groups from 1985 to today.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of Chapter 4 is to present the data drawn from the administration of a survey instrument that was designed to answer the following questions:

1. How do high school principals, division superintendents, school board chairs, members of Virginia House of Delegates and Virginia Senate, and high school athletic/activity directors perceive the authority of the VHSL?
2. What are the opinions of high school principals, division superintendents, and school board chairs, members of Virginia House of Delegates and Virginia Senate, and high school athletic/activities directors concerning the governance of the VHSL?
3. Are high school principals, division superintendents, school board chairs, members of Virginia House of Delegates and Virginia Senate, and high school athletic/activities directors satisfied with the performance of the VHSL?
 - a. What is the source of any dissatisfaction that does exist?
 - b. How can the dissatisfaction be reduced or resolved?
4. How do the results of the *Polakiewicz Study* compare to the results obtained in this study?
5. Do the same groups surveyed in the two studies express similar concerns?
6. Do the groups surveyed in this study raise concerns not identified by the *Polakiewicz Study*?

The survey instrument was distributed to the following groups: (1) public high school principals, (2) public school superintendents, (3) public school board chairs, (4) members of the Education Committee in the Virginia House of Delegates, (5) members of the Education and Health Committee in the Virginia Senate, and (6) high school athletic/activity directors in Virginia. The survey instrument included questions pertaining to the performance of and recent topics of interest regarding the VHSL. Survey questions dealing with current issues and topics facing the VHSL from the *Polakiewicz study* were incorporated into this study, and additional questions pertaining to current events and issues facing the VHSL were added in order to update the survey instrument.

This survey was conducted pursuant to the guidelines provided by the Institutional Review Board at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. The survey instrument was emailed November 28, 2016, to all survey participants, and the survey instrument was also mailed to members of the Education Committee in the Virginia House of Delegates and members of the Education and Health Committee in the Virginia Senate. A follow-up email was sent on December 8, 2016, to all survey participants, including Virginia Delegates and Senators, reminding them that they had been requested to participate in the study of the VHSL. The survey instrument was sent to 933 individuals, and 419 individuals responded to the survey, resulting in a 45% response rate. While this response rate does not provide an opportunity to make definitive generalizations, the survey results presented are the responses from the 419 individuals who participated in the survey.

Results from the Administration of Section I of the Survey

The first section of the survey instrument requested the participants to identify their current leadership role, and their answers are shown in the ‘Participants’ column in Table 3. The breakdown of the individuals making up the six groups who were asked to participate in this survey are also shown in this table. While there was a 45% response rate for this survey, only 4 members of the Education Committee in the Virginia House of Delegates and only 5 members of the Education and Health Committee in the Virginia Senate participated. Additionally, high school principals (35.3%) and high school athletic/activities directors (32.5%) make up for a combined 67.8% (284 out of 419) of the participants for this study. Therefore, results must be considered in light of the majority of the respondents were school leaders.

For comparison, developed in Table 4 is the breakdown of the similar groups who participated in the Polakiewicz study. Note that high school athletic/activities directors were not included in the Polakiewicz study, and Virginia Senators and Delegates were merged as Virginia Legislators in the Polakiewicz study. Later, results from the Polakiewicz study will be contrasted to the results derived from this study.

Table 3

Participants in the Study

Groups	Population	Participants	Participation Rate of Group (# Group Participants / # Group Population Size)	Participation Rate of Population (# Group Participants / Total Participants)
High School Principals	316	148	46.8%	35.3%
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	313	136	43.5%	32.5%
Public School Superintendents	135	76	56.3%	18%
Public School Board Chairs	132	46	34.8%	11%
Members of Education Committee in Virginia House of Delegates	22	4	18%	1%
Members of Education and Health Committee in Virginia Senate	15	5	33.3%	1.2%
No Answer	N/A	4	N/A	1%
Total	933	419	45%	100%

Table 4

Participants in the 1985 Polakiewicz Study

Groups	Sample Size	Participants	Participation Rate of Group (# Group Participants / # Group Sample Size)	Participation Rate of Sample (# Group Participants / Total Participants)
High School Principals	100	86	86%	44%
Public School Superintendents	50	42	84%	22%
Public School Board Chairs	50	45	90%	23%
Virginia Legislators	46	21	45.6%	11%
Total	246	194	78.8%	100%

Source: Polakiewicz, 1985

Results from the Administration of Section II of the Survey

A combination of 7 statements and questions were drawn from the Polakiewicz study and form the first 7 statements and questions of the current survey instrument. The results of this section will be presented in order and contrasted to the results of the Polakiewicz study.

Statement 1: The VHSL should have the authority to impose a period of probation upon ____

Statement 1 of the survey instrument asked the participants to respond to which group/groups should have a period of probation imposed on them by the VHSL. Seventy-three percent of the all participants responded that the VHSL should have the authority to impose periods of probation on coaches/sponsors, member schools, and participants collectively. While 2% of the high school athletic/activities directors responded that none of these groups should have periods of probation imposed on them, 76.5% of high school athletic/activities directors believe that the VHSL should have this authority. Even though the responses from Delegates was at 100% in favor of imposing probation periods, this group was only made up of 4 survey participants. A detailed tabular representation of the responses to this statement is provided in Table 5.

Table 6 shows the results of all participants, high school principals, public school superintendents, public school board chairs, and Virginia legislators in the Polakiewicz study who responded to the same statement.

Table 5

Responses to Statement 1: The VHSL should have the Authority to Impose a Period of Probation Upon ____

Statement 1: The VHSL should have the authority to impose a period of probation upon: (More than one answer may be selected)	Coaches/ Sponsors	Member Schools	Participants	All of The Above	None of The Above	No Answer
Total Response	7%	15%	6%	73%	4%	5.5%
High School Principals	9.5%	18%	6%	72%	3%	4%
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	4%	15%	5%	76.5%	2%	4%
Public School Superintendents	9%	17%	5%	70%	6.5%	5%
Public School Board Chairs	6.5%	4%	6.5%	69.5%	9%	13%
Members of Education Committee in Virginia House of Delegates	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Members of Education and Health Committee in Virginia Senate	0%	0%	20%	60%	0%	20%

Table 6

(Polakiewicz Study) Responses to Statement: the VHSL should have the Authority to Impose a Period of Probation Upon ____

Statement: The VHSL should have the authority to impose a period of probation upon: (More than one answer may be selected)	Coaches/ Sponsors	Member Schools	Participants	All of The Above	None of The Above	No Answer
Total Response	52.6%	83%	45.4%	87.6%	9.3%	3.1%
High School Principals	55%	88.4%	50%	93%	3.5%	3.5%
Public School Superintendents	45.2%	90%	39.1%	90.5%	9.5%	0%
Public School Board Chairs	51%	77.8%	44.4%	82.2%	15.6%	2.2%
Virginia Legislators	52.4%	66.6%	42.9%	71.5%	19%	9.5%

Source: Polakiewicz, 1985

Statement 2: The VHSL should have the authority to prohibit the participation of ____

In regard to having the authority to prohibit the participation of coaches/sponsors, member schools and participants, 70% of the participants responded that the VHSL should have this authority. High school athletic/activities directors showed the most support to this statement, with 76% supporting the authority to prohibit the participation of these groups. Eleven percent of public school board chairs responded that the VHSL should not have the authority to prohibit the participation of coaches/sponsors, member schools and participants. A detailed tabular representation of the responses to this statement is provided in Table 7.

Table 8 shows the results of all participants, high school principals, public school superintendents, public school board chairs, and Virginia legislators in the Polakiewicz study who responded to this same statement.

Table 7

Responses to Statement 2: The VHSL should have the Authority to Prohibit the Participation of _____

Statement 2: The VHSL should have the authority to prohibit the participation of: (More than one answer may be selected)	Coaches/ Sponsors	Member Schools	Participants	All of The Above	None of The Above	No Answer
Total Response	10%	12%	8%	70%	4%	5.5%
High School Principals	11.5%	14%	9%	70%	3%	5%
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	9.5%	11%	7%	76%	1.5%	3%
Public School Superintendents	5%	14.5%	4%	71%	5%	4%
Public School Board Chairs	11%	6.5%	11%	56.5%	11%	17%
Members of Education Committee in Virginia House of Delegates	25%	0%	25%	75%	0%	0%
Members of Education and Health Committee in Virginia Senate	20%	0%	20%	40%	0%	20%

Table 8

(Polakiewicz Study) Responses to Statement: The VHSL should have the Authority to Prohibit the Participation of _____

Statement: The VHSL should have the authority to prohibit the participation of: (More than one answer may be selected)	Coaches/ Sponsors	Member Schools	Participants	All of The Above	None of The Above	No Answer
Total Response	46%	69.6%	43.3%	79.9%	17.5%	2.6%
High School Principals	53.3%	80.2%	59.3%	89.6%	8.1%	2.3%
Public School Superintendents	40.4%	69%	43%	78.6%	21.4%	0%
Public School Board Chairs	37.8%	66.6%	31.1%	68.9%	28.9%	2.2%
Virginia Legislators	47.6%	66.6%	42.8%	66.7%	23.8%	9.5%

Source: Polakiewicz, 1985

Statement 3: Generally, the VHSL imposes penalties which are _____

When the VHSL does impose penalties, 59% of the participants responded that the penalties are appropriate. Furthermore, 67% of high school principals and 60% of high school athletic/activities directors and members of the Education and Health Committee in the Virginia Senate also responded that the penalties imposed by the VHSL are appropriate. While 7% of the high school athletic/activities directors responded that the penalties imposed by the VHSL are harsh, 24% of the high school athletic/activity directors responded that the penalties imposed by the VHSL are lenient. Additionally, only 12% of the high school principals responded that the penalties imposed by the VHSL are lenient. A detailed tabular representation of the responses to this statement is provided in Table 9.

Table 10 shows the results of all participants, high school principals, public school superintendents, public school board chairs, and Virginia legislators in the Polakiewicz study who responded to this same statement.

Table 9

Responses to Statement 3: Generally, the VHSL Imposes Penalties which are _____

Statement 3: Generally, the VHSL imposes penalties which are:	Lenient	Appropriate	Harsh	I Don't Know	No Answer
Total Response	18%	59%	5%	11%	7%
High School Principals	12%	67%	5%	9%	7%
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	24%	60%	7%	5%	4%
Public School Superintendents	18%	58%	3%	17%	4%
Public School Board Chairs	17.5%	41%	4%	20%	17.5%
Members of Education Committee in Virginia House of Representatives	25%	25%	0%	50%	0%
Members of Education and Health Committee in Virginia Senate	0%	60%	0%	20%	20%

Table 10

(Polakiewicz Study) Responses to Statement: Generally, the VHSL Imposes Penalties which are

Statement: Generally, the VHSL imposes penalties which are:	Lenient	Appropriate	Harsh	I Don't Know	No Answer
Total Response	20.1%	57.2%	.5%	20.1%	2.1%
High School Principals	25.6%	67.4%	0%	5.8%	1.2%
Public School Superintendents	28.6%	66.7%	0%	2.4%	2.4%
Public School Board Chairs	4.4%	42.2%	2.2%	51%	0%
Virginia Legislators	14.3%	28.6%	0%	47.6%	9.5%

Source: Polakiewicz, 1985

Question 2: If a member school, participant, or coach wishes to appeal a decision or disciplinary action of the VHSL, who should hear the final appeal?

The second question of the survey instrument addressed the appeals process adopted by the VHSL. Forty-six percent of participants responded that an impartial fact-finding panel should hear appeals regarding a decision or disciplinary action by the VHSL. While only 4% of superintendents responded that an outside agency established by the Virginia Department of Education should hear appeals, 37% of superintendents responded that a panel/committee selected by the VHSL should hear the final appeals. Only 10% of participants responded that appeals on VHSL decisions should be heard by an outside agency established by the Virginia Department of Education. A detailed tabular representation of the responses to this question is provided in Table 11.

Table 12 shows the results of all participants, high school principals, public school superintendents, public school board chairs, and Virginia legislators in the Polakiewicz study who responded to this same question.

Table 11

Responses to Question 2: If a member school, participant, or coach wishes to appeal a decision or disciplinary action of the VHSL, who should hear the final appeal?

Question 2: If a member school, participant, or coach wishes to appeal a decision or disciplinary action of the VHSL, who should hear the final appeal?	A Panel/Committee Selected by the VHSL	An Outside Agency Established by the Virginia Dept. of Education	An Impartial Fact-Finding Panel	Other	No Answer
Total Response	31%	10%	46%	5%	8%
High School Principals	33%	6%	47%	7%	7%
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	28.5%	17%	48%	1.5%	5%
Public School Superintendents	37%	4%	43%	9%	7%
Public School Board Chairs	24%	15%	39%	4.5%	17.5%
Members of Education Committee in Virginia House of Delegates	0%	25%	75%	0%	0%
Members of Education and Health Committee in Virginia Senate	40%	0%	40%	0%	20%

Table 12

(Polakiewicz Study) Responses to Question: If a Member School, Participant, or Coach Wishes to Appeal a Decision or Disciplinary Action of the VHSL, Who should Hear the Final Appeal?

Question: If a member school, participant, or coach wishes to appeal a decision or disciplinary action of the VHSL, who should hear the final appeal?	A Panel/Committee Selected by the VHSL	An Outside Agency Established by the Virginia Dept. of Education	An Impartial Fact-Finding Panel	Other	No Answer
Total Response	25.3%	14.4%	49%	7.2%	3.6%
High School Principals	44.2%	5.8%	41.9%	5.8%	2.3%
Public School Superintendents	16.7%	31%	40.5%	7.1%	4.8%
Public School Board Chairs	2.2%	15.6%	66.7%	13.3%	2.2%
Virginia Legislators	14.3%	14.3%	57.1%	0%	14.3%

Source: Polakiewicz, 1985

Question 3: How many complaints did you receive last school year concerning the VHSL?

Survey participants were requested to quantify the number of complaints concerning the VHSL they had received during the last school year. Fifty percent of the participants responded that they had received 1-5 complaints, but only 2% of participants responded that they received over 20 complaints during the last school year. While 33% of the superintendents responded that they received zero complaints last year concerning the VHSL, 19% of high school athletic/activities directors responded that they received 6-10 complaints last year. Senators and

Delegates also responded that they received complaints, with 20% of Senators receiving 6-10 complaints and 25% of Delegates receiving 1-5 complaints. However, this means that only one Senator and only one Delegate responded that they received complaints last school year. A detailed tabular representation of the responses to this question is provided in Table 13.

Table 14 shows the results of all participants, high school principals, public school superintendents, public school board chairs, and Virginia legislators in the Polakiewicz study who responded to this same question.

Table 13

Responses to Question 3: How Many Complaints did you Receive Last School Year Concerning the VHSL?

Question 3: How many complaints did you receive last school year concerning the VHSL?	0	1-5	6-10	11-20	20+	No Answer
Total Response	21%	50%	15%	4%	2%	8%
High School Principals	18%	52%	16%	5%	0%	9%
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	13%	56%	19%	5%	2%	5%
Public School Superintendents	33%	51%	10%	0%	1%	5%
Public School Board Chairs	22%	35%	11%	9%	6%	17%
Members of Education Committee in Virginia House of Delegates	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Members of Education and Health Committee in Virginia Senate	60%	0%	20%	0%	0%	20%

Table 14

(Polakiewicz Study) Responses to Question: How Many Complaints did you Receive Last School Year Concerning the VHSL?

Question: How many complaints did you receive last school year concerning the VHSL?	0	1-5	6-10	11-20	20+	No Answer
Total Response	57.2%	32.5%	2.3%	.5%	1%	4.5%
High School Principals	59.3%	34.9%	2.3%	0%	0%	3.5%
Public School Superintendents	59.5%	28.6%	4.8%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%
Public School Board Chairs	53.3%	31.1%	6.7%	0%	2.2%	6.7%
Virginia Legislators	52.4%	38.3%	4.8%	0%	0%	9.5%

Source: Polakiewicz, 1985

Statement 4: I am satisfied with the VHSL’s administration of athletics.

In regard to satisfaction with how the VHSL is doing, 79% of the participants responded that they are satisfied with their administration of athletics. Specifically, 80% of superintendents, 81% of high school principals, and 82% of high school athletic/activities directors responded that they are satisfied with the VHSL’s administration of athletics. While 63% of the school board chairs responded that they are satisfied with the VHSL’s administration of athletics, 20% of the school board chairs responded that they disagree with the statement ‘I am satisfied with the VHSL’s administration of athletics.’ A detailed tabular representation of the responses to this statement is provided in Table 15.

Table 16 shows the results of all participants, high school principals, public school superintendents, public school board chairs, and Virginia legislators in the Polakiewicz study who responded to this same statement.

Table 15

Responses to Statement 4: I am Satisfied with the VHSL’s Administration of Athletics.

Statement 4: I am satisfied with the VHSL’s administration of athletics.	Agree	Disagree	No Answer
Total Response	79%	12%	9%
High School Principals	81%	11%	8%
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	82%	13%	5%
Public School Superintendents	80%	11%	9%
Public School Board Chairs	63%	20%	17%
Members of Education Committee in Virginia House of Delegates	100%	0%	0%
Members of Education and Health Committee in Virginia Senate	60%	20%	20%

Table 16

(Polakiewicz Study) Responses to Statement: I am Satisfied with the VHSL’s Administration of Athletics.

Statement: I am satisfied with the VHSL’s administration of athletics.	Agree	Disagree	No Answer
Total Response	76.3%	19.1%	4.6%
High School Principals	89.5%	8.1%	2.3%
Public School Superintendents	83.3%	14.3%	2.4%
Public School Board Chairs	57.8%	37.8%	4.4%
Virginia Legislators	47.6%	33.3%	19%

Source: Polakiewicz, 1985

Statement 5: If I were to evaluate the VHSL on its performance, I would assign the following grade:

The next statement, which represents the last of the survey statements and questions from the Polakiewicz study, requested survey participants to assign the VHSL a grade on its performance. Fifty-four percent of the participants assigned the VHSL a grade of B--above average, and 23% assigned a grade of C--average. While 12% of high school principals assigned the VHSL a grade of A--excellent, only 7% of high school athletic/activities directors assigned the VHSL a grade of A--excellent. Nine percent of school board chairs and 7% of high school principals assigned the VHSL a grade of D--below average. No participants assigned the VHSL a grade of F--failing. A detailed tabular representation of the responses to this statement is provided in Table 17.

Compared to the results of the Polakiewicz study, survey participants assigned a grade of A--excellent more often in 1985 than for this study. Specifically, 34.9% of high school principals in 1985 assigned a grade of A--excellent, and only 12% of high school principals assigned the same grade for this study. Also, 31% of superintendents assigned a grade of A--excellent in 1985 and only 11% assigned the same grade for this study.

Table 18 shows the results of all participants, high school principals, public school superintendents, public school board chairs, and Virginia legislators in the Polakiewicz study who responded to this same statement.

Table 17

Responses to Statement 5: If I were to Evaluate the VHSL on its Performance, I would Assign the Following Grade:

Statement 5: If I were to evaluate the VHSL on its performance, I would assign the following grade:	A-- Excellent	B-- Above Average	C-- Average	D-- Below Average	F-- Failing	No Answer
Total Response	9%	54%	23%	6%	0%	8%
High School Principals	12%	53%	21%	7%	0%	7%
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	7%	58%	27%	4%	0%	4%
Public School Superintendents	11%	59%	20%	4%	0%	6%
Public School Board Chairs	9%	37%	26%	9%	0%	19%
Members of Education Committee in Virginia House of Delegates	0%	50%	0%	25%	0%	25%
Members of Education and Health Committee in Virginia Senate	0%	20%	40%	20%	0%	20%

Table 18

(Polakiewicz Study) Responses to Statement: If I were to Evaluate the VHSL on its Performance, I would Assign the Following Grade:

Statement: If I were to evaluate the VHSL on its performance, I would assign the following grade:	A-- Excellent	B-- Above Average	C-- Average	D-- Below Average	F-- Failing	No Answer
Total Response	23.2%	46.9%	21.1%	3.1%	2.6%	3.1%
High School Principals	34.9%	52.3%	11.6%	0%	0%	1.2%
Public School Superintendents	31%	50%	9.5%	0%	7.1%	2.4%
Public School Board Chairs	2.2%	37.8%	44.4%	8.9%	4.4%	2.2%
Virginia Legislators	4.8%	38.1%	33.3%	9.5%	0%	14.3%

Source: Polakiewicz, 1985

Results from the Administration of Section III of the Survey

The third section of the survey instrument contains 18 questions that pertain to some current issues facing the VHSL. The results of this section will be presented in the same order as they were presented in the survey instrument.

Statement 6: The VHSL should do more to educate parents regarding high school athletics and activities.

Sixty-seven percent of participants responded that the VHSL should do more to educate parents on high school athletics and activities. Specifically, 80% of superintendents, 81% of high school principals, and 82% of high school athletic/activities directors responded that the VHSL should do more to educate parents on high school athletics and activities. Additionally, 12% of survey participants did not answer this question. A detailed tabular representation of the responses to this statement is provided in Table 19.

Table 19

Responses to Statement 6: The VHSL should do more to educate parents regarding high school athletics and activities.

Statement 6: The VHSL should do more to educate parents regarding high school athletics and activities.	Agree	Disagree	No Answer
Total Response	67%	21%	12%
High School Principals	81%	11%	8%
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	82%	13%	5%
Public School Superintendents	80%	11%	9%
Public School Board Chairs	63%	20%	17%
Members of Education Committee in Virginia House of Delegates	100%	0%	0%
Members of Education and Health Committee in Virginia Senate	60%	20%	20%

Statement 7: The VHSL should do more to oversee and regulate officials/referees and athletic officials’/referees’ associations.

Sixty-nine percent of participants responded that the VHSL should do more to oversee and regulate officials/referees and officials’/referees’ associations. While 74% of superintendents and 75% of athletic/activities directors responded that the VHSL should do more to oversee and regulate officials/referees and their associations, 21% of superintendents and 18% of high school principals disagree. Additionally, 59% of school board chairs responded that the VHSL should do more to oversee and regulate officials/referees and their associations, while 30% of school board chairs did not respond. A detailed tabular representation of the responses to this statement is provided in Table 20.

Table 20

Responses to Statement 7: The VHSL should do more to Oversee and Regulate Officials/Referees and Athletic Officials’/Referee’s Associations.

Statement 7: The VHSL should do more to oversee and regulate officials/referees and athletic officials’/referee’s associations.	Agree	Disagree	No Answer
Total Response	69%	17%	13%
High School Principals	68%	18%	14%
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	75%	15%	10%
Public School Superintendents	74%	21%	5%
Public School Board Chairs	59%	11%	30%
Members of Education Committee in Virginia House of Delegates	50%	25%	25%
Members of Education and Health Committee in Virginia Senate	40%	40%	20%

Statement 8: The VHSL should provide athletics and activities for students in order to regulate initiatives set forth by the Virginia Department of Education (Civic Engagement, Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Collaboration, and Communication)

Fifty-two percent of participants responded that the VHSL should provide athletics and activities for students in order to regulate initiatives set forth by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). While 52% of high school athletic/activities directors responded that they agree, 38% of the high school athletic/activities directors responded that they disagree. Three out of four Delegates responded that the VHSL should provide athletics and activities for students in order to regulate initiatives set forth by the VDOE. A detailed tabular representation of the responses to this statement is provided in Table 21.

Table 21

Responses to Statement 8: The VHSL should Provide Athletics and Activities for Students in order to Regulate Initiatives Set Forth by the Virginia Department of Education (Civic Engagement, Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Collaboration, and Communication)

Statement 8: The VHSL should provide athletics and activities for students in order to regulate initiatives set forth by the Virginia Department of Education (Civic Engagement, Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Collaboration, and Communication)	Agree	Disagree	No Answer
Total Response	52%	34%	14%
High School Principals	53%	32%	15%
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	52%	38%	10%
Public School Superintendents	57%	38%	5%
Public School Board Chairs	46%	26%	28%
Members of Education Committee in Virginia House of Delegates	75%	25%	0%
Members of Education and Health Committee in Virginia Senate	40%	40%	20%

Statement 9: The VHSL does an adequate job educating students on concerns regarding concussions.

The next four statements of the survey instrument address concussion education, and whether or not the VHSL does an adequate job of educating students, parents and families, coaches and sponsors, and officials. The first of these statements related to how the VHSL educates students on concerns regarding concussions. Sixty-six percent of participants responded that the VHSL does an adequate job of educating students on concerns regarding concussions.

Specifically, 75% of superintendents, 69% of high school athletic/activities directors, and 68% of high school principals agreed that the VHSL does an adequate job educating students on concerns regarding concussions. A detailed tabular representation of the responses to this statement is provided in Table 22.

Table 22

Responses to Statement 9: The VHSL does an Adequate Job Educating Students on Concerns Regarding Concussions.

Statement 9: The VHSL does an adequate job educating students on concerns regarding concussions.	Agree	Disagree	No Answer
Total Response	66%	22%	12%
High School Principals	68%	20%	12%
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	69%	24%	7%
Public School Superintendents	75%	20%	5%
Public School Board Chairs	46%	26%	28%
Members of Education Committee in Virginia House of Delegates	75%	0%	25%
Members of Education and Health Committee in Virginia Senate	40%	20%	40%

Statement 10: The VHSL does an adequate job educating parents and families on concerns regarding concussions.

Sixty-two percent of participants agreed that the VHSL does an adequate job of educating parents and families on concerns regarding concussions. While 72% of superintendents agreed that the VHSL does an adequate job educating parents and families on concussions, 37% of school board chairs responded that they disagree with this statement and 28% of school board chairs did not respond. A detailed tabular representation of the responses to this statement is provided in Table 23.

Table 23

Responses to Statement 10: The VHSL does an Adequate Job Educating Parents and Families on Concerns Regarding Concussions.

Statement 10: The VHSL does an adequate job educating parents and families on concerns regarding concussions.	Agree	Disagree	No Answer
Total Response	62%	25%	13%
High School Principals	62%	23%	15%
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	68%	24%	8%
Public School Superintendents	72%	21%	7%
Public School Board Chairs	35%	37%	28%
Members of Education Committee in Virginia House of Delegates	75%	0%	25%
Members of Education and Health Committee in Virginia Senate	0%	40%	60%

Statement 11: The VHSL does an adequate job educating coaches and activity sponsors on concerns regarding concussions.

Seventy-two percent of participants responded that the VHSL does an adequate job of educating coaches and activity sponsors on concerns regarding concussions. While 83% of superintendents agreed that the VHSL does an adequate job of educating coaches and sponsors on concerns regarding concussions, 26% of school board chairs and 15% of high school athletic/activities directors responded that they disagree with this statement. A detailed tabular representation of the responses to this statement is provided in Table 24.

Table 24

Responses to Statement 11: The VHSL does an Adequate Job Educating Coaches and Activity Sponsors on Concerns Regarding Concussions.

Statement 11: The VHSL does an adequate job educating coaches and activity sponsors on concerns regarding concussions.	Agree	Disagree	No Answer
Total Response	72%	15%	13%
High School Principals	74%	14%	12%
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	76%	15%	9%
Public School Superintendents	83%	12%	5%
Public School Board Chairs	46%	26%	28%
Members of Education Committee in Virginia House of Delegates	50%	0%	50%
Members of Education and Health Committee in Virginia Senate	40%	20%	40%

Statement 12: The VHSL does an adequate job educating game/activity officials on concerns regarding concussions.

Sixty-five percent of participants responded that the VHSL does an adequate job of educating game and activity officials on concerns regarding concussions. While 71% of superintendents and 66% of high school principals agreed that the VHSL does an adequate job of educating officials on concerns regarding concussions, 26% of school board chairs and 22% of high school athletic/activities directors disagreed with this statement. Additionally, 14% of survey participants did not answer this question. A detailed tabular representation of the responses to this statement is provided in Table 25.

Table 25

Responses to Statement 12: The VHSL does an Adequate Job Educating Game/Activity Officials on Concerns Regarding Concussions.

Statement 12: The VHSL does an adequate job educating game/activity officials on concerns regarding concussions.	Agree	Disagree	No Answer
Total Response	65%	21%	14%
High School Principals	66%	19%	15%
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	68%	22%	10%
Public School Superintendents	71%	21%	8%
Public School Board Chairs	48%	26%	26%
Members of Education Committee in Virginia House of Delegates	25%	25%	50%
Members of Education and Health Committee in Virginia Senate	40%	20%	40%

Statement 13: I believe that home-schooled students should be able to participate in athletics and activities at VHSL Member Schools in the areas where they live.

The topic of home-schooled students and their ability to participate in athletics and activities at VHSL member schools is addressed in the next survey statement. Seventy-eight percent of participants responded that home-schooled students should not be able to participate in athletics and activities at VHSL member schools in the areas where they live. While 13% of the high school athletic/activities directors responded that home-schooled students should be able to participate, 88% of the superintendents and 70% of school board chairs responded that they disagree with this statement. Additionally, three out of four Delegates (75%) responded that home-schooled students should be able to participate in athletics and activities. A detailed tabular representation of the responses to this statement is provided in Table 26.

Table 26

Responses to Statement 13: I believe that Home-Schooled Students should be able to Participate in Athletics and Activities at VHSL Member Schools in the Areas Where they Live.

Statement 13: I believe that home-schooled students should be able to participate in athletics and activities at VHSL Member Schools in the areas where they live.	Agree	Disagree	No Answer
Total Response	10%	78%	11%
High School Principals	9%	79%	12%
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	13%	79%	8%
Public School Superintendents	7%	88%	5%
Public School Board Chairs	4%	70%	26%
Members of Education Committee in Virginia House of Delegates	75%	25%	0%
Members of Education and Health Committee in Virginia Senate	40%	40%	20%

Statement 14: The VHSL does an adequate job educating students on the importance of sportsmanship.

The next four statements of the survey instrument address sportsmanship, and whether or not the VHSL does an adequate job of educating students, parents and families, coaches and sponsors, and officials on the importance of sportsmanship. Sixty-five percent of participants responded that the VHSL does an adequate job of educating students on sportsmanship. While 75% of high school athletic/activities directors responded that the VHSL does an adequate job educating students on sportsmanship, 30% of superintendents disagreed with this statement. Additionally, 14% of survey participants did not answer this question. A detailed tabular representation of the responses to this statement is provided in Table 27.

Table 27

Responses to Statement 14: The VHSL does an adequate job educating students on the importance of sportsmanship.

Statement 14: The VHSL does an adequate job educating students on the importance of sportsmanship.	Agree	Disagree	No Answer
Total Response	65%	21%	14%
High School Principals	65%	22%	13%
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	75%	16%	9%
Public School Superintendents	63%	30%	7%
Public School Board Chairs	46%	22%	32%
Members of Education Committee in Virginia House of Delegates	50%	25%	25%
Members of Education and Health Committee in Virginia Senate	60%	0%	40%

Statement 15: The VHSL does an adequate job educating parents and families on the importance of sportsmanship.

Fifty-five percent of participants responded that the VHSL does an adequate job of educating parents and families on the importance of sportsmanship. While 68% of high school athletic/activities directors and 55% of superintendents responded that the VHSL does an adequate job of educating parents and families on sportsmanship, 37% of public school superintendents disagreed with this statement. A detailed tabular representation of the responses to this statement is provided in Table 28.

Table 28

Responses to Statement 15: The VHSL does an Adequate Job Educating Parents and Families on the Importance of Sportsmanship.

Statement 15: The VHSL does an adequate job educating parents and families on the importance of sportsmanship.	Agree	Disagree	No Answer
Total Response	55%	31%	14%
High School Principals	50%	34%	16%
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	68%	22%	10%
Public School Superintendents	55%	37%	8%
Public School Board Chairs	41%	31%	28%
Members of Education Committee in Virginia House of Delegates	50%	25%	25%
Members of Education and Health Committee in Virginia Senate	20%	40%	40%

Statement 16: The VHSL does an adequate job educating coaches and sponsors on the importance of sportsmanship.

Seventy percent of participants responded that the VHSL does an adequate job of educating coaches and activity sponsors on the importance of sportsmanship. While 78% of superintendents and 76% of high school athletic/activities directors agreed that the VHSL does an adequate job of educating coaches and sponsors on the importance of sportsmanship, 25% of Delegates and 24% of school board chairs disagreed with this statement. A detailed tabular representation of the responses to this statement is provided in Table 29.

Table 29

Responses to Statement 16: The VHSL does an adequate job educating coaches and sponsors on the importance of sportsmanship.

Statement 16: The VHSL does an adequate job educating coaches and sponsors on the importance of sportsmanship.	Agree	Disagree	No Answer
Total Response	70%	17%	13%
High School Principals	70%	17%	13%
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	76%	15%	9%
Public School Superintendents	78%	17%	5%
Public School Board Chairs	48%	24%	28%
Members of Education Committee in Virginia House of Delegates	50%	25%	25%
Members of Education and Health Committee in Virginia Senate	60%	0%	40%

Statement 17: The VHSL does an adequate job educating game/activity officials on the importance of sportsmanship.

Sixty-nine percent of participants responded that the VHSL does an adequate job of educating game and activity officials on the importance of sportsmanship. While 76% of high school athletic/activities directors and 69% of high school principals agreed that the VHSL does an adequate job of educating officials on the importance of sportsmanship, 24% of superintendents and 20% of school board chairs disagreed with this statement. A detailed tabular representation of the responses to this statement is provided in Table 30.

Table 30

Responses to Statement 17: The VHSL does an Adequate Job Educating Game/Activity Officials on the Importance of Sportsmanship.

Statement 17: The VHSL does an adequate job educating game/activity officials on the importance of sportsmanship.	Agree	Disagree	No Answer
Total Response	69%	18%	13%
High School Principals	69%	18%	13%
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	76%	15%	9%
Public School Superintendents	68%	24%	8%
Public School Board Chairs	52%	20%	28%
Members of Education Committee in Virginia House of Delegates	50%	25%	25%
Members of Education and Health Committee in Virginia Senate	60%	0%	40%

Statement 18: The VHSL should require head varsity coaches/sponsors and head junior varsity coaches/sponsors to take part in a course in coaching education (best coaching practices, safety measures, legal safeguards, etc.) prior to the start of every season.

Sixty-three percent of participants responded that head varsity coaches/sponsors and head junior varsity coaches/sponsors should take part in a coaching education course prior to the start of every season. While 38% of high school athletic/activities directors disagreed with the coaching education course requirement, 75% of superintendents and 68% of school board chairs responded that the coaching education course should be a requirement. A detailed tabular representation of the responses to this statement is provided in Table 31.

Table 31

Responses to Statement 18: The VHSL should Require Head Varsity Coaches/Sponsors and Head Junior Varsity Coaches/Sponsors to Take Part in a Course in Coaching Education (Best Coaching Practices, Safety Measures, Legal Safeguards, Etc.) Prior to the Start of Every Season.

Statement 18: The VHSL should require head varsity coaches/sponsors and head junior varsity coaches/sponsors to take part in a course in coaching education (best coaching practices, safety measures, legal safeguards, etc.) prior to the start of every season.	Agree	Disagree	No Answer
Total Response	63%	25%	13%
High School Principals	65%	22%	13%
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	53%	38%	9%
Public School Superintendents	75%	20%	5%
Public School Board Chairs	68%	4%	28%
Members of Education Committee in Virginia House of Delegates	50%	25%	25%
Members of Education and Health Committee in Virginia Senate	60%	20%	20%

Statement 19: The VHSL does an adequate job regulating the safety of student athletes through their policies and rules.

Seventy-seven percent of participants responded that the VHSL does an adequate job regulating the safety of student-athletes through their policies and rules. While 83% of superintendents and 79% of athletic/activities directors responded that the VHSL does an adequate job in regulating the safety of student-athletes through their policies and rules, 13% of school board chairs responded that they disagree with this statement. Additionally, 13% of survey participants did not answer this question. A detailed tabular representation of the responses to this statement is provided in Table 32.

Table 32

Responses to Statement 19: The VHSL does an adequate job regulating the safety of student athletes through their policies and rules.

Statement 19: The VHSL does an adequate job regulating the safety of student athletes through their policies and rules.	Agree	Disagree	No Answer
Total Response	77%	10%	13%
High School Principals	78%	10%	12%
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	79%	11%	10%
Public School Superintendents	83%	8%	9%
Public School Board Chairs	59%	13%	28%
Members of Education Committee in Virginia House of Delegates	50%	0%	50%
Members of Education and Health Committee in Virginia Senate	80%	0%	20%

Statement 20: If I were to change one thing about the VHSL, it would be:

When survey participants were requested to identify the one aspect they would change about the VHSL, the responses varied. While the two main themes identified from the 208 open-ended responses received pertained to the classification/redistricting of VHSL member schools, other topics that received multiple responses pertained to the VHSL website, communication, and the organization of the VHSL Executive Committee. Additionally, school board chairs responded that they would make changes to the VHSL football playoff system and game officials. Displayed in Table 33 is the number of responses to this statement and the main themes identified by each responding group. A detailed representation displaying all of the responses to this statement is provided in Appendix E.

Table 33

Responses to Statement 20: If I were to Change One Thing about the VHSL, it would be:

Groups	Number of Responses	Main Themes of Responses
High School Principals	73	Alignment of Schools, VHSL Website
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	71	Alignment of Schools, Communication, VHSL Website
Public School Superintendents	43	Alignment of Schools, Organization of Executive Committee
Public School Board Chairs	18	Alignment of Schools, Game Officials, Football Playoff System
Virginia Delegates and Senators	3	Home-schooled Students Participation, Cost of Games, Activities Getting More Attention
Total	208	

Statement 21: The biggest issue facing the VHSL over the next 5 years will be:

Survey participants were requested to identify the biggest issues the VHSL would face over the next 5 years. The main theme identified from the 216 responses pertained to home-schooled students participating in VHSL athletics and activities. A major theme identified in the responses from high school principals pertained to policies regarding transgender students, and both athletic/activities directors and superintendents identified the financial model of the VHSL as an issue facing the VHSL over the next 5 years. Displayed in Table 34 is the number of responses to this statement and the main themes identified by each responding group. A detailed representation displaying all of the responses to this statement is provided in Appendix F.

Table 34

Responses to Statement 21: The Biggest Issue Facing the VHSL over the Next 5 years will be:

Groups	Number of Responses	Main Themes of Responses
High School Principals	75	Home-schooled Student Participation, Private School Participation, Transgender Students Policies
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	76	Home-schooled Student Participation, VHSL Financial Model
Public School Superintendents	45	Home-schooled Student Participation, Private School Participation, VHSL Financial Model
Public School Board Chairs	18	Home-schooled Student Participation, Private School Participation
Virginia Delegates and Senators	2	Home-schooled Students Participation, VHSL Financial Model
Total	216	

Statement 22: The biggest issue facing the VHSL over the next 10 years will be:

Survey participants were requested to identify the biggest issues facing the VHSL over the next 10 years. The main themes identified from the 192 responses pertained to the financial model of the VHSL and home-schooled students participating in VHSL athletics and activities. These main themes were consistent in the responses from high school principals, athletic/activities directors, superintendents, and school board chairs. Additional themes from the responses are private school participation, concussions, policies regarding transgender students, and classification of VHSL member schools. Displayed in Table 35 is the number of responses to this statement and the main themes identified by each responding group. A detailed representation displaying all of the responses to this statement is provided in Appendix G.

Table 35

Responses to Statement 22: The Biggest Issue Facing the VHSL Over the Next 10 Years will be:

Groups	Number of Responses	Main Themes of Responses
High School Principals	68	VHSL Financial Model, Home-schooled Student Participation
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	68	VHSL Financial Model, Home-schooled Student Participation
Public School Superintendents	38	VHSL Financial Model, Home-schooled Student Participation
Public School Board Chairs	16	VHSL Financial Model, Home-schooled Student Participation
Virginia Delegates and Senators	2	Home-schooled Student Participation, Concussions
Total	192	

Question 4: The VHSL has been asked previously by individuals to be ‘more transparent’ and ‘better communicators.’ If you agree with the need for the VHSL to be ‘more transparent’ and ‘better communicators,’ what specifically should the VHSL do to accomplish this?

The final question of the survey instrument addressed the topic of transparency, and what the VHSL could do to become more transparent. The main themes identified from the 157 responses pertained to increased communication through the VHSL website, VHSL social media feeds, VHSL participation and presence at region and state meetings, VHSL newsletters, and VHSL financial transparency. Displayed in Table 36 is the number of responses to this question and the main themes identified by each responding group. A detailed representation displaying all of the responses to this question is provided in Appendix H.

Table 36

Responses To Question 4: The VHSL has been Asked Previously by Individuals to be ‘More Transparent’ and ‘Better Communicators.’ if you Agree with the Need for the VHSL to be ‘More Transparent’ and ‘Better Communicators,’ what Specifically should the VHSL do to Accomplish this?

Groups	Number of Responses	Main Themes of Responses
High School Principals	55	Social Media Usage, VHSL Website, VHSL Doing a Good Job
High School Athletic/Activities Directors	52	VHSL Doing a Good Job, Social Media Usage, VHSL Website
Public School Superintendents	35	VHSL Doing a Good Job, VHSL Website
Public School Board Chairs	13	VHSL Website, Social Media Usage, Newsletter
Virginia Delegates and Senators	2	Restructure VHSL
Total	157	

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS

Presented in Chapter 5 are the research questions and the related conclusions, along with discussion on the limitations and problems with this study. Additionally, implications and recommendations for future research are discussed in this chapter.

Research Questions and Main Findings of the Study

The purpose of this study was to answer the following questions:

1. How do high school principals, division superintendents, school board chairs, members of Virginia House of Delegates and Virginia Senate, and high school athletic/activity directors perceive the authority of the VHSL?
2. What are the opinions of high school principals, division superintendents, and school board chairs, members of Virginia House of Delegates and Virginia Senate, and high school athletic/activities directors concerning the governance of the VHSL?
3. Are high school principals, division superintendents, school board chairs, members of Virginia House of Delegates and Virginia Senate, and high school athletic/activities directors satisfied with the performance of the VHSL?
 - a. What is the source of any dissatisfaction that does exist?
 - b. How can the dissatisfaction be reduced or resolved?
4. How do the results of the *Polakiewicz Study* compare to the results obtained in this study?
5. Do the same groups surveyed in the two studies express similar concerns?
6. Do the groups surveyed in this study raise concerns not identified by the *Polakiewicz Study*?

All of the above research questions are presented below including a discussion of the relevant study results.

1. How do high school principals, division superintendents, school board chairs, members of Virginia House of Delegates and Virginia Senate, and high school athletic/activity directors perceive the authority of the VHSL?

The majority of participants responded that the VHSL should have the authority to impose periods of probation on coaches and sponsors, member schools and participants (73%), and prohibit the participation of coaches and sponsors, member schools, and participants (70%). The survey results suggest that the authority of the VHSL to perform such duties is supported by the majority of the groups that participated in this study.

In addition to supporting the authority of the VHSL to impose periods of probation and the authority to prohibit participation, the majority of participants (59%) responded that the VHSL currently imposes penalties that are appropriate. The survey results also suggest that the VHSL could impose stronger penalties, as 18% of participants responded that the VHSL imposes penalties that are lenient. The survey results suggest that the penalties imposed by the VHSL are supported by the groups that participated in this study.

2. What are the opinions of high school principals, division superintendents, and school board chairs, members of Virginia House of Delegates and Virginia Senate, and high school athletic/activities directors concerning the governance of the VHSL?

The survey results suggest that the VHSL should consider changing the way they hear appeals to decisions or disciplinary action taken by the VHSL. When survey participants were requested to identify which group should hear VHSL appeals, participants responded that an impartial fact-finding panel (46%) or an outside agency established by the Virginia Department of Education (10%) should have this responsibility. In conclusion, a combined 56% of survey participants responded that appeals should be heard agencies other than the VHSL.

Additionally, the survey results suggest that the VHSL should do more in regards to educating parents on high school athletics and activities. With 67% of participants responding that the VHSL should do more to educate parents, the VHSL should consider an education initiative for the parents and families of the students participating in VHSL athletics and activities.

In contrast, the majority of participants responded that the VHSL is doing an adequate job in educating students (66%), parents (62%), coaches (72%) and officials (65%) on the topic of concussions. Also, the majority of participants responded that the VHSL is doing an adequate job in educating students (65%), parents (55%), coaches (70%) and officials (69%) on the importance of sportsmanship.

The majority of participants responded that the VHSL should do more to oversee and regulate officials/referees and their associations (69%). The survey results also suggest that the VHSL should consider developing a plan to oversee game officials and their associations.

The majority of participants responded that the VHSL should require head varsity and head junior varsity coaches participate in a coaching education course prior to the beginning of every season (63%). The survey results suggest that the VHSL should consider making a coaching education class an annual requirement for all head varsity and head junior varsity coaches.

The majority of participants responded that the VHSL does an adequate job regulating the safety of student-athletes through their policies and rules (77%). The survey results suggest that there is support for the current safety initiatives, policies, and rules that the VHSL has established and implemented.

The majority of participants responded that home-schooled students should not be able to participate in athletics and activities at member schools in the areas where they live (78%). The only group that participated in this study that viewed this differently was Virginia legislators, where five out of nine Delegates and Senators (55%) responded that home-schooled students should be able to participate. The survey results suggest that legislation regarding home-schooled student participation should be monitored closely by the VHSL and Virginia educators in the future.

The majority of participants responded that the VHSL should provide athletics and activities for students in order to regulate initiatives set forth by the Virginia Department of Education (Civic Engagement, Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Collaboration, and Communication) (52%). However, 34% of participants responding that the VHSL should not provide athletics and activities that support VDOE initiatives. The survey results suggest that providing VHSL athletics and activities for students in order to regulate initiatives set forth by the VDOE requires further consideration.

3. Are high school principals, division superintendents, school board chairs, members of Virginia House of Delegates and Virginia Senate, and high school athletic/activities directors satisfied with the performance of the VHSL?
 - a. What is the source of any dissatisfaction that does exist?
 - b. How can the dissatisfaction be reduced or resolved?

The majority of participants responded that they are satisfied with the VHSL's administration of athletics (79%). Additionally, survey participants responded that they would assign the VHSL a grade of 'A--excellent' (9%) or 'B--above average' (54%) when evaluating the performance of the VHSL. The survey results suggest that there is satisfaction with how the VHSL is performing.

Survey participants responded that they received '0' (21%) or '1-5' (50%) complaints concerning the VHSL during the previous school year. The survey results suggest that not only are participants satisfied with the performance of the VHSL, but they also suggest that communities and constituents associated with the participants are satisfied with the performance of the VHSL.

Survey participants also had the opportunity to answer an open-ended question that dealt with any possible suggested changes to the VHSL. Two of the major themes that developed from the survey responses pertained to the alignment/classification of schools and the quality of the VHSL website. The survey results suggest that there are concerns with how high schools are classified and aligned by the VHSL and the VHSL should consider a clear and consistent alignment model. The survey results also suggest considering enhancements to the VHSL website to make it more user-friendly.

4. How do the results of the *Polakiewicz Study* compare to the results obtained in this study?

During the Polakiewicz study, there were 194 survey participants (Polakiewicz, 1985). For this study, there were 419 participants. The response rate for the Polakiewicz study was higher (78.8%) than this current study (45%) (Polakiewicz, 1985). Additionally, this study included high school athletic/activity directors, a group that did not participate in the Polakiewicz study. This study had more high school principals (148) and public school superintendents (76) participating in comparison to the number of high school principals (86) and public school superintendents (42) who participated in the Polakiewicz study (Polakiewicz, 1985). Both studies had similar numbers of public school board chairs participating, with 45 school board chairs participating in the Polakiewicz study and 46 school board chairs participating in this current study (Polakiewicz, 1985). Additionally, more Virginia legislators participated in the

Polakiewicz study (21) when compared to the number of Virginia legislators who participated in this study (9) (Polakiewicz, 1985).

A larger percentage of survey participants in the Polakiewicz study (87.6%) responded that the VHSL should have the authority to impose a period of probation upon coaches, member schools, and participants when compared to the survey results of this current study (73%) (Polakiewicz, 1985). Additionally, a larger percentage of survey participants responded that the VHSL should have the authority to prohibit the participation of coaches, member schools, and participants in the Polakiewicz study (79.9%) when compared to this current study (70%) (Polakiewicz, 1985).

The majority of participants responded in the Polakiewicz study (57.2%) and this current study (59%) that the VHSL imposes penalties that are appropriate (Polakiewicz, 1985). Additionally, high school principals from the Polakiewicz study (67.4%) and high school principals from this current study (67%) responded that the VHSL imposes penalties that are appropriate (Polakiewicz, 1985).

The results of this current study suggest that the VHSL should consider either an outside agency established by the Virginia Department of Education (10%) or an impartial fact-finding panel (46%) to hear appeals on VHSL decisions or disciplinary action. Similarly, in the Polakiewicz study, participants responded that an outside VDOE agency (14.4%) or an impartial fact-finding panel (49%) should hear VHSL appeals (Polakiewicz, 1985).

In regards to complaints about the VHSL, 50% of survey participants received '1-5' complaints concerning the VHSL during their last school year. In comparison, only 32.5% of survey participants in the Polakiewicz study reported receiving '1-5' complaints concerning the VHSL during their previous school year (Polakiewicz, 1985). Additionally, 57.2% of participants responded that they received '0' complaints concerning the VHSL during the last school year in the Polakiewicz study, while 21% of participants responded that they received '0' complaints for this study (Polakiewicz, 1985). The survey results suggest that while there is satisfaction with how the VHSL is performing, the number of complaints received by participants has increased when compared to the Polakiewicz study.

The majority of participants in the Polakiewicz study responded that they were satisfied with the VHSL's administration of athletics (76.3%), while 79% of participants responded that they were satisfied with the VHSL's administration of athletics in this study (Polakiewicz, 1985).

The survey results suggest that satisfaction with the VHSL's administration of athletics has increased when compared to the Polakiewicz study.

In regards to the performance of the VHSL, 23.2% of participants from the Polakiewicz study assigned the VHSL a performance grade of 'A--excellent', while only 9% of the survey participants from this current study assigned the VHSL the same grade (Polakiewicz, 1985). A combined 70.1% of participants from the Polakiewicz study assigned performance grades of 'A--excellent' or 'B--above average' to the VHSL, and a combined 63% of participants from this study assigned the same grades (Polakiewicz, 1985). The survey results suggest that impressions regarding the performance of the VHSL are down slightly, but still favorable, when compared to the Polakiewicz study.

5. Do the same groups surveyed in the two studies express similar concerns?

When examining the statements and questions used from the Polakiewicz study for this study, the results of both surveys suggest that the only similar concern expressed by the participants in both studies is the VHSL appeals process. The survey results suggest that the VHSL should consider using an impartial fact-finding panel or an outside agency established by the VDOE to hear VHSL appeals.

6. Do the groups surveyed in this study raise concerns not identified by the *Polakiewicz Study*?

Aside from the concerns expressed previously by participants in this chapter, participants in this study were asked to identify potential issues that the VHSL may face over the next five or ten years. In regards to potential issues the VHSL may face over the next five years, the participants identified the following main themes: home-schooled students participating in VHSL athletics and activities, private school participation in VHSL athletics and activities, the financial model of the VHSL, and transgender student policies. Additionally, participants were asked to identify potential issues facing the VHSL over the next ten years. The participants identified two major issues, the financial model of the VHSL and home-schooled students participating in VHSL athletics and activities. The survey results suggest that participants are concerned about the long-term financial future of the VHSL, and concerned about how the VHSL will deal with home-schooled students in the future.

Lastly, survey participants were requested to give the VHSL recommendations on how they could be more transparent. The survey results suggest that the VSHL could be more transparent if they focused on social media use and an improved VHSL website. The responses suggest that utilizing different/enhanced communication methods would improve their level of transparency.

Limitations

While this study involved using only some of the survey questions from the Polakiewicz study and examining some current issues facing the VHSL, it did not address all of the current issues facing the VHSL. For example, survey questions pertaining to issues such as transgender student policies and the financial model of the VHSL were not addressed in this survey. This study does not include an extensive search of state board rules and regulations, state department regulations, or state athletic association handbooks. This study was limited to the review and analysis of selected court cases in Virginia and other states concerning the Virginia High School League and several other state athletic associations respectively. This study was also limited to a review of state athletic associations in close geographical proximity to Virginia, rather than a review of all associations (Polakiewicz, p. 34). Additionally, the study was limited to the rules and regulations of the VHSL, as they appeared in the 2016-2017 VHSL Handbook.

Problems

A problem with this current study was the low response rate by Virginia legislators, as only nine out of 37 (24%) Delegates and Senators who received the survey participated. Additionally, only 46 out of 132 public school board chairs (34.8%) participated in this survey. Both response rates fell below the desired 40% response rate for this study.

Another problem with this study was the number of participants who chose not to answer individual questions on the survey. The range of non-responders on survey questions by participants varies from 5% to 14% on individual questions, with non-response rates even greater on individual questions by the groups making up the survey population.

Implications

From the conclusions discussed previously in this chapter, several implications followed and resulted in the following observations and suggestions:

- The VHSL should consider establishing a system to oversee athletic/activity officials and their associations.
- The VHSL should consider utilizing independent panels for their appeals process.
- The VHSL should consider analyzing their current financial model.
- The VHSL should consider changes to their website and utilization of social media feeds to improve and enhance communication.
- The VHSL should consider a parent education program regarding interscholastic athletics and activities.
- The VHSL should consider a coaching education training program that can be utilized annually.
- The VHSL should consider a consistent and effective alignment model for member schools.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research into the VHSL, and other state athletic associations, might focus in particular on the following areas based specifically on the results of this study:

- Research the financial model of the VHSL to determine if it is a sound fiscal program. -Research the financial model of the VHSL Foundation to determine if it is a sound fiscal program.
- Investigation of independent panels utilized for purposes of hearing appeals.
- Study the current alignment of VHSL member schools to see if it is appropriate for member schools.

Additionally, after a review of literature and relevant court cases, it is also suggested that future research on the VHSL and other state athletic associations could focus on the following areas:

- Investigation of student-athlete academic eligibility requirements in school systems that vary from the academic eligibility requirements set by their state athletic association.
- Comparative analysis of financial models of similar state athletic associations.
- Comparative analysis of appeals processes used by similar state athletic associations.
- Investigation of the VHSL Executive Committee and similar committees in other state athletic associations.

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APPENDIX A
PERMISSION TO USE INFORMATION

Administration

Warren County Schools
109 Cousin Lucy's Lane
Post Office Box 110
Warrenton, North Carolina 27589
(252) 257-3184 Fax (252) 257-5357

September 18, 2015

Dear Scott,

Please accept this letter as written permission to replicate my dissertation study 'A legal and descriptive analysis of the authority, governance, and performance of the VHSL, Inc.' that was published in 1985.

I understand that purpose of the study is to gauge feedback from stakeholders in Virginia on issues pertaining to the Virginia High School League since the 1985 study. In addition to the replicated survey, an examination of recent legal cases and state legislature involving the Virginia High School League will be completed. The proposed study will focus on recent court cases and policy changes regarding topics such as Eligibility, Private School Participation, Liability, and the Age Rule.

Additionally, the study will explore topics that will impact the VHSL in the immediate future, such as Realignment and Homeschool Student Participation. While the survey questions will provide a comparison to the results from 1985, this study will also describe the 'current state' of the Virginia High School League. Ultimately, this replicated study will provide a summary of issues, thoughts and perceptions regarding the performance of the VHSL.

I support your decision to replicate this study as you work towards earning your doctoral degree at Virginia Tech.

Respectfully,



Dr. Frank Polakiewicz

APPENDIX B
LETTER REQUESTING PARTICIPATION

An Analysis of the Performance, Governance, and Authority of the Virginia High School League, Inc.

November 29, 2016

Dear _____,

My name is Scott Jefferies, and I am a Doctoral student in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Department at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. I am conducting a research study to analyze the performance, governance, and authority of the Virginia High School League, Inc. The motivation for this study is from a previous study completed in 1985, titled 'A Legal and Descriptive Analysis of the Authority, Governance and Performance of the Virginia High School League, Inc.' by Dr. Frank J. Polakiewicz.

This study involves a survey of 26 questions. It will take you approximately 15 minutes to complete. If you decide to participate in the study, please complete the survey and place in the return envelope. You can also access the survey through the link below:

<https://survey.vt.edu/survey/entry.jsp?id=1479494816669>

Completion and submission of the survey will be considered your consent to participate. If you do not wish to participate, simply discard this message.

There are no more than minimum risks to participate in this study. There are no major benefits to you for your participation, but a potential benefit may be the gathering of information necessary for enlightened decision-making concerning the administration of athletics and activities in Virginia high schools.

Records of information that you provide for the research study and your personally identifying information (name or other characteristics) will not be linked in any way. It will not be possible to identify you as the person who provided any specific information for the study.

If you have any questions concerning this research study, please call me at my number listed below, or Dr. David Alexander, professor of education specializing in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies for Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, at (540)231-9723.

This research has been approved the Institutional Review Board of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact Dr. David M. Moore, the Chair of Institutional Review Board, (540)231-4991.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,



Scott Jefferies
scottj77@vt.edu
(540)817-0726

APPENDIX C
FOLLOW-UP LETTER REQUESTING PARTICIPATION

An Analysis of the Performance, Governance, and Authority of the Virginia High School League, Inc.

December 8, 2016

Good afternoon,

This letter serves as a follow-up notice to a message that was sent to you approximately two weeks ago, regarding a research study that I am conducting to analyze the performance, governance, and authority of the Virginia High School League, Inc.

This study involves a survey of 27 questions. It will take you approximately 15 minutes to complete. If you decide to participate in the study, please access the survey through the link below:

<https://survey.vt.edu/survey/entry.jsp?id=1479494816669>

Completion and submission of the survey will be considered your consent to participate. If you do not wish to participate, simply discard this message.

There are no more than minimum risks to participate in this study. There are no major benefits to you for your participation, but a potential benefit may be the gathering of information necessary for enlightened decision-making concerning the administration of athletics and activities in Virginia high schools.

Records of information that you provide for the research study and your personally identifying information (name or other characteristics) will not be linked in any way. It will not be possible to identify you as the person who provided any specific information for the study.

If you have any questions concerning this research study, please call me at my number listed below, or Dr. David Alexander, professor of education specializing in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies for Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, at [\(540\)231-9723](tel:5402319723).

This research has been approved the Institutional Review Board of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact Dr. David M. Moore, the Chair of Institutional Review Board, [\(540\)231-4991](tel:5402314991).

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,



Scott Jefferies
scottj77@vt.edu
(540)817-0726

APPENDIX D
SURVEY

Survey

Thank you for your time and cooperation. Completion and submission of the survey will be considered your consent to participate. If you do not wish to participate, simply close this window. There are no more than minimum risks to participate in this study. There are no major benefits to you for your participation, but a potential benefit may be the gathering of information necessary for enlightened decision-making concerning the administration of athletics and activities in Virginia high schools. Do you agree with the above statements, and wish to move on to the survey questions?

- (1) YES (2) NO

1. What is your current leadership role?

- (A) HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL
(B) ATHLETIC/ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR
(C) SUPERINTENDENT
(D) SCHOOL BOARD CHAIR
(E) MEMBER OF VIRGINIA HOUSE OF DELEGATES
(F) MEMBER OF VIRGINIA SENATE

Survey Statements/Questions used in the 1985 Study:

2. The VHSL should have the authority to impose a period of probation upon (may select more than one):

- (1) COACHES/SPONSORS (2) MEMBER SCHOOLS (3) PARTICIPANTS
(4) ALL OF THE ABOVE (5) NONE OF THE ABOVE

3. The VHSL should have the authority to prohibit the participation of (may select more than one):

- (1) COACHES/SPONSORS (2) MEMBER SCHOOLS (3) PARTICIPANTS
(4) ALL OF THE ABOVE (5) NONE OF THE ABOVE

4. Generally, the VHSL imposes penalties which are:

- (1) LENIENT (2) APPROPRIATE (3) HARSH (4) I DON'T KNOW

5. If a member school, participant, or coach wishes to appeal a decision or disciplinary action of the

VHSL, who should hear the final appeal?

- (1) A PANEL/COMMITTEE SELECTED BY THE VHSL
- (2) AN OUTSIDE AGENCY ESTABLISHED BY THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
- (3) AN IMPARTIAL FACTFINDING PANEL (4) OTHER

6. How many complaints did you receive last school year concerning the VHSL?

- (1) 0 (2) 1-5 (3) 6-10 (4) 11-20 (5) 20+

7. I am satisfied with the VHSL's administration of athletics.

- (1) AGREE (2) DISAGREE

8. If I were to evaluate the VHSL on its performance, I would assign the following grade:

- (1) A EXCELLENT (2) B ABOVE AVERAGE (3) C AVERAGE
- (4) D BELOW AVERAGE (5) F FAILING

New Survey Statements/Questions:

9. The VHSL should do more to educate parents regarding high school athletics and activities.

- (1) AGREE (2) DISAGREE

10. The VHSL should do more to oversee and regulate athletic officials/referees and athletic officials'/referees' associations.

- (1) AGREE (2) DISAGREE

11. The VHSL should provide athletics and activities for students in order to regulate initiatives set forth by the Virginia Department of Education (Civic Engagement, Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Collaboration, and Communication).

- (1) AGREE (2) DISAGREE

12. The VHSL does an adequate job educating students on concerns regarding concussions.

- (1) AGREE (2) DISAGREE

13. The VHSL does an adequate job educating parents and families on concerns regarding concussions.

- (1) AGREE (2) DISAGREE

14. The VHSL does an adequate job educating coaches and activity sponsors on concerns regarding concussions.

(1) AGREE (2) DISAGREE

15. The VHSL does an adequate job educating game/activity officials on concerns regarding concussions.

(1) AGREE (2) DISAGREE

16. I believe that homeschooled students should be able to participate in athletics and activities at VHSL Member Schools in the areas where they reside.

(1) AGREE (2) DISAGREE

17. The VHSL does an adequate job educating students on the importance of sportsmanship.

(1) AGREE (2) DISAGREE

18. The VHSL does an adequate job educating parents and families on the importance of sportsmanship.

(1) AGREE (2) DISAGREE

19. The VHSL does an adequate job educating coaches and sponsors on the importance of sportsmanship.

(1) AGREE (2) DISAGREE

20. The VHSL does an adequate job educating game/activity officials on the importance of sportsmanship.

(1) AGREE (2) DISAGREE

21. The VHSL should require head varsity coaches/sponsors and head junior varsity coaches/sponsors to take part in a course in coaching education (best coaching practices, safety measures, legal safeguards, etc.) prior to the start of every season.

(1) AGREE (2) DISAGREE

22. The VHSL does an adequate job of regulating the safety of student athletes through their policies and rules.

(1) AGREE (2) DISAGREE

Open-ended Questions:

23. If I were to change one thing about the VHSL, it would be:

24. The biggest issue facing the VHSL over the next 5 years will be:

25. The biggest issue facing the VHSL over the next 10 years will be:

26. The VHSL has been asked previously by individuals to be ‘more transparent’ and ‘better communicators’. If you agree with the need for the VHSL to be ‘more transparent’ and ‘better communicators’, what specifically should the VHSL do to accomplish this?

APPENDIX E
QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES TO NUMBER 23

23: If I were to change one thing about the VHSL, it would be:

High School Principals (73 Total Responses)

Alignment (districts/regions)
Alignment format change instituted which eliminated districts and created conferences was a fiasco. This was a top down decision and the best interest of students was a low priority. The institution of this was done under "Emergency Legislation", with no opportunity for dialogue among member schools as to the logistics prior. The entry of Liberty Christian was done in the same manner, "Emergency Legislation" with no prep time for member schools to consider all of the facts.
Allowing schools who host Regional/State events to keep a portion of the gate. Example: A school that hosts a state semi-final football game only gets expenses reimbursed while the remainder of the \$10/person ticket all goes to the VHSL. The schools should be allowed to keep at least 1/3 of the gate.
Assign interested administration to oversee each sport in order to provide direction and vested governance in the decision making process that is specifically tasked with making annual reviews and proposals for improvements.
Assistance in supporting efforts related to the sportsmanship of parents/activity attendees/observers/fans.
Be more transparent and put an end to emergency legislation.
Better communication through out [sic] the entire state. For ex: maybe an office in Southwest Virginia.
Classification
classification
Communication and Transparency
Communication with Member Schools

Educate - especially new - principals about the purpose of the VHSL: that it is an organization made up of ALL of Virginia's HS principals. VHSL governance is administered by League staff but the principals ARE the VHSL.
Educating administrators on issues.
Eliminate the provision allowing emergency legislation
Executive committee
Executive Committee. More seats at the table.
Gender equity
Go back to our former districts.
Handbook- rules and regulations are cumbersome.
How they decide schools that comprise a conference. There are schools that must travel 3-4 hours to play another school.
How we discuss structural changes to the organization. I feel that a lot of the change comes through a small group decision process, but it appears the latest move to make change is taking a different route to insure that member schools have an opportunity to voice concern.
I think the VHSL Staff does a good job of creating fair rules of play. The enforcement of the rules is very difficult without an investigative staff and the expectation that schools will self report [sic]. Individuals from schools are not willing to turn in "friends and neighbors" so many rules are ignored. I would like to see some form of investigative staff so that the field is really leveled for all.
I think the VHSL website needs to have better navigation. There are times when I cannot find what I need on the website. Administrator pages need to be more comprehensive. The website is just not very good...
Improve running of Olympic sports
It seems as if the leadership of regions/conferences always involves the same people- ones who are outspoken on certain issues.
It would be a part of VRS in order to recruit more educators into leadership positions.
Keep a chairman of the exe comm for the league for 2 year term.
Lower the cost of tournaments - shorten travel... Our teams and schools cannot afford the competition...

Mandatory training for athletic directors, coaches and administrators on fiscal responsibility, fund raising and effective coaching practices. The VHSL should look at developing "teaching" lessons for coaches on building a team culture, communicating with players and communicating with parents. With so many coaches that are no longer teachers, there is a gap in the art of education and coaching for many in the profession.
More events in which the VHSL leadership meet/interact with parents and athletes - build positive relationships - should not just be seen as the legislative authority.
More inclusion of students with special needs.
More up to date website Governance will have to change because of new classification / region structure
Not much. Doing a great job.
not sure
nothing
Nothing at this time.
Parent education about sportsmanship.
Realignment
Regulate the VHSL Activities in the same manner as VHSL Sports.
Representation for Decision making is based on one vote for one school. Schools with large student populations therefore are not equitably represented and even though they represent many more students receive the same vote as a school with a very small population.
Step up and get involved in district decisions instead of leaving that to a select committee. If the VHSL is truly about kids and participation then get involved and work with schools to make the hard decisions instead of relying on certain committee with members that make pacts among each other.
Stop dividing the 5A and 6A and create a state championship that actually means something. Continuing to water down the competition by subdivisions has created region and state championships that do not mean anything.
Stop messing around with the conference and region alignments. It seems that things are always changing. Once a change is made, the VHSL is looking for a way to amend the changes before they even get started with the new procedures.

That they visit more schools and not just the large ones.
That they would make more definitive decisions concerning classifications. Too much of the process is left up to the membership which, naturally, is more concerned with their own individual needs. Classifications, after a broad plan is agreed upon by the memberships, should be clearly and evenly distributed in the best interest of all schools.
The alignment and regions
The appeal process
The governance structure as associated with major decision making. The selection of regions, transportation and funding implications have not been well managed recently.
The make-up of conferences and teams advancing in the playoffs after being defeated.
The makeup of the exec committee. So secretive
The organization of the executive committee. More leaders involved
the state tournament system for 1A schools
The use of the executive committee to enact sweeping emergency legislation.
The VHSL already has a fair and proper means to change any policy.
The VHSL Foundation
The VHSL should not accept adequate to be acceptable when it comes to concussions. I believe the VHSL does a good job (above adequate) in maintaining a positive sportsmanship athletic game.
The way the Charlottesville office is perceived
The website and technology.
The website is difficult to navigate
their image to let people know they are not in the "Ivory Tower". That schools ae the VHSL and the VHSL is the schools.
Their website
Their website
Their website. It needs a major overhaul.
There should be a process of appeals that can be heard by a fact-finding panel.
They need to do a better job educating principals before votes occur by discussing options and allowing for discussion. They have principals vote in the large meetings and it seems rushed

and all alternatives are not fully explained. Not all principals are completely aware of the options available.
To educate Principals that we are the VHSL! We make policy not the League Staff!
To stop being run like a business. Benefit games are a joke especially since they are taking 1/3 of the gate for doing absolutely nothing.
Too many groups!
Transfer regulations
VHSL needs to define its boundaries and communicate these boundaries with member schools. VHSL simply needs better management. Very clearly, it has been disorganized for a long time. With no real recourse for member schools to voice concerns, or change leadership. Consistency of application or rules, clarity of rules and procedures and policies is a significant problem. It's a big organization. Bureaucracies will always face criticism. School districts face them all the time. But, you can't use that as an excuse. And, the VHSL hasn't even tried, from my perspective, to manage itself or it's members.
VHSL needs to lead and take authority away from individual districts and regions, they need to establish the way teams make it to post season play, or not. Also, officials should be under direct control of VHSL and not their association.
Website. It is so difficult to navigate
Work to create a consistency in regional play. This year moving back to districts instead of conferences created issues on how schools were going to schedule regional tournaments (all-in verses a limited number of teams). The all-in model limits the importance of districts to little more than a scheduling body. It also creates issues in multi-level districts (districts with multiple classifications and regional enrollments) One region is doing one thing and another region is doing something else. With tournaments, districts have difficult time raising money to cover trophies and all-district recognition.

High School Athletic/Activities Directors (71 Total Responses)

A longer cycle before making changes, such as the experiment with conferences and then switching to regions.
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Add More staff , I would like to see them do ore but I think its [sic] impossible if we don't give them more employees
Add more staffing to assist with the growing needs of multiple areas.
Alignment
All state selection process.
Allow public and private schools from out of state to count as part of the power rating system, in some way.
Assistant Directors need to be more accessible to athletic directors. Only Tom Dolan responds.
At time it feels like the member schools work for the VHSL and not the other way around. The VHSL exists because of the member schools.
Be tougher on rules governing transfers. too many loopholes
Budget planning to prepare for losses for tournaments.
Classification of schools
Consideration of individual and unique situations within the state. There are huge hardships within the schools because of travel.
Current Classification system. We should go back to the 3 class system with Division I and II in Single A and Division III and IV in Double A.
District alignments
do a better job of officials education
Do a better job with the website. Things are hard to find and it's not very user friendly.
Everything
Executive Committee not able to override binding decisions made through voting of membership. They should not have the authority to impose their "better judgment" and reverse membership votes.
Fairer in the treatment of all Schools not just the largest.
Give it the power to enforce the rules. One example is that transfer rules are largely ignored. The PIAAA routinely sits high profile athletes for transferring for athletic purposes. I've been in the state for 20+ years and I cannot recall this ever happening. If it has it has been infrequent... Grow a pair.
Go back to 3 classifications and eliminate year round practice rule

Go to four (4) classifications. Stop trying to make the six (6) classification system work, it is too many.
Good ol [sic] boy system
Governance. Now that we have new region alignment, all regions should have one person involved on the executive committee.
Have policy that would provide consistency for all the Regions and Classifications. Scheduling requirements.
Having superintendents on the Executive Committee.
having them regulate tournaments so everyone is doing the same thing
having universal guidelines for conferences - soon to be new sub regions - on how they should qualify for playoffs, so all groups are doing postseason equally.
I am in my 23 year as a High School A.D. and was a Jr. High A.D. for 12 years before then that also went by the VHSL rules and regulations. I believe that the VHSL does a tremendous job in regulating Athletics/Activities and keeping all schools updated on any issues. I believe it is the schools job to pass this info on to its coaches, parents, and fans.
I believe with the change of the director the VHSL will experience a positive change for our membership schools.
IT HAS BEEN DONE WITH THE CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP.
Let the club teams do the year round practicing. Teachers don't want to coach anymore because of the extra commitment. They definitely are not getting paid to coach all year. Only 4 teachers coached out of 24 stipend spots in the fall at my school. We need to end out of season practices. You should only be able to lift weights and do agility work. It will allow the kids to play more than one sport. I see more injuries today than ever before because kids don't get a break. To find middle ground, we could limit practices to 3 or 4 weeks in the off season.
Make the website more user friendly.
Make them be accountable for how regions are ran and for them to establish the same guidelines for every region.
Make them have more guidance about how things are ran and operated and not worried so much about how much money they can make. Have more ownership instead of throwing it off on the regions to decide how things are done ex. playoffs.

More contact with schools. It seems they only contact you if there is a problem.
More direction in how districts/regions/state groups should mesh competition, awards, etc.
More education geared towards athletes/students.
More involvement with how teams qualify for post season tournaments now that there are so many classifications. As it now stands, it is very inconsistent.
More outreach to schools coupled with AD's and Principals
More oversight of officials associations, and make the appeals process go through a 3rd party. Its crazy to me the head of the officials association has to agree to an appeal by a school in order for it to move forward. 9 times out of 10 they are going to support their official.
More structure and guidance.
More structure of post season play regulated from the League down. There should be more consistency of who is in the post season, and how they advance toward a State Championship, coming from the League and driven down to the Regions.
more time in the field andnot [sic] behind a desk
None at this time.
Not have but 4 classifications for state championships.
Nothingness
Over seeing appeals of ejections made by officials.
Provide more direct oversight and directives on how tournaments will run.
provide more guidance when MAJOR change are enacted. ex. the initiation of conferences
Put guidelines to help direct adoption of policies instead leaving it up to localities to figure out best practices.
Recruitment enforcement
Region District Issues
Regulation of recruitment.
Stop being all about the money
Take control of District, Regional & State Level classification. At this time we are regulated to Regional & State levels but we are still in districts that are distributed with different size schools.

That all schools that have students outside of their attendance zone should count 1 1/2 just like LCA has to do.
The limited and difficult access to important information. Support system for newly hired administrators regarding VHSL policy.
The playoff formats for basketball.
The VHSL website
The way schools are classified and regions
The Web site. It's too hard to find the necessary forms needed.
Their involvement in investigating students and their families for eligibility when transferring.
They don't seem to care about the individual needs of school divisions. Numbers are their main concern. They need to be more in tune with small rural schools and the problems they are facing.
They need to take a stronger hand in determining alignment, districts, Regions and state playoff format.
to have a larger role in establishing and regulating polices for new districts and regions. Also to contribute more direction to the organization of the join tournament sports.
transparency
Try stopping recruiting.
Website
Website and handbook, it's very difficult to find information.
While they try to leave governance of things up to districts and regions, they should be more involved in setting deadlines for decisions. Decisions are often a domino affect [sic] and one ends up waiting too late on the decisions from others.

Public School Superintendents (43 Total Responses)

-The need to establish a uniform district / region / state format and stick with it. Too much confusion and expense trying to implement the old versus new jurisdictions.
-The VHSL needs to take a stand with the poor behavior (sportsmanship) of parents and students. School administration is left to mediate and navigate these situations and depending on the nature the School Board, this may or may not be supported locally [sic].

Add more non-athletic competitions
An out-of-season practice rule needs to be established in order to ensure the safety and well being [sic] of student athletes.
Current classification system
districts and divisions
Establish off-site offices in various parts of the state as an easy access point to collect feedback and deal with other relevant issues
Excellent organization!
Governance: Make the EC smaller and establish a larger/different advisory committee to the the [sic] EC.
Improve their financial status and support local schools
Increase their ability to provide parent workshops by partnering with them.
It has already happened. A change in leadership was desperately needed and Billy Haun is going to be great! The "everyone makes the playoffs" was stupid, so the realignment should help. Also, hopefully now that new leadership is in place, the VHSL will revisit/re-institute rules regarding out of season practice. Students should be encouraged to participate in as many activities as necessary, not feel a pull to be a one-sport athlete.
Leadership and it has already transpired.
Making less travel between teams when playing as students lose learning time leaving school and fuel costs and driver costs increase
management of funds to prepare for shortfalls
Mandatory training for all coaches and sponsors prior to assuming that role.
Members of the executive committee
More consideration to the distance that schools must travel in order to compete according to the different level of I, II, III, etc [sic]
More professional development for coaches in how to deescalate a situation with community members and/or parents.
More regulatory control and oversight.
n/a
nothing

Organize districts so that it is not up to Athletic Directors to decide who they will/will not play.
Redistricting has been an issue, but I think VHSL has attempted to do this as fairly as could be done.
Reduce membership fees.
Regulate Officials throughout the state.
Six divisions is too many and diminishes the achievement of earning a "state championship." As a result, way too many schools qualify for post-season tournaments, which also serves to make regular season performance less important.
Something needs to be done to address the large number of students playing at schools under false address. VHSL also needs to address what appears to be a large disparity in football competition competitiveness.
State Tournament destination inflexibility. Can affect schools negatively during seasons of inclement weather.
Stop the cross over at the final 4 level. East final 2 play against west final 2. Too much travel for final 4 games in 1A and 2A. A small stipend needs to be given to teams playing in the final 4, \$5,000.
The amount of travel for conference contests.
The Classification System
the executive committee and how it is made up
The location of state tournament events should be moved to areas that are more centrally located. The VHSL often operates as if the state ends at Roanoke when making these decisions.
The VHSL shall provide a venue for schools to file complaints concerning officials.
There needs to be an increased level of involvement of the VHSL in the training and oversight of division coaching staffs. Additionally, there needs to be consistency in the districts and approaches to each district/division for fairness and affordability.
They need to become better educators of stakeholders for new practices and polices [sic].
to reduce the expenses on schools for athletic/academic events.
Transfer eligibility enforcement

Understand the impact of budgets concerns and the cost of implementing a variety of programs.
Unsure
VHSL should change their focus away from a revenue producing organization to an organization that benefits students and schools in a positive manner.
With the changing of the classifications, get improved guidance on governance.

Public School Board Chairs (18 Total Responses)

Have more items brought to the large assembly in instead of important decisions always going to the governing committee....what ever happened to one school one vote?
Have more items brought to the large assembly in instead of important decisions always going to the governing committee....what ever happened to one school one vote?
Be more proactive to address concerns mentioned by member school
Encouraging school districts to allow home schoolers access to school sports.
Ensure referees are trained to equal expectations for interpreting rules. As students progressed from local to regional to state level play, students were frustrated by calls that were rule violations yet previously uncalled.
How classifications are set
I would spend more time on educating officials on the games that they officiate. Grade evaluate and try to help them do a better job.
Improve minimum requirements for playoff sports venues. Especially football. Need to go back to better football state championship locations. Liberty, Va [sic] Tech, UVA not William and Mary
More control over eligibility issues and consistent officiating.
Observation about the survey-Schools should educate the parents and kids. Coaches need training but not as a fund raiser for VHSL. More difficult decisions need to go to the membership and not just to the governing committee. One school one vote.
Playoff system
Preserve local rivalries
The football playoff system. It's a joke.

The most needed change has already occurred this year with the hiring of a new executive director.
The VHSL should treat athletics and activities with the same amount of respect and recognition. I feel that they currently show little respect for those who participate in theater, forensics, etc. This shows forth in the little effort put in to insuring that those people judging the competitions are truly qualified to the hall of fame where athletes are in one category and those in the activities area are simply called contributors and lumped in with people who have not competed but deserve honor for other contributions. Also, I believe that the VHSL board should have more representatives from school boards on their board. Currently school boards have one representative. School boards are the ones who actually pay the bills for the VHSL. I would like to see, at a minimum, one school board representative from each of the VSBA regions.
They need to change the divisions back to where schools do not have to travel so far to compete in events. An example is a Richmond school traveling to the Eastern Shore or vice versa.
Upgrade the public image of VHSL, which is comprised of member schools. VHSL is not "they", it is the member schools which should regard VSHL as "we."
Waiver policy for Classification reductions due to travel requirements. Schools should be allowed to compete at lower classifications when travel is excessive.

Virginia Legislators (3 Total Responses)

I Know virtually nothing about this subject and doubt my General Assembly colleagues do either.
It would be more representative of the not only the various schools who are members, but the communities they serve. In addition, VHSL and it's [sic] member schools put too much emphasis on athletics and not enough on the other activities that VHSL coordinates for student. In addition VHSL athletic programs cost keep raising even after parents paid activity and school fees. Soon you will price attending games out of the ability of some families to pay.
Let the home-schooled students play.

APPENDIX F
QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES TO NUMBER 24

24: The biggest issue facing the VHSL over the next 5 years will be:

High School Principals (75 Total Responses)

*The inclusion of homeschool students, and schools outside the public arena. This causes funding issues for individual schools as well. *the lack qualified and available officials.
Athletes and their skirting of rules for eligibility
Budget
Budget Inclusion of Home-Schooled students
budget and the different conferences.
Budget concerns/realignment
Budget issues and governance under the new system
Changing school populations
Communication and district alignment
Concussions Home School Issues Transgender Issues
Conference Schedules
Consolidation and money!
Continuing to create balance in the realignment of classifications with consideration for school size and travel costs.
District alignments
Finances
Finances Securing appropriate state tournament sites for reasonable fees Home School Participation
General Assembly attempts to chase single issue political motives.
Home school legislation and the changes it will bring to the VHSL and schools.
Home School participation
Home school participation in VHSL Activities

Home School Students
Home school students & reclassification (RR)
Home school students being allowed to participate in VHSL sports.
Home schooled athletes trying to play in the VHSL. I am truly against this from occurring, as it is not fair that those students do not have the demands of SOLs to pass for graduation requirements.
homeschool
Homeschool and travel team participation that will lessen student participation in VHSL athletics.
Home-school athletes
Homeschool Bill
Homeschool participation and private school participation
Homeschool participation in athletics
Homeschool participation in VHSL activities.
Homeschool students
homeschool students - if allowed to play - how to you ensure that they are held to the same requirements as students in regular schools.
Homeschool students and their right to participate in the VHSL.
Homeschooled Students
Homeschooled students
It SHOULD be financial difficulties by member schools over rising costs and lower revenues.
Keoing [sic] homeschool students from participating in the activities
Keeping the programs cost effective for member schools.
Legislature
LGBTQ issues
maintaining profitability to stay afloat
Nobody can predict the future. Be ready for everything. Be ready by having a vision, mission, establishing core values. Strategic planning. Then, be clear in communicating the vision and plan. The VHSL has done nothing in the last 10 years that approximates good planning. Decisions seem irrational because rationale for them are not communicated well, or at all.

Participation of students that want to compete in a gender specific sport other than their birth gender.
Political pressure
Private school and homeschool student participation.
Private/Charter school membership into VHSL.
Private/Home School Participation.
Probably homeschool student challenges
Realignment & Homeschool participation
Remaining relevant
Restructuring small districts
School Choice
Schools having a mandatory ATC and the amount of games played by student athletes in a season. An example is high school football. By the end of a state championship season these teams will have played 16 games, so the same as an NFL team without the nutrition, medical care, and access that NFL teams have. That is a lot to put on the minds and bodies of our student athletes.
See above. The issues at 1A and 2A may need some help from the VHSL but it does not mean those issues need to be addressed at 5A and 6A. The old AAA was fine.
Sports injury and how we handle them due to the studies and emerging research on the long term effects.
Sportsmanship concerns with athletes, parents, and officials.
Sustaining officials....
The biggest issue will be getting schools comfortable with the new alignment pattern. Until everyone settles into 6 classifications and realizes that you can not [sic] divide into more classifications without increasing travel. Transgender issues may increase in the next few years.
The challenges of constant administration turn over. The new administrators rush meetings and are not following appropriate procedures.
The growth/loss in specific areas of the state and how this affects alignment. Also maintaining a stable alignment plan.

The Homeschool Eligibility Issue....
The inclusion of home-school and charter school students [sic] participation in VHSL.
The issue of transgenders [sic].
The way officials are treated at games.
Their membership meetings. It is a waste of time. All it seems to be is party time.
There are several in no specific order: finances, transportation, gender identity, and student participation in high school athletics (numbers declining in favor of club/travel experiences).
There are two--first fans/parents are getting more and more disrespectful and displaying bullying behavior toward student athletes and coaches--sometimes their own. I was recently at a regional semi-final football game where a group of 20 -30 adult males were calling out an athlete from the other team--referring to his jersey number. The AD and I tried to get them to stop, and then sought out the AD from the host school, but could not find him. I will add that ADs, Principals, and divisions need to address this behavior and due what is necessary to ensure all athletes feel supported, however, a strong message from VHSL would carry a lot of weight. The second are issues around eligibility--some divisions have magnet or specialty programs for academics enabling students to apply to attend a school other than their base school their freshmen year. However, we are asking 13/14 year olds to find something which is a good fit for them, and often they do not understand the full implications including academic support, community/friend support, etc. Students then may wish to transfer to another school and thus lose their eligibility. Given college freshmen struggle with this, it seems some leniency could be granted to students so young (e.g., a one-time transfer opportunity).
Transgender
Transgender
Transgender issues
Transgender participation guidelines
Transgender Students
Transparency and communication
Whether to continue to let home-schooled students participate in sports.

High School Athletic/Activities Directors (76 Total Responses)

- Home School Students - Keeping costs down for schools -
Above item.
Adaquate [sic] trainings and retainment [sic] of athletics. Participation numbers stagnant
Budget
By letting in a private school we opened the door for all private schools to join. Their main goal is to recruit so they can stay in business. Recruiting is against our rules. How are we going to stop them from making super all-star teams? And they should have to follow the VHSL rules from the beginning not 3 years from now. No 5th year senior should be allowed to compete in the playoffs.
Classification and Alignment
Classification changes.
Classification.
Continued effort to push sportsmanship and appropriate penalties to try and curb fighting, cursing, etc.
Continued issues with reclassification and realignment.
Continued realignment issues and financial issues related to realignment. Home school legislation.
Continuing to effectively manage concussion training in the eyes of the public as the national conversation on the issue continues to question concussion management in sports.
Deciding whether or not we will stay with the new alignments and classifications.
do not agree with multi classification districts. VHSL should set up districts based on classification not travel.
Educating the public on the ever changing classification system.
Eligibility if the government introduces school choice.
Finances
finances
Finances - Keeping afloat
Finances/Homeschool bill
Financial setup Foundation

Funding [sic]
gender
Helping the AD's get the message out that kids should play multiple sports and not specialize.
HOME SCHOOL
Home School and transferring for Sports reasons.
Home School and transgender
Home School Bill
Home school bill
Home school issue and transgender. Also high school coaches recruiting
Home school issues and transgender issues.
Home School legislation
Home school participation
Home school participation Lack of money to sustain most programs
Home school regulations
Home school student participation.
Home school students
Home school Students and other private schools that want to join the VHSL.
home school students gaining access athletics in public schools
Home School students participating and governance of that practice
Home School/Private School participation in VHSL activities
Home schooled students participating in athletics and activities.
Home Schoolers
home schooling
Home schooling and finances.
Home schooling participation.
Homeschool
Homeschool and private school participation
homeschool participation
Homeschool student and transgender
Homeschool students

Homeschool students
How to manage response to homeschool initiatives
How to regulate/monitor compliance with private school and eventually home schoolers wishing to compete in VHSL sponsored events.
Incorporating and regulating home schooled student athletes and developing appropriate measures/policies for transgender athletes.
money
Money
Money. Everything is costing more and schools are making up difference. Also official cost continue to increase. Schools get hit from both sides. We need to find how to keep the prices down without loosing [sic] the atmosphere of state championships.
Not enough staffing at league office. Budget issues. Safety of Athletes will always be an issue.
Once again classifications.
One of the big issues over the next few years facing the VHSL will be the home school bill.
Playoff organization and classifications.
Promoting public school participation in the face of growing travel and AAU leagues. It was a big mistake to move to a 6 class system. Generally speaking the VHSL competitions are looked down upon by elite kids more than ever. It is incredibly watered down now. That was a terrible call.
Realignment issues and home school bill
Reclassification
Reclassification of schools based upon student enrollment fluctuation will cause problems within districts.
Restructuring the entire organization
Settling down the playoff structure into a format that allows schools and the VHSL to remain profitable.
State Tournaments. Where are they played?
Staying involved in membership schools
Structure

Students participating in athletic activities for schools outside the zone in which they live.
The Home School Bill
The Home School Bill.
The new format for playoffs Homeschool athletes
Transparency

Public School Superintendents (45 Total Responses)

-Finances and enforcement of rules and regulations. Too much distance between the home office and issues in the field.
-Home schooling and school choice are going to be significant challenges. The Tebow Bill or a similar bill such as HB 8 will continue to advance with the current political situation.
1. Home school and private school students gaining access to VHSL member school teams. 2. Strengthening the financial status of the VHSL
Budget concerns and safety
Dealing with homeschool athletic [sic] participation
Declining enrollment resulting in students playing all sports.
Enrollment loss in rural school divisions. Home school, Charter School, and private school issues
Equality
Eventually, homeschoolers will be permitted to participate so that will need to be managed well. AAU teams are and will be an ever-increasing thorn in the side of school-based teams.
Fairness & Equity of Competition
Fan interest
Financial health Home school participation Sites for State Championships
Financial stability and challenges to standing by the Virginia General Assembly
Football injuries
Funding
Governance and funding
home school participation
Home school participation.

Home schooled students participating in VHSL contests.
homeschool issues
Homeschool participation
Home-school participation.
Homeschool student participation.
Homeschool, private school participation.
homeschooled students and reclassifying
Homeschoolers and transgender athletes [sic]
how it can evolve and remain a viable institution with the forecast for major changes to public education.
Inclusion of home school students which is inevitable.
Lack of interest in certain sports
Maintaining equity by declining participation of home schooled students.
Non-public school student participation
Participation of home-schooled students. If this is permitted, member schools will need guidance on this issue. The need for capital projects, inclusive of having membership support a budget line to that effect.
Player safety
Private school memberships and home school participation.
Re-classification and home school.
Regulating homeschoolers' participation, if approved.
Safety Home-school participation
Supporting the profile of a graduate and providing equitable access to competition sports and activities
Sustaining quality leadership and monitoring the participation of private school and home school students. Creating a safe environment for all.
The influence of home-school legislation. I encourage VHSL to continue to oppose home-school participation in VHSL activities.
Transfer eligibility enforcement
Travel. Homeschool participation.

Turnover in the administrative staff of the VHSL.
Whether or not home-school students and private school students can participate in public school sports
Working with parent stakeholders to educate and regulate their activity and involvement in high school sports. Additionally, the issue of student safety will continue to dominate the landscape.

Public School Board Chairs (18 Total Responses)

Being able to adjust the playoff system. The football system takes to long, to many teams involved. We play in Aug. and all the way to Christmas ! Local regular season play and local rivals are what makes money. The new system is fair but has put an dent in the money. Home School and private school play is a concern and must be worked out legally and fairly.
Being pro active in issues facing the VHSL rather than sitting back and saying we will face it when the time comes. I feel this is what has been done with the home school issue. I do not support home school students playing in the VHSL but if it is going to happen then the VHSL should be actively working on a bill that would shape the participation rules in the way that would best benefit the current VHSL members.
Classification
Continuing to do it's job well with so many critics (just as public schools have so many critics too).
Drug use
Establishing fairness, consistency and stability in the realignment process.
Financial issues relating to conference alignment and team travel time/distance. Concussions will also continue to be a big issue at all levels with regard to football.
Gender Home school participation
Get the districts and regions to work better. Continue focus on concussions
Home-schooled and private school students participating in VHSL activities
How to accommodate transgender students in VHSL activities.
Primarily safety in terms of concussion, not just for football, but other sports like lacrosse and soccer too.

Private school and Home School participation
Private school and Home School participation
Regulating recruitment activities if home schooled students are allowed to participate.
Strong stance on co-ed team play. It is not ethical to wrestle boys with girls, for example. Providing advice to parents regarding the hazards of starting too soon in a sports regiment, age-appropriate beginnings to contact sports and over-exerting a youth (baseball pitcher, football, ...).
The increase in private and home schooled children.
Travel

Virginia Legislators (2 Total Responses)

Balancing an inclusive system of athletics and other pursuits of students who may or may not be in the traditional K-12 school systems. In addition, trying to arrange a price structure that will not break the bank for families.
Keeping home schooled students out of the activities.

APPENDIX G
QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES TO NUMBER 25

25: The biggest issue facing the VHSL over the next 10 years will be:

High School Principals (68 Total Responses)

Alignment issues
as above
Budget
Budget, growing populations/number of schools, appropriate sites for state tournaments.
Continued governance and transparency
Continuing to evolve with students and schools.
Decreased funding for school athletic programs
Eligibility and their Coaches going around rules to help certain programs.
Ensuring that there is adequate funding to run VHSL Sports and Activities in member schools.
Equity issues regarding disparities in funding for athletics among various regions in the state.
Finances
Finances
Finances
finances
Finances and the growing number of potential sports championships.
Finances I [sic]
Financial Model
Financial solvency...
Financial stability
Financial viability of its members.
Financial. To conduct business has become very expensive and we are experiencing reduced crowds at our athletic events to offset the cost. How will we survive?
Football is the biggest sport but has also taken the biggest hit with concussions. I believe that with more information, football will dwindle and our society will see less importance on

<p>football. I see this as an issue because VHSL will need to catch up with the times. Most organizations have a difficult time staying ahead of the biggest money makers and football games are the biggest money makers.</p>
<p>Football safety</p>
<p>Gambling</p>
<p>Government interest</p>
<p>High School reform that includes career academies (zoning)</p>
<p>Homeschool and travel team participation that will lessen student participation in VHSL athletics. Also, less participation in football due to parental concussion concerns.</p>
<p>Homeschool participation</p>
<p>Homeschool student participation in athletics</p>
<p>Homeschool students</p>
<p>Homeschool students eligibility</p>
<p>Homeschooled Students. Private school participation and involvement. Region sites. State finals locations.</p>
<p>How to help schools maintain participation in VHSL activities and athletics due to the many other options for entertainment that students have.</p>
<p>I believe that finances and realignment will be the greatest challenges of the league. Continuing to raise enough money to provide the level of services expected may not be possible. The league may reach a point of having to cut services. I am concerned that increasing ticket prices will reach a point where people will not attend. The realignment issue will continue to resurface as new schools find themselves as the bubble teams that may be forced to move to different classifications. Also, travel cost will continue to increase and gate receipts may not keep pace. We will hear cries of "losing traditional rivalries," but these cries may also include a new issue of communities losing interest in attending high school events. This will be related to the increases in technology and the overall loss of interest in local events.</p>
<p>I would say Transgender students</p>
<p>Keeping pace with costs.</p>
<p>LBGTQ issues.</p>

Long-term sustainability and economic viability of the League.
Maintaining the separation of public and private schools competing as VHSL members. How would the VHSL regulate these schools in terms of recruiting players to come to their schools.
maintaining profitability to stay afloat
Money
Not sure.
Participation of home-school athletes.
Policies involving homeschool student participation and transgender student-athletes.
Political pressure
Private schools entering the league
Regulating spectator (parent) behavior before, during, and after competition.
Remaining relevant
remaining the only athletic association of public school activities/athletics
Restructuring small districts
Same as above
Same as above only adding virtual schools
Same as number 24.
Same as Question #24
Scheduling
See above.
Student participation in high school sports due to the rise of AAU and other outside agencies.
Sustainability
the different conferences
The home school issue will continue to arise.
The number of disciplinary issues by athletes in games
The same as for 5 years.
Title IX compliance with expansion of athletics
Transgender related issues. Will there be single sex sports such as girls' field hockey or will sports become gender neutral?
Transgender students

Trans-gendered participation and money.
Transition of leadership again
We need to adjust tournament pricing, post season pricing, etc. We are limiting access to our families with the cost. Our Athletic Departments are losing [sic] money trying to support our athletics in regional and state competitions.

High School Athletic/Activities Directors (68 Total Responses)

?
1. Budget 2. R & R Committee
AAU/Travel sports vs VHSI [sic] sports
Adequate finances to help cover the activities and athletics for schools. State tournament participation is an honor but it can also be a financial burden.
Allowing Home-school students to participate in athletic activities.
Classification
Classifications
Coaches [sic] retention and education.
Coaching requirements fees. Participation numbers. Viability of VHSL as governing body
Concussion concerns and legislation.
Concussions
Drop in numbers/participation of interscholastic athletics
Educating the public on the ever changing classification system.
Elimination of football from high school sports.
Finances
Finances
Finances
Finances
Finances
Finances which will determine how we proceed down the road.
FINANCIAL STABILITY AMONGST ITS MEMEBERS
Finding Adequate corporate sponsor funding to defray the costs of running programs.

From where I am, declining enrollment in many rural schools is a big issue.
Funding based on the state of the economy.
Growth in smaller zones.
helping individual schools find qualified coaches
Helping schools find good coaches with less of the teachers wanting to coach
Home School issue.
Home school participation and regulation
Home School/ Private School participation in VHSL activities. Concussions.
Homeschool student
I think as education evolves and more students take classes away from school we must be able to adapt to these changes and the use of technology
Increased pressure to enforce rules.
Keeping the focus on why athletic programs exist. It is becoming more of a business issue than a developmental element of a child's education.
litigation from concussion cases prior to the recently increased education efforts
members threatening to leave
Membership.
money
Money
Money
My biggest concern over the next 10 years is finding coaches who are teachers. Without teachers, we are just another club team with no connection to the school. I would call a meeting of all Superintendents and make sure the human resource departments are going out to find young teachers that want to coach.
No comment
none at this time
Officials and sportsmanship.
Officials associations
Participation in all sports
Private schools

Privatization of sports (only school recruited in the high school now is football) and how it continues to grow.
Reclassification
Recruiting
Recruiting by high school coaches
Safety in regards to football.
Same as 24 with the addition of potential issues in football, if Concussions continue to be a major problem.
Schools recruiting and playing student-athletes not residing within the school zone will continue to be a problem.
Sportsmanship & Quality Referees.
Staying ahead of the curve on how our economy affects playoff expenses.
Staying involved in membership schools
Technology and social media
The continued growth of AAU and travel teams playing year-round, and their effects on athlete participation on their high school teams.
The growth of many high school throughout Virginia, and the diminishing population in other districts, and the impact this may have on the classification system.
The next 10 years the VHSL will have to worry about financial situations.
The possible death of football. It is a huge revenue stream for your member schools. We have to find a way to make this safe and palatable for your local communities. #'s are down across the state. IF we ignore this it will be a major issue in the coming years.
Transferring school for sports reasons only.
Transgender
Transgender athletes and categories for competition.
transgender students
Travel with in the current structure of playoffs.
Whether we have been consistant [sic] with new alignment and classifications.

Public School Superintendents (38 Total Responses)

-Much as with Education in general, the disparity between larger schools and medium / low enrollment schools. The power curve seems to lie within the larger divisions.
Affordability and access to programs.
Budget concerns and safety
Challenges to standing by the Virginia General Assembly and inclusion of home school participants in league activities. How can consistent eligibility factors be developed for public school attendees and home schooled students?
Classifications with declining enrollments [sic]
Competition with club teams/travel teams, etc.
Continue to have representatives at Regional meeting.
Elimination of Football as an HS sport and then the subsequent funding issues that come from that because of lack of admission \$\$
Fairness & Equity of Competiton [sic]
Fewer and fewer student athletes. As education is personalized, more and more students will graduate early or be part-time at the high school level to attend community college, participate in internships, etc. Combined with the ever-growing and monopolizing AAU teams, there will be fewer student-athletes to participate. Already, there are so many Spring sports that even 4A schools are having a hard time fielding JV teams.
Funding
Funding
Funding
home school participation
homeschool and concussions
How to get a handle on individuals influencing athletes to transfer
Lobbying groups wishing to influence who is permitted to participate. Sportsmanship.
Maintaining programs that can be financially supported by the member schools. It appears that athletics revenues within the schools have been in decline for the last several years. More affluent school divisions can supplement these programs but the poorer ones often have to cut

their programs. The VHSL should work with member schools to help them create self-sustaining programs.
n/a
Participation in VHSL programs due to continued budget concerns.
Player safety
Private school/ homeschool participation
Public funding
Representation and organization of members schools both on the Executive Committee and the general membership meetings. The issue of one school, one vote regardless of size needs to be changed.
Same
Same as above.
Same as above. It will not be going away any time soon.
social media
Staying under budget
Sustaining quality leadership and monitoring the participation of private school and home school students.
The increasing number of high schools and the reorganization and reclassification that occurs every two to four years.
The need for capital projects, if not already addressed in the next or first 5 years per above comment.
Title IX
Transgender
Transgender issues.
Travel team sports
Unsure
whether it can remain a viable institution with the forecast for major changes to public education.

Public School Board Chairs (16 Total Responses)

changing demographics in the western part of the state. Schools seem to be losing student population, while at the same time there are several very large schools competing like Franklin County, Patrick Henry Roanoke, and G W. Danville.
concussions Schools coming up with a way to do what VHSL does and do it themselves.
Ensuring a physical health person attend every event and provide services to any player at any time.
Financial stability
Funding. Ways to fund programs and competitions without increasing significantly the cost to schools.
Home school participation
Homeschool students Transgender students Lack of qualified coaches
How to handle home school and private school students desiring to compete in VHSL activities.
I think the same as in Question 24.
Increasing funding for athletics and academic activities through private partnerships, VHSL Foundation support, etc. rather than increasing school membership fees. Schools have been under an extreme budget crunch for the past several years.
Reorganization protecting local rivalries and travel considerations...the new alignment has damaged funding
Reorganization protecting local rivalries and travel considerations...the new alignment has damaged funding
Same as 24
Same as 24.
The male female transgender issue will affect sports eventually. Liability issues will certainly increase with injuries. There is nothing to prevent another organization from starting up to represent school activities.
Unsportsmanlike conduct

Virginia Legislators (2 Total Responses)

Concussions. Football especially should not be encouraged.
More of the above.

APPENDIX H
QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES TO NUMBER 26

26: The VHSL has been asked previously by individuals to be ‘more transparent’ and ‘better communicators’. If you agree with the need for the VHSL to be ‘more transparent’ and ‘better communicators’, what specifically should the VHSL do to accomplish this?

High School Principals (55 Total Responses)

1. Revamp website 2. Revamp Handbook to a more clear, concise and easy to understand reading.
Absolutely. Again, less use of the executive committee.
After committee meeting minutes are posted but what about recording the open meeting and letting people hear the discussions taking place. Post that online so any member, parent, athlete or coach will know what was discussed and what was said. Quit relying on abbreviated minutes.
Again, make more definitive decisions versus pushing it back to the membership.
As stated earlier, information should be given and shared about options prior to voting at meetings. One example from the last meeting was that we could vote to accept the change or we were told that it would go back to "the way it was". It was never explained that there were actually other options. I feel like VHSL does not want Principals to question or have the opportunity to discuss options, but just wants what they want voted on and approved. If principals do not seek out the information on their own, they are often not aware that other options exist.
Attend meetings at the district level Create a communications committee Social media outlets
Attendance at more region and district meetings
Be open to suggestions and recommendations
Change the term "emergency legislation" into something that is more acceptable.
Communication through the website has improved tremendously over the last couple of years. The trendy term "transparent" takes on many meanings and what exactly needs to be revealed? Maintain fairness in how the policies are applied and don't make "knee jerk" decision when

<p>one event happens. Rather, develop research before making changing to support that a change is really needed.</p>
<p>Create a representative structure that provides school representation based on student enrollment, i.e. one student, one vote, instead of one school, one vote.</p>
<p>Dr. Haun, the new Executive Director, talks as if he wants the VHSL to be more transparent. I believe that we should give him a chance to see how he communicates and the direction that the VHSL will take over the next year.</p>
<p>Eliminate the provision allowing emergency legislation</p>
<p>Explain decisions and consider appropriate input from stakeholders.</p>
<p>Finances! Where does all the money we give to the VHSL go? What does it do? We have a right to know what we are giving our money up for. We've asked for an accounting for years. The budget should be posted on the website. The public has access to school funding. Parents should know where all their money goes. You have a lot to do to re-establish trust and regain the respect of members. Do that by leading with a vision and a plan. New leadership is a new opportunity to do that. Final note: Most of my answers above reflect an attitude that the VHSL should have no authority to tell me, a principal, how to manage or discipline my coaches, teams, sponsors. That is because the VHSL has done nothing in the last 8 years, my time as a principal, to earn respect. If it was a respectful organization, I would be happy to accept its authority.</p>
<p>Have VHSL Board representation from the coaching level.</p>
<p>Hire an experienced high quality web designer to completely redesign and update the VHSL website. Offer professional development for ADs and Principals on classic case studies that highlight gray areas of athletic best practices and stimulate discussion on ethics and and the boundaries of the VHSL as compared with school division policies and regulations.</p>
<p>I am a part of the VHSL and I feel that we try to be transparent and good communicators. I think the league office gets blamed for many things but many times the fault lies with the individual schools.</p>
<p>I believe the VHSL is very transparent. Representation is broad and varied. (Supt's, principals, GA, DOE, AD, and PTA)</p>
<p>I believe they have improved their communication over the past 3 years.</p>

I feel as though they have already put into place the things that will improve this
I feel with the change at the top there will be better communication and the VHSL will be more Transparent.
I like the transparency.
I think the VHSL does an excellent job with media releases and emails, but the website needs work to be better accessible to administrators and the general public. 'Transparency' to me includes the need for releasing financial records on a regular basis, perhaps quarterly, to the general public.
Make information on the website more accessible.
Make more info available to the public. Insist that all staff return all phone calls and emails.
Many people out side [sic] of AD's and Principals don't understand what they do with all of the money that they receive from events. Putting out exactly what they do with this money in an easy to find and easy read/understand format.
More information to stakeholders (parents, students, schools) directly from the VHSL.
More training and information regarding decisions on eligibility rulings
Not just tell us and send e-mails, but come out and visit our schools. Talk to our student-athletes and coaches.
Not sure, but something needs to be done. There is certainly a disconnect [sic] between the Charlottesville office and the High Schools.
Not sure.
Nothing
Open up all communications to all ADs and Principals and have more panels to discuss how moves impact all schools from 1A to 6A
PLEASE PLEASE MAKE THE STATE MEETINGS MEANINGFUL. I do not mind coming to Richmond for the 2 days of meetings, if we actually worked to accomplish items. Granted it was nice to honor Mr. Tilley for what he did, but the majority of the event was a lovefest for Mr. Tilley. If I am going to be away from my building for two days, it needs to be worth the time.
Provide more email reminders regarding deadlines, paperwork, etc. to those required to complete it.

Schedule "area" meetings for parents / community members to attend. A VHSL representative can do a brief presentation, followed by a Q and A for parents.
See box 23. The use of "Emergency Legislation" to push through the leagues agendas should be eliminated.
Social media feeds
The league is transparent if you take the time to research.
The League Staff do a great job of communicating and being transparent. School Principals and Athletic Administrators need to do the same since they are the VHSL!
The student eligibility rules are very complex and even more so when dealing with family situations that don't fit the tradition view of families. The VHSL needs to simply the eligibility rules and develop a clear communication plan for the rules so an average person can understand them.
The VHSL should be willing to conduct more informational sessions in the afternoon or evening convenient for administrators that are not able to be away for extended periods of time.
These complaints are not easily addressed and often the complaint is more related to the fact that a decision did not go a particular way. I think that the VHSL has made great strides in becoming more transparent by attending the regional meetings and being willing to ask questions. I think one specific thing that can be done by the VHSL is to provide a rationale when decisions are reached. This would be the case when decisions are made that involve multiple views. The rationale would be intended to inform all parties of all arguments and why the decision was reached. A similar thought would be to provide ample advance warning that change is going to take place. This was done with the planned fee imcrease [sic]. This practice could be used as often as possible. Change is always difficult for some but the opportunity to plan makes it tolerable. A final thought is increase the communication with individual schools. I think that some principals and AD's never have a conversation with the league staff. I know that it is not possible to call every school often but a scheduled call to ask what is the greatest challenge or problem that the school is facing.
they are OK right where they are, to [sic] much transparency is not necessary a good thing
They do a great job with their communication

This is hopefully being done by a committee. While I agree better communication is important, I do not have enough knowledge to offer suggestions.
Tranparincy [sic] with the VHSL foundation.
Transparency with finances
Use more social media and improve your website
Use more social media Attend district/region meetings
use socialmedia [sic] more and make yourselves available to the member schools
User friendly website
When we attend VHSL conferences, their [sic] should be breakout sessions for principals/ADs. Alot [sic]of windshield time, and too make free time/party time for participants in my opinion.
Yes, I would refer to the first question and my answer there. I think the hiring of Billy Haun as new Executive Director will remedy most of this. Billy is a worker and a go-getter.

High School Athletic/Activities Director (52 Total Responses)

?
Alignment and how to be placed properly.
Attendance at region meetings
Be involved in more district and region level meetings.
Be more accessible. All staff
Be up front on how much money their people make and not worry so much about covering their tales. Not sure on the communication piece.
Better Website
Broadcast Executive Committee meetings over the web similarly to what local School Boards or City/County Councils already do. There will still likely be business that happens in "closed" session, but if meetings are broadcast, member schools can view them either live or on delay so that all members have the opportunity to see and hear what happens in those meetings. There could even be an option to "call in" with a question or feedback during those sessions.
Coaches need to hear some of the values from VHSL Personnel.

Come up w/ a better website
communication with all state [sic] selection. This should be run by the VHSL and a non biased [sic] group select all state. There are too many problems with coaches making it a all tournament [sic] team instead of all state. Teams that do not advance but have quality players are being overlooked by coaches who make it to the championships and selecting their players.
Continue surveys and hope for better participation and feedback from membership.
Continue to send updates on any changes that they foresee and be more specific about what they would like to see, so we can better understand where they are coming from on some decisions.
Create an email chain for any and all executive committee decisions.
develop a more user friendly website. Update information and archive the old.
Easier access to decision making processes and electronic delivery of important information.
Executive committee members need to have term limits.
finding information on the VHSL website needs to be easier for the public.
Four years ago when we changed classifications and regions the VHSL left it up to each group to "set the rules". They could have been more involved in helping to make some of the decisions. The region travel has been a huge burden on most of us. They need to be more involved with these major decisions. Smaller schools often feel "pushed" by the larger schools with not where to turn for help. With join tournament classifications, we are always told to work it out on our own. These join classification tournaments are also a financial problem. 2A hosts and 1A ususally [sic] does not contribute financially to the tournament. Again- we are told to work it out.
Get out and visit the school divisions they govern. The policies and rulings they make often don't benefit everyone. In our case it has had detrimental effects on athletics.
Have a website easy to find things. website [sic] is too complicated and not very well organized. Hard finding rules.
Have more area sessions at the start of the school year so more guidance and administration can attend. Move the membership meetings to a more central location.
I agree with the statement, but am unsure how to suggest improvements. My impressions of the VHSL hierarchy is that it caters too much to certain groups and individuals who seem to be

perceived as worthy of special consideration. My biggest objection to current VHSL governance is that a certain few individuals seem to exert undue influence.
I am not sure they are using social media
i [sic] believe this is happening
I don't agree with the statement, but from the last meeting in Charlottesville I found the voting to be strange. Specifically the double vote on the fighting rule. As a relatively new AD it would be nice to know the parliamentary procedures behind changing the rule from 2 games suspension to 3 games. Maybe they can go over the procedures in the new AD class and list them in the program at our next conference. Did the executive committee change it and then we needed 2/3 vote to stop the change? The first vote was to see if we should vote to overrule the executive committee? I was confused and so were many others. During the 1st vote, we had a certain percent vote for it not to pass. Then people got confused about the second vote and less people voted for it not to pass. I'm sure that people were so confused that they just didn't vote the second time. I also feel that the VHSL officers wanted the change and were pushing for it in the state group meetings to send it to the Executive Committee. How does a handbook rule get sent to the Committee? Is it 2/3 of the groups (4 out of 6) or just 50% of the groups (3 out of 6)? For a group to be in support of a change, do 2/3 of the voters have to agree on a change or just 50%. Can the Executive Committee change a rule on their own without input from the State Groups or Regions? Can the VHSL officers write possible changes for the Executive Committee to vote on? I'm sure all of this is in the handbook but it would be nice for it to be laid out on paper so that when we go to vote we understand the particular process that we are in without having to open the handbook.
I feel the VHSL staff does a decent job of communicating with member schools.
I think emails from the VHSL to athletic directors should be less lengthy. More precise emails can be replied to and acted upon efficiently. When we receive updates with 12-14 topics, for example, I for one, tend to scan the material, as opposed to paying close attention to each point. At my school, I act as an administrator, teacher, and athletic director, so time is of the essence.
i'm [sic] not sure how that would be possible. i [sic] believe that the vhsl [sic] goes to great lengths to communicate with player, coaches, and parents.

In my opinion some of this comes out of concern and/or lack of trust of previous EC. Due to him not being well received and not viable in their eyes, people did not feel like they had a voice. To [sic] much was done through emergency legislation in peoples [sic] eyes which is harder to overturn if the membership does not agree with it. The reclassification was mishandled from the start creating ill will among folks.
In the VHSL's defense they are under-staffed. To be more involved, they should be out and be seen, meeting people, talking to people, and talking to student-athletes.
Make sure that all Supers, Principals and Athletic Directors receive information from VHSL via email.
Make the handbook easier to understand.
media use of social media, etc [sic]
More social media outlets
More transparent
Na
Need more communication through current channels. Weekly updates of VHSL news of what's happening would help. Like a news letter [sic]. Weekly updates are good. But news of what is happening daily would be nice to know.
none at this time
social media outlets
The Ad's should hear more from the individual Athletic Directors in charge of each sport. We get weekly newsletters from the VHSL, but hardly ever get anything in regards to sport specific deadlines.
The staff at the VHSL do the best they can. They are understaffed and many of them (not all) lack real world experience. Make it a VRS job and open up the positions. Get some current practitioners in there and let them take the bull by the horns and run with it.
The VHSL does a good job of informing members of what is going on at the league office. Sending out e-mails when something new comes across the VHSL desk or sending out special alerts when new legislation is passed are ways to keep the members informed of changes at the league office.

The VHSL needs more staff in place to stay afloat with current communications. Social media is huge and needs to highlight the players to become more relevant in their households. It's a new age. Emails and phone calls are not enough.
They are on the correct path. Continue to educate its members on how to become involved in the decision making process and who to contact about expressing opinions.
They are transparent, but everyone needs to be on the same page.
They have improved in this area so no suggestions.
Using Social Media and emails to keep every school abreast of events and activities.
Utilize more social media outlets and attend more district/region meetings. Send your staff out to attend
VHSL does a good job in communicating!
VHSL is doing an adequate job.
Yes- hire more jndividuals [sic]

Public School Superintendents (35 Total Responses)

-As a Superintendent, I am only familiar with the VHSL participating in Regional Superintendents' meetings to provide verbal updates. I am also familiar with our athletic director attending VHSL meetings. I am not aware of newsletters or other correspondences. It would be helpful to receive some of that information as it may help me to advocate for accountability of athlete and spectator behavior when working with School Board members.
-I think the VHSL communicates wonderfully, up to the individual to take advantage of their information. I have no issues with transparency.
Allow every division an equal vote
An update to the website would be helpful as well as forays into social media to engage students, parents and other stakeholders. VHSL Facebook pages seem to be activity-specific as opposed to general. It would be helpful to have VHSL staff regularly travel to schools to talk with parents, booster clubs, students, etc. to share key issues - it would put a face with the "VHSL" brand. I know the Executive Director travels to regional superintendent meetings which is informative. It may be valuable to create media releases and send them to media channels (paper, TV, etc.) across VA to increase the visibility of VHSL work in VA.

Annual community forums throughout the state
change website and attend more region meetings
Communicate regularly with districts on multiple levels
Coordinate athletic results/standings via a common platform with 100% participation in score reporting from all member schools.
Disagree-- feel like they have been transparent.
Email blast are good. Webpage is not user friendly and very little information can be obtained from this webpage.
Ensure there is a wide representation of voices on the various committees - especially the key decision making committees.
Every organization is requested to be more "transparent". Normally those calls are from people who do not pay attention to regular forms of communication. I think the VHSL has already taken a step in the right direction by hiring a new executive director.
Hold Seasonal Regional Meetings. Each Region is Unique
I believe that the information is there if one is able to ask the right person or find it when searching the VHSL sight.
I believe that their weekly updates are comprehensive in nature. I do believe that the meeting for staff are to long and to often. It impacts the division. Even superintendents do not spend this much time in meetings.
I believe the VHSL is transparent and communicates well.
I believe they operate in a transparent manner. Unfortunately, most principals and athletic directors do not take the time to attend the meetings or read the minutes.
I think they are transparent and communicate well.
I think this will occur with the new Executive Director
It's the school and coaches responsibility to educate athletes.
more frequent communication - shared decision making
More outreach via social media and accessibility to online information.
n/a
n/a
Na [sic]

Newsletters, direct email communication to administrators and coaches.
Release of findings when violations of VHSL policies and/or procedures are substantiated in order to ensure proof of compliance.
Speaking at Superintendent and School Board Association meetings PSA that would grab the attention of parents and students
The VHSL has addressed some of this perception via the use of BoardDocs [sic]. In my opinion, this is more of a perception issue than reality. Additionally, planned upgrades to the VHSL website will also be useful.
The VHSL should have office hours for specific sports or concerns. Maybe establish an online chat with the director that is responsible for that sport. It must be more than the rules clinics that are held at the beginning of the seasons.
Too much of the training is left for the individuals schools to do which is costly. VHSL should provide annual safety videos for all coaches in all sports that are updated yearly in coaching, sportsmanship, concussions, rules, etc. or a series of videos on each subject required by all coaches.
Update their website Survey the superintendents as to what VHSL could do to partner with them to provide positive impact on their school system Offer work sessions and follow up with all athletic directors on communication skills / public outreach / etc.
VHSL staff should participate more in Superintendent, Athletic Director and Principal's local meetings when possible or at least when requested.
Work more closely with the school divisions and parents for outreach and education through social media, regional appearances and discussions/trainings and visibility.
Yes, but Billy Haun will make this happen. The outdated, outmoded leadership style of the the [sic] previous E.D. is already in the process of being replaced.

Public School Board Chairs (13 Total Responses)

Actually discuss issues at the group meeting...it remains a close knit ...good old boys network
Actually discuss issues at the group meeting...it remains a close knit ...good old boys network
As a coach and Principal, I would attend many Regional and State Membership meetings. No real legislation was voted upon. Then, a few weeks later the Governing Committee would vote

<p>something in or out that had never been discussed with membership in an open meeting. With today's electronic voting opportunities it should be easy to mass note.</p>
<p>Be available to discuss how it works. Didn't have a presence at the VSBA this year.</p>
<p>Each member school should be responsible for being better communicators for VSHL, because member schools ARE the VHSL. Any organization can do better, but I believe that the VHSL has increased transparency and communication over the past several years!</p>
<p>I am not in a position to answer that.</p>
<p>I think the VHSL does a good job getting their message out to schools, officials, coaches and (through Coaches) athletes. I do not think their [sic] is much connection between the VHSL and parents/community members. I think district meeting for community members during the summer months might be welcome. Undeniably it is a difficult issue to find a reasonable solution to due to geography, staffing and finances.</p>
<p>Improvement of the website with more easily assessable info would be helpful. Communication with member schools should be more timely [sic]. There should rarely, if ever be a need for "emergency" meetings regarding issues about which the membership has not been fully advised. Again, I believe the hiring of a new executive director will bring about positive changes.</p>
<p>Injuries</p>
<p>Not sure. Possibly publish more information, data, and VHSL decisions.</p>
<p>One easy way to better communicate is to have a monthly online newsletter that anyone can subscribe to.</p>
<p>Social media, a hyperlink on every school sport webpage, facilitate youtube [sic] videos on sports safety specific to each sport and age group.</p>
<p>They should request that reports be sent to the superintendent's office and the school board of injuries that happen at end of each season sport that is played.(Basketball, football, tennis & etc.</p>

Virginia Legislators (2 Total Responses)

No knowledge of this. No opinion.

VHSL is not transparent nor does it communicate well. In fact VHSL should have non professional [sic] educators involved in it's [sic] governance structure from top to bottom, and maybe a new system should be developed to replace VHSL!