**NMAA Appeals Review Committee Hearing**
**September 25, 2026**
**8:00 a.m. - Virtual**

Welcome - Meeting called to order by Mr. Paul Benoit, NMAA Appeals Review Committee Chairman, at 8:05 a.m., Ms. Alissa Wesbrook, NMAA Assistant to the Executive Director, conducted roll call and the following members were present:

Mr. Brian Stacy
Mr. Vance Lee
Mr. Paul Benoit
Mr. Mike Chambers
Mr. Larry Chavez

Not Present:
Mr. Keith Durham
Ms. Lynda Spencer
Dr. Channel Segura
Mr. Bill Green
Mr. Gary Salazar
Ms. Freda Daugherty
Mr. Gerry Washburn

5 members were present representing a committee quorum.

**Approval of the Agenda**:
Mr. Benoit asked for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Chambers made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Lee seconded. A vote was taken and passed unanimously (5-0).

**Approval of Minutes**
Mr. Benoit asked for a motion to approve the minutes of September 21, 2026, appeal review hearing. Mr. Chambers made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Stacy seconded. A vote was taken and passed unanimously (5-0).

**Goddard High School Appeal**
**Closed Session** (unless family requests hearing to be in open session)
Mr. Benoit asked the appealing party if they wished for the appeal hearing to be in open session or closed session. The appealing party requested the hearing be conducted in open session.

Mr. Benoit stated the appeal hearing will be open as per the request.

Mr. Benoit reviewed the agenda and procedures for the hearing and then introductions took place.

Also present from the NMAA staff were Mrs. Alissa Wesbrook, Assistant to the Executive Director; Mr. Scott Owen, Deputy Director; and Mr. Dusty Young, Executive Director. Present for the aggrieved party was Mr. Britt Cooper, District AD, Roswell Independent Schools; Ms. Leslea Tivis, Athletic Director, Goddard High School; Mr. Micah Trujillo, Assistant AD, Roswell Independent Schools; and Ms. Jamie Chavez, mother of

Jaythan

**NMAA Summary**

Jaythan is a freshman transfer from NM Military Institute who is currently enrolled at Early College High School within the Roswell Independent School district. For the purposes of NMAA eligibility, Early College High School is considered an alternative school. NMAA bylaw 10.4.2.B. states that students enrolled in an alternative school must participate in their attendance zone public high school. Jaythan began participating with the Goddard High School football team this school year while enrolled at ECHS before it was discovered that his bona fide residence fell within the Roswell High School attendance zone. Goddard's petition states that Jaythan's parents are currently in the process of separation, and that his father currently resides in a separate residence located within the Goddard attendance zone with Jaythan's grandmother. However, at the time of our ruling, it could not be substantiated that the parents were legally separated or that the father did in fact reside full time at the Goddard address or that Jaythan resided there too. As a result, it has been determined that Jaythan's bona fide residence falls within the Roswell High School attendance zone, and thus he has been ruled ineligible for participation in any extracurricular activities at Goddard High School.

**Aggrieved Summary**

Ms. Tivis- they received the Form C on 8/25 and discovered he had been practicing with the football team at Goddard High School. They did self-report and received an eligibility letter from the NMAA on August 31st deeming him ineligible at Goddard. Ms. Chavez did submit on September 3rd a petition for legal separation with her husband and stated he was staying with his mother in the Goddard zone and Jaythan would be with her husband. The school then requested the need for proof of that in a utility bill or something of that sort to show the proof of residency. On September 11th they received a bill from the water department and the father, Christopher, had been added to the grandmother's water bill.

Cooper- asked the committee if they received a copy of legal separation document sent. Benoit- yes they did.

**Committee Questions**

Stacy- does their other son play anything.
Chavez- No he does not.

Stacy- Why NMMI.
Ms. Chavez- it was a middle school program, and they only had certain sports, they didn't have football, so he played up at the high school level.
Stacy-Why not stay at NMMI.
Chavez- it is a boarding school.
Stacy- as a freshman he could board.
Ms. Chavez- they chose not to send him to board. Her oldest attended there and was in the 9th grade, and it was a terrible experience, feels kids need to be older to be out of the house like that.

Stacy- Why Early College.
Chavez- they provide smaller classroom settings and that is what he is used to.

Stacy- Form C says he attended the Prep academy at NMMI from 2023-2026.
Chavez-correct, he started as a 6th grader.

Stacy- what sections of football do they have at Goddard High School.
Cooper- they have a freshman, junior varsity and varsity team.

Stacy- who is titled on the house she is living in.
Chavez- she is, her husband Chris and also the boys. It's a family property, so Riverstead Homestead is her family property.

Stacy-Who is titled on grandmother's estate.
Chavez- she and her husband but he is in nursing home.

Stacy- is the grandmother her mom or husbands mom.
Chavez- husband's mother

Stacy- the separation clause is simply an agreement between she and her husband. Why file the separation.

Chavez-they are not ready to divide things yet, the property is a family estate, her grandmother lives next to her. The separation is due to excessive alcohol use. Initially they tried staying at opposite ends of house and now they are at opposite ends of town.

Lee- does Jaythan play any other sports.
Chavez- he played basketball for middle school as well as track. NMMI didn't offer football, so he had to play up at the high school level in that sport.

Benoit- the ruling is ineligible at all levels because his primary residence is in Roswell zone and attending an alternative school.
Young- correct, the eligibility currently for this student is at Roswell HS.

Benoit-he attended NMMI 6-8$^{th}$ grade academically and played sports there.
Chavez- Correct.

**Executive Session**
Mr. Benoit asked for a motion to enter Executive Session for discussion purposes only. A motion was made by Mr. Lee and seconded by Mr. Stacy to go into Executive Session at 8:24 a.m. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously (5-0).

| Yes/For | No/Against | Appeal Review Committee Member Name |
|---|---|---|
| X | | **Mr. Paul Benoit** |
| X | | **Mr. Brian Stacy** |
| X | | **Mr. Larry Chavez** |
| X | | **Mr. Vance Lee** |
| X | | **Mr. Mike Chambers** |

Mr. Benoit asked for a motion to exit out of Executive Session. A motion was made by Mr. Stacy and seconded by Mr. Lee to exit Executive Session and go back into open session at 8:35 a.m. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously (5-0). Mr. Benoit stated there was no action taken during

Executive Session.

| Yes/For | No/Against | Appeal Review Committee Member Name |
|---|---|---|
| X | | **Mr. Paul Benoit** |
| X | | **Mr. Brian Stacy** |
| X | | **Mr. Larry Chavez** |
| X | | **Mr. Vance Lee** |
| X | | **Mr. Mike Chambers** |

**Action Item**
Vote On Student Eligibility: Mr. Benoit asked if there was any need for further discussion. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to uphold, amend or overturn the original decision for the Goddard High School appeal. A motion was made by Mr. Lee to uphold the New Mexico Activities Association's ruling. Mr. Chavez seconded. A vote was taken and passed unanimously (5-0).

The Meeting continued after a short recess and called back to order by Mr. Paul Benoit, NMAA Appeals Review Committee Chairman, at 8:41 a.m.

**Ruidoso High School Appeal**
**Closed Session** (unless family requests hearing to be in open session)
Mr. Benoit asked the appealing party if they wished for the appeal hearing to be in open session or closed session. The appealing party requested the hearing be conducted in open session.

Mr. Benoit stated the appeal hearing will be open as per the request.

Mr. Benoit reviewed the agenda and procedures for the hearing and then introductions took place.

Also present from the NMAA staff were Mrs. Alissa Wesbrook, Assistant to the Executive Director; Mr. Scott Owen, Deputy Director; and Mr. Dusty Young, Executive Director. Present for the aggrieved party was Mr. Andrew McCraw, Athletic Director, Ruidoso High School; Ms. Jackie Herrera, mother of Marcus and Marcus Ortega, student.

**NMAA Summary**
Marcus is a freshman transfer who has recently transferred from NM Military Institute to Ruidoso High School. Marcus was enrolled at Ruidoso HS on August 27, 2026, after having already been rostered on the football team at NMMI and after the official start date for all other fall sports. NMAA Bylaw 6.12.1.D states that students who transfer after the official practice start date will be ineligible for varsity participation at the new school for the remainder of that sport's season. As a result of Marcus's late transfer, he has been ruled ineligible for varsity participation in all fall sports at Ruidoso High School, but eligible immediately in all other sports under the "first transfer" provision.

**Aggrieved Summary**
Herrera- the goal for Marcus was a better education at NMMI. Unfortunately, due to liability issues for Marcus for self-medicating himself, the school was trying to blame him for not understanding, he was to take 3 ibuprofen but wasn't told to take every three hours. They allowed the student to take his own medication. They handed him two baggies with 50 pills, and within those were ibuprofen and Tylenol

together. He took a total of 9 pills within 8 hours. They thought it was suicide, so the school went to her and said he was suicidal. They then academically expelled him for the semester. She is an employee of the state and went to the Governor and was able to speak to the Board of Regents who gave him a plan to return the school there. The school then called CYFD on her and said she was neglecting him. She felt the boarding school NMMI was scared of the liability issue they had by giving him medication to self-medicate. She does feel NMMI has a great education but as a 14-year-old, they don't understand how often they need to take medicine. She made the decision to bring him back to his home school. Felt due to the animosity of her going to a higher level for guidance, that there could also be some backlash if she left him at NMMI. She graduated from Ruidoso so it has been home for a while.

***Committee Questions***

Chavez- how did they determined he was academically ineligible. NMMI did and academically suspended him. She didn't see how they could suspend him academically for the semester when he has A's and B's. He is a great student. Felt they realized the liability issues they were in and were trying to look for a way to not have him there. NMMI does have a reputation for high suicide attempts due to their rigorous academics. However, his grades are great.

McCraw- they do grade checks every 4-weeks and he has straight A's. He was chosen and selected as the student of the week.

Benoit- academically suspended, but still working online schooling.
Herrera- she reached out to the Governor and Ms. Aguilar and wrote an email, said he was suicidal and was furloughed from school. He was struggling online and was told that they couldn't do anything as they don't have an online program. She stated that is something that the commander general said was ok, she just wanted a higher education.

Chambers- do they have a jv football program. They have played one jv game, they only have 38 kids on their roster in total and has been hard to field a jv program due to numbers. They currently have 2 more games scheduled and due to a bye week, they were able to send more numbers, but next week they cannot. Numbers wise it is a struggle to have a jv program.

Stacy- mom stated academically in the state of NM, Ruidoso has a good school and NMMI has a good school. How did he do in NMMI grade wise.
Herrea- He had all A's, he was struggling in French disenrolled him and put him in Spanish, all A's an a B to their knowledge.

Stacy- it was stated that she did the research and simply wanted something higher academically for her son, now going back to what she considered not strong academically.
Herrera- that is her personal opinion, she knows its not an easy job. New Mexico has always been low in education across the nation, NMMI has higher educational standards. Feels like she wasn't prepared at Ruidoso, however she does see that they have options. Statistically across the nation NM is on the lower end. She wanted to give him something better than she had.

Stacy- what is his class schedule. Athletics, welding, English, Freshman success, Environmental Science, Algebra 1 and AP Science.

Stacy- with the medical issues going on is he doing better.
Marcus- there was no diagnosis at the time, but he had muscle cramps in his lower abs, and they have gone away.

Lee- has he been practicing.
McCraw- Yes, he has been practicing. What position- offensive lineman.

**Executive Session**
Mr. Benoit asked for a motion to enter Executive Session for discussion purposes only. A motion was made by Mr. Chambers and seconded by Mr. Lee to go into Executive Session at 9:04 a.m. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously (5-0).

| Yes/For | No/Against | Appeal Review Committee Member Name |
|---|---|---|
| X | | **Mr. Paul Benoit** |
| X | | **Mr. Brian Stacy** |
| X | | **Mr. Larry Chavez** |
| X | | **Mr. Vance Lee** |
| X | | **Mr. Mike Chambers** |

Mr. Benoit asked for a motion to exit out of Executive Session. A motion was made by Mr. Stacy and seconded by Mr. Chambers to exit Executive Session and go back into open session at 9:13 a.m. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously (5-0). Mr. Benoit stated there was no action taken during Executive Session.

| Yes/For | No/Against | Appeal Review Committee Member Name |
|---|---|---|
| X | | **Mr. Paul Benoit** |
| X | | **Mr. Brian Stacy** |
| X | | **Mr. Larry Chavez** |
| X | | **Mr. Vance Lee** |
| X | | **Mr. Mike Chambers** |

**Action Item**
Vote On Student Eligibility: Mr. Benoit asked if there was any need for further discussion. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to uphold, amend or overturn the original decision for the Ruidoso High School appeal. A motion was made by Mr. Lee to overturn the New Mexico Activities Association's ruling, granting eligibility. Mr. Chambers seconded. A vote was taken and passed unanimously (5-0).

**Adjournment**
Mr. Benoit asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Mr. Chambers and seconded by Mr. Stacy to adjourn the meeting. A vote was taken and passed unanimously (5-0). The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 a.m.