

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Newly-formed Lakes Valley Conference hosts kick-off event**

Representatives from nine area high schools gathered today for the kick off of the newly-formed Lakes Valley Conference (LVC). Student leaders, athletic directors and school administrators came together in a show of support for and in celebration of their collective success in forming the LVC.

The high schools (Lakeland, Milford, Walled Lake Central, Walled Lake Northern, Walled Lake Western, Waterford Kettering, Waterford Mott, South Lyon and South Lyon East) represented the Huron Valley, South Lyon, Walled Lake and Waterford school districts. The schools have been part of the Kensington Lakes Activities Association (KLAA) since 2008, but large gaps in enrollment equity and philosophical scheduling differences led to multiple proposals for reorganization of the KLAA. When none of the proposals gained majority support, the nine LVC schools came together to form a separate league. Official notification of withdrawal was sent to the KLAA in May 2016. Athletic contests within the new league begin with the 2017-2018 fall sports season. Representatives from all four school districts agreed that partnership with the KLAA had been extremely valuable.

“I’m thankful for the schools that were in the KLAA for providing us with great competition and sportsmanship,” said Sophia Bolden, a 10th grader at South Lyon East High School. “I’m now excited to play others who share the same level of play and culture that South Lyon East holds.”

LVC principals and athletic directors are forming a constitution in order to establish the framework for quality sportsmanship and competition within the league. The blueprint for the LVC is founded on competitive equity, comparable enrollment and geographic proximity.

South Lyon East 9th grader Rachel Waranaukus said, “I am looking forward to joining the new athletic league. The KLAA has great schools, but our school was much smaller in student

population. Joining the LVC will bring closer competition and a new change and opportunity to our athletes, our school and our community.”

Principals in the LVC schools are assuming an active role in the management of the new league and are mandating greater recognition of student activities and academics. Milford High School Principal Kevin McKenna will serve as the acting president of the new league.

“I’ve enjoyed the work that has gone into the development of the conference as everyone involved has had a common mission and vision in supporting our schools and students.”

Additionally, the LVC will look to incorporate school-related points of pride, innovative scheduling and unique leadership opportunities for students. Social media will help market and promote conference achievements on the athletic field and in the classroom. Scott Rolando, Lakeland teacher and Student Activities Director, will take a leadership role in implementing these efforts conference-wide.

“Being part of the LVC is going to provide great opportunities for our student leaders,” Rolando said. “We are looking to expand our focus and reach within the communities we represent. We are looking forward to leveraging social media and the league’s website to promote all the great programs, activities and events taking place in the LVC.”

The LVC participant schools will continue finalizing schedules for the 2017-2018 school year. The conference is also looking for opportunities to expand the league going forward and will create a Middle School Conference involving ten schools from the participating districts beginning with the 2017-2018 school year.

Walled Lake District Athletic Director Brian Swinehart will serve as the conference president for Athletic Directors. Mr. Swinehart has taken a critical leadership role in the development of the Conference and states “This is an exciting time for the school communities of Huron Valley, South Lyon, Walled Lake and Waterford. We are all looking forward to working together to build a league based on the values of athletics, sportsmanship, academics and community service. It is bittersweet because we are sad to part ways with the many outstanding schools and people of the KLAA. However, we are also very excited to look forward and start our own traditions and history in the Lake Valley Conference.”

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