

**SHIFTING LEADERSHIP,
SHIFTING PRIORITIES
ENGAGING ATHLETIC SCHOOL
ADMINISTRATORS
WITH STATE ASSOCIATIONS**



PRESENTATION TEAM



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INTRODUCTION



Welcome



Purpose



Importance of
Collaboration



UNDERSTANDING THE MISSION

- **Mission, Goals, and Code of Ethics**
 - Provide professional development and support
- **Significance for State High School Associations**
- **Significance for State Athletic Directors Associations**
- **Structure**



MISSION STATEMENTS

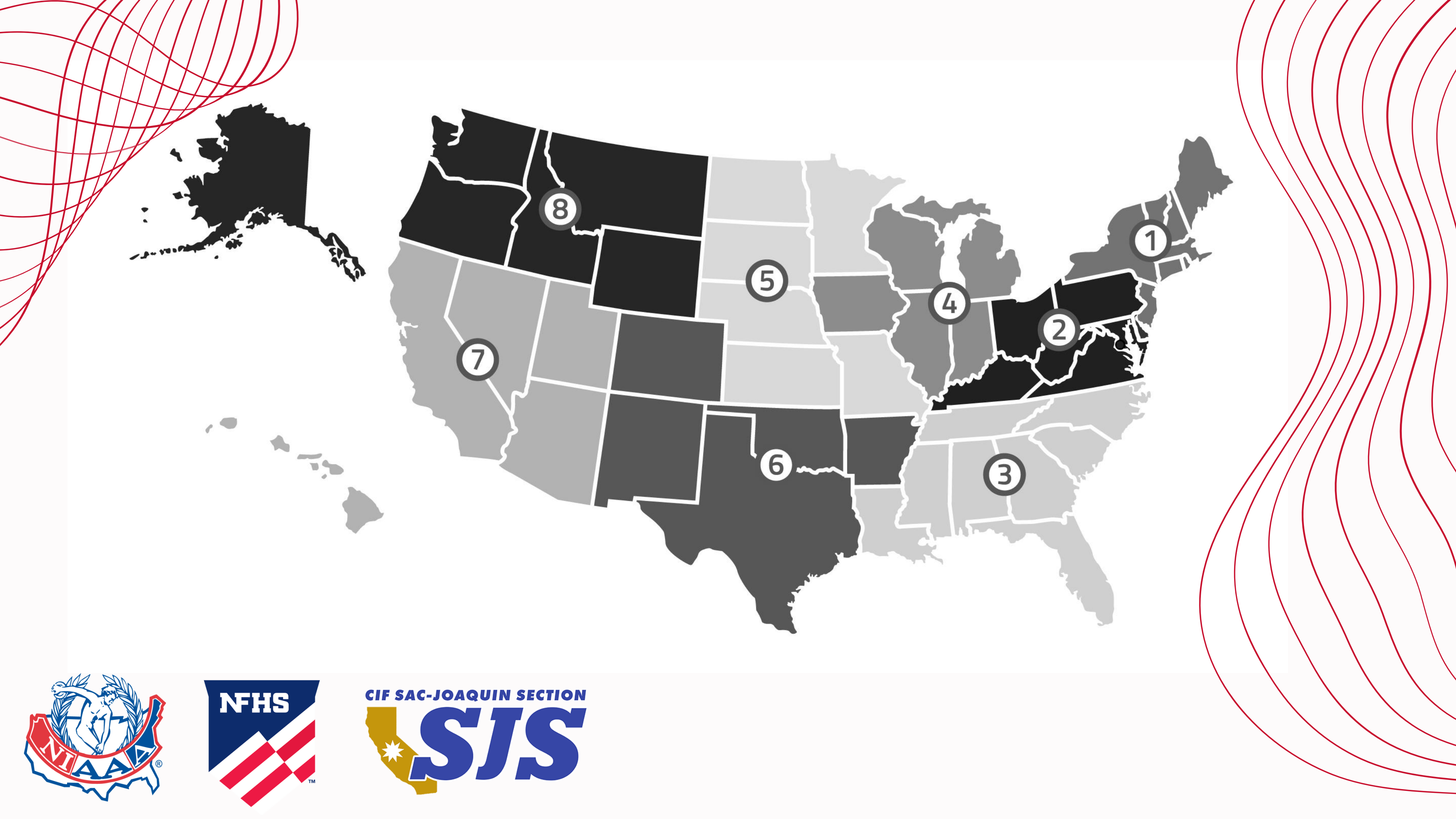
NIAAA

The NIAAA preserves, enhances, and promotes **education-based** athletics through the professional development of interscholastic athletic administrators. As a recognized accredited educational institution committed to **leadership** programs, resources, and service opportunities, the Association **supports** the athletic administrators' efforts in providing quality athletic participation **opportunities** for students.

NFHS

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) serves its members by providing **leadership** for the administration of **education-based** high school athletics and activities through the writing of playing rules that emphasize health and safety, educational programs that develop leaders, and administrative **support** to increase **opportunities** and promote sportsmanship.





PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES



- **NIAAA Leadership Training and Certification**
- **NFHS Learn – Training for Coaches, Administrators, Parents, Students, Officials**
- **Workshops and Conference at State Offices**
 - Importance of consistent meetings for alignment
- **Fostering Continuous Learning**



SHIFTING PRIORITIES

- Changing Role of School Leadership
- Changing Landscape for School Leaders
- Shifting Educational Priorities
- Association Engagement Models



SHIFTING EDUCATIONAL PRIORITIES

- Broader Student Outcomes Beyond Academics
- Whole-Child Education
- School Climate and Belonging
- Student Engagement and Attendance
- Equity and Access
- Mental Wellness
- Leadership Development
- Community Connection



CHANGING ROLE OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

- Increased Demands
- Time Scarcity / Overload / Burnout
- Safety and Liability Concerns
- Budget Constraints
- Staff Shortages / Turnover
- Student Retention and Engagement
- Mental Health / Student Wellness
- Parent Activism/Community Polarization
- No/Limited Coaching or Athletic Background



PARTNER ACTIVITY

If you had 90 seconds with a principal / superintendent, what would you want them to remember about your association?

OR

If you had 90 seconds with a state association executive director, what would you want them to know about school and principal / superintendent realities?



ADDRESSING THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE - Aligning with Administrator Realities -

- Time Scarcity
 - Administrators are overwhelmed
- Risk Management Culture
 - Administrators increasingly think through
- Student Wellness and Whole-Child Education
 - Educational leadership focus
- Leadership Turnover
 - Many of our schools are experiencing this



LEADERSHIP TURNOVER

Administration Reality

- Frequent Turnover
 - Athletic Directors (#1)
 - Principals (#2)
 - Superintendents (#3)
- Loss of Institutional Knowledge

Association Opportunity

- Reinforce Value Constantly
 - They Feel:
 - Seen
 - Respected
 - Supported
 - Heard
 - Appreciated
 - Less Isolated
 - You Are:
 - Responsive
 - Respectful
 - Fair
 - Trustworthy
 - Consistent
 - Practical
- Simplify Onboarding
- Provide Leadership Education Quickly
- Build Systems; Not Just Relationships



TIME SCARCITY

Administration Reality

- Overwhelmed
- Long Memos Ignored
- Complicated Processes = Frustrations
- Excessive Compliance Language = Disengagement

Association Opportunity

- Executive Summaries
 - Action/Deadline/Impact (60-90 Sec)
 - Layer Communications > Short Email
 - Plain Language Headlines
 - Predictable Communication Sequences
- Simplify Processes (2 Minute Rule)
 - Visual Workflow vs. Text-Heavy Instructions
 - Checklists vs. Narratives
- Translate Compliance into Real-World Impact
 - Separate legal lang. from operational guidance
 - Use human-centered tone
 - Reduce acronyms & internal jargon



RISK MANAGEMENT CULTURE

Administration Reality

- High school administrators are managing institutional risk every day — educational, legal, reputational, operational, and political
 - Liability
 - Safety
 - Public Perception
 - Equity
 - Compliance
 - Crisis Response

Association Opportunity

- Associations must position themselves as helping schools navigate that complexity successfully.
 - Risk Reduction Support
 - Guidance Provider
 - Trusted Expert
 - Consistent Statewide Resource
- Shift from being viewed primarily as a **rule-enforcement body** to being viewed as a **risk-management and leadership partner**.



STUDENT WELLNESS & WHOLE-CHILD FOCUS

Administration Reality

- Student Mental Health
- Belonging
- Character Development
- School Climate
- Student Connection

Association Opportunity

- Expand beyond eligibility and competition oversight and position as leaders in:
 - Student Wellness
 - Healthy School Culture
 - Mental Health Awareness
 - Educational Balance
 - Social-Emotional Development
 - Safe Participation
 - Belonging and Connection
- Message > Athletics not just extracurricular – they are student engagement infrastructure.



TRADITIONAL ASSOCIATION ENGAGEMENT

- Losing Effectiveness -

WHY

- Assuming athletics are a top administrative priority
- Sending Information instead of creating engagement
- Transactional relationships
- "Rules over relationships" perception
- Leading with rules rather than solutions

VIEWED

- Reactive
- Bureaucratic
- Difficult to navigate
- Event-focused only
- Detached from district realities

"The schools we serve have changed. If we engage them the same way we always have, relevance slowly erodes"

Being efficient operationally is no longer enough to maintain engagement & influence



FUTURE OF ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP

The next era of successful associations will be defined by adaptability and relevance.

PRIORITIES

- Service-Centered Leadership
- Relationship-Based Influence
- Student-Centered Decision Making
- Data-Informed Communication
- Simplified Systems
- Leadership Development
- Cross-Functional Collaboration

The associations that thrive will be the ones school leaders view as indispensable partners.



INCREASING ADMINISTRATIVE ENGAGEMENT

STRATEGIES

- #1) Speak the Language of School Leadership
 - Avoidances vs. Connect
- #2) Reduce Friction
 - Audit Interactions (Unnecessary complication weakens engagement)
- #3) Prioritize Relationship Capital
 - Trust is built outside moments of conflict
- #4) Create Administrator-Centered Professional Development
 - When administrators gain practical value, engagement increases
- #5) Tell Better Stories
 - Help schools create transformational student experiences



REFRAMING – ROLE OF STATE ASSOCIATION

How do we position ourselves as a strategic educational partner

Governance Organization vs. Leadership Organization

- Regulator → Trusted Partner
 - ✓ Supported / Educated / Respected / Heard
- Event Operator → Leadership Resource
 - ✓ Leadership Trn. / Crisis Mngt. Support / Culture Building / Stu. Wellness
- Compliance Officer → Student Experience Advocate
 - ✓ Stu. Opportunity / Educational Impact / School Culture / Long-Term Dev

Rules Matter – But Relationships Determine Influence



BENEFITS OF COLLABORATION

- **Mutual Support and Resources**
 - Share resources, expertise, and best practices
- **Professional Development Opportunities**
- **Strengthening High School Athletics Nationwide**



BUILDING STRONG FOUNDATIONS

- **Establishing Clear Communication Channels**
 - Methods for regular, open communication
- **Identifying Common Goals and Objectives**
 - Align on shared objectives and goals
- **Recognizing Unique Strengths**
 - Distinct contributions of each association



COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

- **Utilizing Technology for Efficient Communication**
 - Tools and platforms
- **Regular Meetings and Check-ins**
 - Importance of consistent meetings for alignment
- **Promote Transparency and Open Dialogue**
 - Openness and honesty to build trust



OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

- **Potential Barriers**
- **Legislative Overreach**
- **Effective Problem Solving**
- **Flexibility and Adaptability**



COLLABORATION PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES

- **Showcasing Successful Case Studies**
- **Impact on Athletic Administrators**



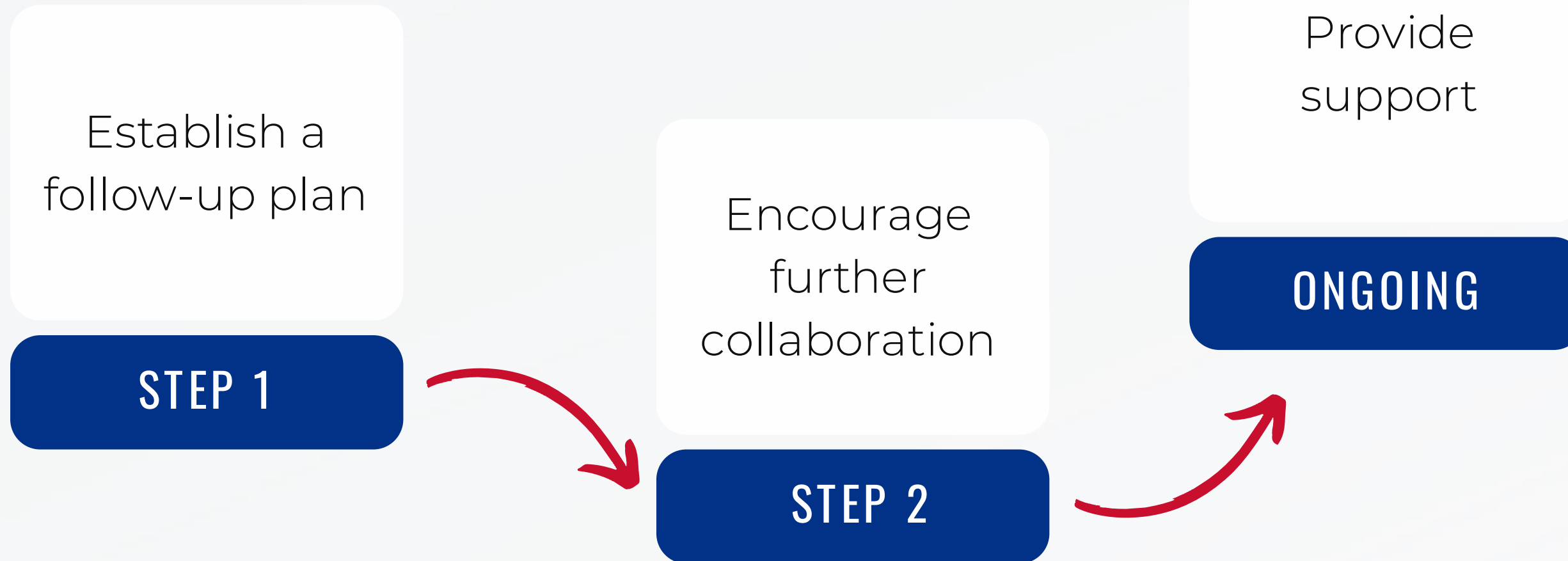
CLOSING THOUGHTS

- *School leaders are navigating unprecedented complexity. The question is not whether athletics matter – it's whether we are connecting athletics to what matters most to them.*
- *If leadership priorities shift, our engagement strategies **MUST** shift with them.*
- *Our Influence does not come from authority alone. It comes from relevance, trust, and service.*



NEXT STEPS

Where do we go from here?



Q & A TIME



THANK YOU!

*Let's keep the
conversation going!*

