

# Proposed amendment to the bylaws of the Minnesota State High School League to add chess as a MSHSL fine arts activity

Submitted by designated school representative to the MSHSL:

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School

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Printed Name of School Representative

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Title

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Signature

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Date

## 5. Amend the MSHSL Fine Arts Rules and Policies Manual by adding Chess as a sponsored fine arts activity of the MSHSL

Submitted by: Bob Madison, Mounds View; Peggy Flanagan, Minneapolis Southwest; Larry Lawler, Park Center; Mike Smith, Totino-Grace; David Thompson, Stewartville; John Soma, Woodbury

**Participation and Competitive Season:** Chess clubs may hold meetings throughout the school year as do other fine arts activities. Schools may also field teams for a competitive season to end no later than the finals of the League-sponsored State Team Chess Tournament.

**Contests:** The number of interscholastic events or meets, exclusive of the state tournament, shall not exceed 20. Events and meets may consist of more than one head-to-head match per team.

**League-Sponsored Tournament:** MSHSL will conduct a team state tournament for chess to be held as determined by the Board of Directors.

**Eligibility:** Bylaws 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 108, 110, 205, 206 and 209 shall apply.

**Coaches:** Coaches must be school board approved volunteers, staff, or contracted employees in accordance with the individual school district employment policies.

**Officials:** Officials for the state tournament must be registered with the MSHSL.

**Rules:** The United States Chess Federation's *Official Rules of Chess*, as may be modified by the League's Board of Directors from time to time, will constitute the official rules for all MSHSL-sponsored chess events, including the state tournament. USCF membership is not required for students or teams to participate in MSHSL-sponsored chess events.

### Rationale:

- Chess builds critical thinking skills for school and for life. Studies indicate that grades improve in students who participate in chess, and such lessons as building good foundations, seeing the big picture, and making the best choice from among several alternatives are reinforced by playing chess. The state of Minnesota recognizes the benefits of chess to students and provides by state law the opportunity for school districts to include chess as part of their school curriculum.

- Chess would uniquely fill a participation need for MSHSL. While most students in high school chess clubs are also active participants in athletics or other fine arts activities, there are some students without those aptitudes who do not take part in any other MSHSL activity and who would benefit from interscholastic competition in chess.
- Chess is co-educational, allowing girls and boys to compete on equal footing and to work together as part of the same team.
- Chess allows students to participate as integral members of a team while simultaneously developing individual excellence.
- Chess is already a well-established activity in many Minnesota schools. There are currently three high school chess leagues in Minnesota including more than thirty participating schools, and state tournaments are run annually at the high school, middle school, and elementary school levels. A state high school individual/team chess tournament has been run for more than 40 years by the Minnesota State Chess Association, and the 2007 tournament drew students from 41 different high schools.
- Chess is an enduring and worldwide game with championship events at every level. Several U.S. colleges now offer scholarships for chess.
- Chess is very inexpensive. A school district can equip a team with tournament-quality chessboards and chess clocks for under \$250. Almost no other activity can provide a school with more bang for the buck.