

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE  
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS



**NEWS RELEASE**

**Bob Gardner Announces Retirement as NFHS Executive Director**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Bruce Howard

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (January 8, 2018) — Bob Gardner, executive director of the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) since May 2010, has announced his retirement, effective August 1, 2018. Gardner notified the NFHS Board of Directors of his retirement plans at the NFHS Winter Meeting January 3 in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Gardner is the fifth full-time executive director of the NFHS, following H.V. Porter (1940-58), Cliff Fagan (1958-77), Brice Durbin (1977-93) and Bob Kanaby (1993-2010).

Gardner's eight-year run as head of the national organization for high school athletics and performing arts activities will conclude a 48-year career in secondary education, including the final 18 years on the NFHS staff in Indianapolis.

Since assuming duties as NFHS executive director in 2010, Gardner has vigorously promoted the values of high school activity programs and expanded opportunities for participation by boys and girls nationwide. During his eight years as executive director, participation in high school sports has increased by almost 400,000, including the expanded opportunity for students with disabilities in high school sports.

Gardner has led the organization's focus on risk minimization in high school sports, with particular emphasis on concussion awareness, and has brought a heightened national presence to the work of the NFHS and its member state associations. In addition to the continual expansion of the

NFHS Learning Center during his tenure, Gardner is credited with starting the NFHS Network, the first-of-its-kind digital coverage of high school sports with more than 25,000 events covered during the 2016-17 school year.

In addition, during his eight years as chief executive of the organization, operating revenue for the NFHS increased by \$4 million.

Ironically, Gardner's entire 48-year career was spent in the state of Indiana. He was a teacher and coach at three schools for eight years and also served as an athletic director for a period of time. In 1978, Gardner became principal of Milan Junior-Senior High School, followed by a stint as superintendent of the Milan Community Schools.

After serving on the Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) Board of Directors during his time at Milan, Gardner joined the IHSAA staff in 1985 as assistant commissioner. He served 10 years in that role prior to becoming commissioner in 1995.

During his five years as IHSAA commissioner, Gardner led the change in the IHSAA football playoffs to permit participation by all schools, negotiated the association's largest corporate sponsorship agreement in history with Indiana Farm Bureau Insurance and led the transition to multiple classes in team sports.

Gardner joined the NFHS staff in 2000 as chief operating officer and served in that position for 10 years prior to becoming executive director. During this time, he chaired the NFHS Rules Review Committee and was responsible for day-to-day operations of the organization.

Gardner earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Evansville (Indiana) and his master's and Ed.S. degrees from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. He has served on the Board of Directors for USA Football, USA Basketball and the Indiana Sports Corporation. He is a member of the Indiana High School Wrestling Hall of Fame.

Following the March 1 application deadline, finalists for the position will be interviewed by the NFHS Board of Directors April 17-18 in Indianapolis, with the new executive director expected to begin duties August 1.

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### **About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)**

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.9 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, speech and debate coaches, and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS website at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org).

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