

# INFORMATION FOR AWARD NOMINEES

## NIAAA STATE AWARD OF MERIT

### Keith Cory, Johnston HS

CAA Certification - Eight Years  
District Athletic Director for Johnston - Five Years  
Johnston High School and N.A. Ferri Middle School

**Athletic Teams added to N.A. Ferri MS since arrival: (8)**

Boys Cross Country, Girls Cross Country, Girls Volleyball, Girls Lacrosse, Unified Basketball  
Coed Tennis, and JV Girls and Boys Basketball

**Athletic Teams added to Johnston High since arrival: (9)**

Froshmore Football, Girls Tennis, Girls Indoor Track & Field,, Boys Indoor Track & Field  
Girls Lacrosse - Varsity and JV, Boys Lacrosse - Varsity and JV, Unified Basketball  
Boys Volleyball - Varsity and JV, and Boys Tennis

**Johnston School Department Athletic Offerings have increased 60% in five years this includes over 380 additional playing opportunities for Johnston students.**

**RIAAA Executive Board - Three years**

Sport Committees: Boys Lacrosse, Girls Lacrosse  
RIPCOA Liason - Three years

**RIPCOA Executive Board - Three years**

Sport Chair: 2016-2017 Girls and Boys Basketball, 2018 - present Boys Soccer, Softball

RIGSO Executive Board - Five years

### James Cawley, CAA Rogers HS

- Jim serves on the Executive Board
  - Jim serves on sports committees
  - Jim attends both the state and national conferences
  - Jim has earned his CAA
  - Jim has added lacrosse to his program
  - During his tenure Boys Swim, Girls Volleyball, Boys Indoor/Outdoor track, Girls JV Tennis have established or reestablished themselves
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# ATHLETIC DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR

## Ken Rix, Warwick Public Schools

Director of Athletics Warwick Vets HS: 12 Years

Director of Athletics Warwick Public Schools: 3 Years (**4 Schools**: Pilgrim, Toll Gate, Warwick Veterans MS, Winman MS)

Committees Served: Boys Basketball, Baseball, Softball, Competitive Cheerleading.

Current Committee Member: Executive Re-alignment Committee

Past Host of Soccer Playoffs

Achieved CAA

Attended MSSADA Conferences

Attended 2016 NIAAA National Conference

### Recent School Accomplishments:

D3 State Champions: Boys Ice Hockey (Pilgrim)

D3 State Champions: Boys Soccer (Pilgrim)

D2 Division Champions: Girls Soccer (Pilgrim)

D2 State Runner Up: Girls Soccer (Pilgrim)

D3 Division Co -Champion: Field Hockey (Pilgrim)

D3 Division Co- Champion; Field Hockey (Toll Gate)

D3 Division Co-Champion: Field Hockey (Toll Gate)

D3 State Runner Up: Field Hockey (Toll Gate)

D3 State Runner Up: Football (Pilgrim)

### Recent Contributions:

Navigated the WPS Athletic Department through consolidation of High Schools and Middle Schools

Championed and Instituted **Middle School Sports** In Warwick. (Warwick never had middle school sports)

Championed and Instituted **Full Time Athletic Trainers and Strength and Conditioning Coaches** at Both High Schools

Instituted Many Major **Facility Upgrades**: Ie. New Sport Training Rooms, Track Resurfacing at Both HS, New Gym Floor, New Baseball, Football and Softball Field renovations. Drop Down Batting Cages at all 4 schools. Etc.

## **ATHLETIC DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR (continued)**

### **Anthony Ficocelli, Central Falls**

- A Physical Education/Health teacher in the Central Falls School district for 22 years and has served as the Athletic Director for the past 7 years.
- The assistant coach on the football team for last 14 years.
- For the last 2 years we have played with no home field for Boys and Girls Soccer, Football, Baseball and Softball
- In 2018, football team was the Division 3 regular season co champions and the Division 3 State Champions
- 2 first team All-State Football players, first time in school history two first teamers from the same team in the same year in football
- 2018, 200 meter outdoor state track champion
- 2018 3rd team All State 4x200 relay indoor boys track
- 2018 Coach of the Year in Boys Basketball D3 and the back to back 2017 and 2018 Coach of the year in Football D3
- Last year all of the athletic teams, except for one, qualified for the post season.
- Quarterfinal, Girls Basketball, Semi Final Boys Basketball, Semi Final football, Final Unified Volleyball, Final Unified Basketball, Semi Final Baseball.
- First round Volleyball, Boys Soccer, Softball, Girls Soccer
- Both Indoor Track and Outdoor Track (Boys and Girls) had state qualifiers
- CFHS is one of the founding schools in Rhode Island for Unified Sports and were named a National Unified Champion School by Special Olympics in 2017

### **Christy Belisle, CMAA, Mt Hope High School**

- Attends Section 1 Conference annually from 2014 to present
- Serves on Gymnastics and Boys Soccer sport committees
- Received CMAA in June 2018, becoming 3<sup>rd</sup> RI AD with CMAA status and first female AD in Rhode Island
- Serves on the Executive Board for the state of Rhode Island since 2016

It is my pleasure to write this nomination letter for Christina Belisle. Christy is an outstanding individual with a strong work ethic. As Principal of Mt. Hope High School, I have gotten to know Christy not only as the Athletic Director of our sports program, but as a leader and mentor to our students. She is a visionary, always striving to be the best with the goal of providing the best education and athletic experiences possible for all students.

When students talk about Christy, they say she is dedicated to sports but just as important, she cares deeply about each and every one of them and their academic success. She created and implemented our Academic Eligibility policy. Although she holds all students to high academic standards, she mentors them, monitors their progress and shows a genuine care for their future success.

Christy is a rare individual who possesses the knowledge and critical skills in several key areas and the professionalism to make connections to move schools and their sports programs forward. She is a highly respected leader for not only her knowledge and skills, but also for her collaborative style, and her authentic and personable style of wanting to help others learn how to help our student athletes achieve.

I unequivocally support the candidacy of Ms. Christina Belisle as Athletic Director of the Year.

Deborah DiBiase, Ed.D.

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## **SCHOOL OF THE YEAR**

### **Moses Brown : 2017-2018**

Girls' Basketball State Open Champions

Girls Lacrosse Division I State and Division Champions

Softball Division I State and Division Champions

Golf State and Division Champions

Boys' Ice Hockey Division I Semifinalist

Boys' Lacrosse Division I State Runners-Up

Field Hockey Division I Champions and State Runners- Up

Girls' Tennis Division I Runners-Up

Girls' Tennis- Singles Champion- Candice Ballarin

Boys' Soccer Division I Semifinalist

Girls' Soccer Division II Semifinalist

Football Division I playoffs

Two members of the Cross-Country team qualified for New England Championships

Leslie Jones was awarded Field Hockey Coach of the Year

Sportsmanship Award in Swimming and Boys' Basketball

Gatorade Player of the Year- Oluchi Ezeemma, Girls Basketball (two-time recipient)

Gatorade Player of the Year- Ali Blanchard, Softball

Laurie Center named USA Today RI Girls' Basketball Coach of the Year

83% athletic participation rate

42 Three-Season athletes

18 Student-Athletes recruited to collegiate athletics (7 Division I)

Captain leadership training through the Positive Coaching Alliance

Sponsored Open Forum for discussion on Sport Specialization and the harmful effects on student-athletes

Boys' lacrosse raised money for Providence After-School Alliance through a fundraiser matched by the Belichik Foundation (second year)

## **Ponagansett HS**

RIIAAA Awards

2019 Nomination for School of the Year - Ponagansett High School

### **Winter 2017-18**

Unified Sports National Banner School Recipient

Presentation/Assembly hosted by Kevin Negande (ESPN anchor) and Tim Shriver  
(Chairman of Special Olympics International)

Recognized for inclusive school community

Special Olympics RI Polar Plunge Participants

Highest Fundraising School for the past four years to benefit Unified Programs  
statewide

Wrestling Undefeated Season

New England Champions

RI State Team Champions

Division 1 Regular Season Division Champion

Boys Ice Hockey

Division 2 Playoff Semifinalist

Girls Indoor Track & Field

All-American Gianna Rao – Weight Throw

New Balance Indoor Nationals Runner-Up

Three-Time Indoor Track & Field All-American

New England Champion (Two-Time Champion)

RI State Champion (Two-Time Champion)

### **Spring 2018**

Baseball

Division 2 Finals Runner-Up

Third Year in a Row in Finals (D2 Champion in 2016 & 2017)

Division 2 Regular Season Division Champion

Best four-year record in school history

Boys Lacrosse

Division 3 Playoff Finals Runner-Up

Division 3 Regular Season Division Champion

Unified Basketball

Division 5 State Champions

Girls Outdoor Track & Field

All-American Gianna Rao – Weight Throw

New Balance Outdoor Nationals two-time All-American

New England Champion (Two-Time Champion)

RI State Champion (Two-Time Champion)

## **Ponaganset HS (continued)**

### **Fall 2018**

Unified Coaches & Athletes traveled to China with Special Olympics Chairman Tim Schriver to promote programs benefiting individuals with disabilities and the goal of “build a world of inclusion”

#### Cross Country

Host of RIIL Class & State Championships  
16<sup>th</sup> Consecutive Year hosting these meets  
Organized by Head Coach Jim Caron  
50+ student-athlete volunteers make the event run smoothly

#### Football

8-1 Regular Season Record (0-10 in 2017)  
Division 4 Playoff Semifinalist  
Coaches Association Division 4 Coach of the Year

#### Unified Volleyball

Back-To-Back Division 4 State Champions (2017 & 2018)

#### Girls Tennis

Division 2 Finals Runner-Up  
Sportsmanship Award Recipient

#### Girls Volleyball

Sportsmanship Award Recipient (second year in a row)

## **Tiverton HS**

### **Winter of 2017 - 2018**

Boys Basketball was Defeated in Division III State Championship Game  
Girls Basketball Won Division Title and The Division III State Championship  
Unified Basketball Won the Division IV Championship  
Cheering won Small Division Cheering State Championship

### **Spring of 2018**

Softball won Division III State Championship  
Boys Tennis won Division III Championship and Division III State Championship  
Outdoor Track was reinstated for the first time since 1984 with a bonus of hosting their first meet.

### **Fall of 2018**

Field Hockey won Division III State Championship  
Girls Soccer won Division III State Championship  
Football won Division IV State Championship  
Girls Tennis was defeated in the Finals of Division III State Championship match Tournament  
Boys Soccer was defeated in the semifinals of the Division III State Championship Tournament  
Re-implemented Track as a sport in the spring of 2018  
Held first cross country meet in the fall of 2018

# ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR

## **DENNIS SOARES- MIDDLETOWN ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**

Dennis was formally Middletown's Dean of Students and currently serves as the Assistant Principal. After meeting Dennis, the first time, I knew that the culture of Middletown would change with his positive influence. Dennis is a former coach and knows the importance of administrative support of an athletic program. He recently stated these feelings to me:

"Athletics is an important part of high school in general because it helps students learn how to work as a team, good or bad, we tend to see the true person within an athlete under many different circumstances. Athletics teaches team work, cooperation, collaboration, respect, trust, and pride. Athletics also teaches leadership very positively and pushes students to do better in school. Athletes represent generations of athletes and that's important for them to understand. They represent the community, not just the school".

At the end of the fall season he worked with teachers/coaches to develop an after-school training program for all athletes. He currently has over 20 student-athletes attending daily. He hopes to grow this program. The students work hard in a supervised, well planned, energetic and fun program. He has also worked on the camaraderie of the faculty/staff. He has organized outings to P Bruins games as well as student/faculty athletic events. As a teacher I notice a big change in our faculty/staff culture. Everyone seems friendlier towards each other, willing to get involved and there is an overall energy in the building. Lunchtime can be chaotic, but Dennis has managed to completely change the lunchroom environment. He can be found, along with our current dean, telling jokes, playing music, selling ice cream and simply creating a place that students want to be. We used to have to corral them but now they want to be in the lunchroom.

Dennis has been able to create a relationship with our student body by acting as a guiding figure in their lives. He tries to help them believe in themselves. Dennis greets every student daily by name. And if he encounters someone he does not know, he introduces himself and tries to learn something about him/her. As an assistant principal discipline often falls into his hands. My office is near his and I can hear his guiding words as he mentors students and helps them to develop character and reflect on behaviors. He challenges all students to reach their highest potential.

You can find Dennis on the sidelines and in the gymnasiums witnessing students coming out of their shells through athletics. It is important to him to develop relationships based on interactions in sports. Dennis feels athletics shape school pride. He loves the thought of going to a football game on a Friday night. He says, "it gives the school something to look forward to". As an administrator, when he sees our student-athletes on the court or field, he watches them as if they are one of his own. The next day during lunch, he talks about the game and he knows the student-athletes appreciate it.



## **ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR (continued)**

### **Joseph Hurley – Principal Barrington High School**

Mr. Hurley has been the Principal of Barrington High School since 2009, prior to that he had been in the school district as our Assistant Principal for 10 years. He has been a constant support to our athletic programs throughout his tenure. He is involved in all aspects of our school as well. He has served on many NEASC teams and and has been involved with the RIIL in committees when needed.

Joe Hurley was awarded the 2018 Rhode Island Principal of the Year.

Most important, he is a true fan of the Barrington Eagles! He interacts with our coaching staff and athletes on a regular basis and has keen interest of their successes and challenges. He certainly supports me as an athletic administrator and knows what it takes to make an athletic program the best it can be.

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# **SISTER CHARLENE TEDESCHI DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD**

## **Matt Nunes, Sachuest Lacrosse**

- Matt years ago introduced lacrosse to the girls of Aquidneck Island and beyond. In short, he is a big reason there is girls lacrosse in the island high schools (Portsmouth, Middletown, Rogers). Matts, influence has also reached in to the Bristol and Tiverton communities. We all know that the interest begins at a grassroots level and Matt has been there since the beginning and continues to this day to help support island youth lacrosse here at Rogers and through his own Sachuest Lacrosse.

## **Tim Brown, Middletown Athletic Booster**

- Tim is currently our Middletown Athletic Boosters' V.P (2012- Present)
- He was personally involved in raising over \$54,000 in funds that went directly to the Athletic Department. These funds allowed the AD to provide critical supplies, equipment and services to the teams that otherwise would not been doable based on school department budget.
- Due to budget constraints in 2012, he organized/implemented parent volunteers to help operate ticket sales at Fall and Winter home games. As a result, MPS saved and continues to save an estimated \$5,000 each school year.
- He organized the transition of over 100 old individual championship banners to new "by sport" championship banners. In order to offset the cost he organized/implemented an auction and sold the old banners.
- He led a group of parents in raising the funds needed to support a freshman boys basketball team at MHS for two years. (2012,2013)
- In addition, he coached the 2012 freshman boys' basketball team and won the state championship. This was a volunteer position.
- He was also a volunteer Coach for the MHS Boys Varsity Soccer team (2012).
- Outside of MPS he has coached boys' soccer for the Middletown Youth Soccer Club (2008-2012) as well as held the position of MYSC board member Fields Coordinator (2008-2012)

## **MEDIA AWARD**

### **Eric Benevides, The Valley Breeze**

- Sports Editor of The Valley Breeze & Observer Newspapers since July 2014. Responsible for reporting on sports in 11 communities, 10 in northern Rhode Island, as well as 14 high schools, the second-most in the state (behind the Providence Journal). The Valley Breeze, which has a weekly circulation of 64,800, publishes five different editions: its Cumberland/Lincoln edition, the Observer (Smithfield, Scituate, Foster, and Glocester), its North Smithfield/Woonsocket/Blackstone (Mass.) edition, and editions in North Providence and Pawtucket.
- Before Eric joined the Valley Breeze, the newspaper's sports department focused heavily on middle school and youth sports and paid little attention to high school sports. Under Eric's watch, the sports department changed its philosophy to focusing exclusively on high school sports, and his newspaper's sports sections have become the most read in northern Rhode Island.
- Unlike most newspapers that depend on synergy from neighboring newspapers and freelance help, the sports department at The Valley Breeze & Observer is a "two-person show", with Eric and a part-time sports writer, Kayla Panu, responsible for everything. Eric writes his own stories and takes his own pictures, as well as edits and lays out each of the five sections, and he is very passionate about his work.
- While some student-athletes in each area have attended private schools outside of his circulation area, such as La Salle, Moses Brown, Bishop Hendricken, Bay View, and Wheeler, Eric has made it a point to follow their careers and write stories about their successes. And he has also given the same courtesy to local college and professional athletes who have furthered their careers at the next level.
- Eric, who has won multiple Rhode Island Press Association writing awards, has been covering high school sports in Rhode Island since 1999. From 1999-2009, he wrote for the Pawtucket Times, and from 2009-2014, he wrote for both the Times and the Woonsocket Call, serving as their sports editor from 2012-2014. Prior to his time with the Pawtucket Times, Eric wrote for the Fall River Herald News in Mass., which in the '90s, covered Tiverton and Portsmouth.

## **MEDIA AWARD (CONTINUED)**

### **BOBB ANGEL WADK RADIO BROADCASTER**

Bobb began his radio broadcasting career in February of 1967 at a radio station in Fall River. His second job in radio came in June of '67 when he was hired by WADK in Newport. He has remained at WADK for more than 51 years is now. It is believed that no one in Rhode Island radio history has had a longer tenure at one station. Around 1970 Bobb created WADK's Sports Department. Over the years he has continually strived to broaden the station's local sports coverage and heighten the awareness of the community relating to the efforts of our local high schools as well as Salve Regina University.

In addition to airing sportscasts several times a day on weekdays, Bobb has been the play-by-play voice of local football, boys basketball, girls basketball, baseball, girls softball, and hockey. He has been ably assisted by others who shared a dedication to and enthusiasm for local athletes. Those individuals include Jim Ascoli in football for more than 30 years... John Dias in basketball for about 25 years... and the late Ralph Gizzi who was by Mr. Angel's side for some 35 years.

Over the course of his career, Bobb feels very fortunate to have received a number of awards and recognitions. He has been inducted into the R.I. Radio Hall of Fame, as well as Athletic Halls of Fame by the R.I. Interscholastic League, Words Unlimited, Rogers High School, Portsmouth High School, and the City of Newport. Bobb has been named the R.I. Sportscaster of the Year 7 times. He has received a number of awards from Interscholastic associations. His play-by-play work and his sports coverage in general have garnered awards from the Associated Press.

### **Richard Dionne – East Bay Newspapers**

Rich is a consent presence at all games in the East Bay. He is a photographer that covers events throughout each season including the playoffs. He is there right besides our teams in the good times and the down times. Any kind of weather, he stays to the end, dedicated to the student athletes he photographs and reports on. Rich has been a great advocate for all Eastbay Athletic programs . Always ready with his camera he displays our young athletes throughout the local paper. Rich is always ready to provide positive community outreach and support for our programs.

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## **Male Coach of the Year**

### **Andrew Martucci, Rogers Track**

- Andrew is a caring and competitive individual who's passion for track and field is palpable. He consistently takes in and convinces anyone and everyone that they can be successful in at least one event. His roster is normally around 40-50 boys which is no small feat for a small school enrollment. His teams are always in the championship mix, but more importantly his kids come back year after year in a sport where many are known to 'try track' for a season or two before trying something else. The fruits of his labor have paid off for many who came in raw and four years later find themselves moving on to collegiate track programs.
- Andrew has been recognized by his peers with the 2018 NFHS Outdoor Track & Field Coach of the Year.
- Andrew has been recognized by his peers and was awarded the RITCA Coach of the Year Award in 2015

### **Kyle Medeiros, Lincoln Boys and Girls Volleyball Head Coach**

He is extremely passionate, hard-working, dedicated, and goes above and beyond to put his student-athletes in the best position possible to succeed both on and off the court. I could go on and on about the character and qualities Coach Medeiros possesses. I feel very fortunate to have him on my staff at Lincoln and feel he is very deserving of the Male Coach of the Year Award.

### **John “Sandy” Gorham – Barrington High School - Head Football, Head Boys and Girls Swim, Head Softball**

Coach Gorham is deserving of this honor due to his many accomplishments over his 40+ years to the coaching profession. Currently he is the head coach for our football program; boys and girls swim teams, and our softball team.

He is a coach well-liked and respected by his athletes. He puts his team first and truly cares about each individual athlete. Coach Gorham is always there whenever a student needs him both on and off the court.

His most recent accomplishments have been;

- 4 years in row – Girls Swim State Champion Team
  - 2018 Girls Softball – Division 2 State Runner Up
  - 2018 Girls Swimming State Champions (Boys team State Runner Up)
  - 2017 Girls Softball – Division 2 State Champions
  - 2017 Girls Swimming State Champions (Boys team State Runner Up)
  - 2016 Girls Softball – Division 2 North League Champions
  - 2016 Girls Swimming State Champions (Team won without any individual event champions)
  - 2015 Girls Swimming State Champions
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## **FEMALE COACH OF THE YEAR**

### **Nicole Daniello - Mt Hope Head Gymnastics coach**

Nicole has built a fantastic program of student-athletes who have excelled on the mat and in the classroom. Each year she has developed the high school gymnast to compete in one or more events in addition to letting the highly skilled gymnasts lead the way. The girls have become a true unit under her direction closing out Back-to Back to Back Division II State Championships and nearly missing beating the Division I State Champions by less than 1 point the last two years. They have recently moved in to Division I and look strong for the 2018-19 school year. Nicole is the epitome of ethics, sportsmanship, grace and professionalism.

### **Holly Morris – Barrington Head Field Hockey Coach**

Coach Morris is a great motivator and leader of her program. She truly cares about each and everyone one of her athletes. She is committed and passionate to her coaching and works hard to make sure her teams are prepared for competition. This past fall, her team followed her lead as she guided them to a State Championship. It is her second championship in the past three years.

Holly is a coach that any athletic administrator would want working with athletes. She is organized, communicates well with others, and most important, she is dedicated to her team and our school.

Her most recent accomplishments have been;

- 2 of the past 3 years – State Champion Team
- 2018 Girls Softball – Division 2 State Runner Up
- 2018 Field Hockey State Champions
- 2017 Field Hockey Division 1 regular season League Champions
- 2016 Field Hockey State Champions

## **FEMALE COACH OF THE YEAR (continued)**

### **DENISE PATSOS- MIDDLETOWN UNIFIED VOLLEYBALL COACH**

Denise has been the Unified Volleyball coach for 4 years and helped our previous coach when she started the volleyball team. Denise feels that “it is very special to be part of a Unified Team. You cannot put into words what your athletes and partners learn and experience during our times together. From practicing to travelling on the bus together to winning bronze medals and Championship seasons. Watching each person grow and develop in their own way is priceless! It is as important to present young people with life situations and teach them how to act and to be good and kind to each other”.

Having a special needs child gives Denise life experience for working with our Unified Program. Her son Derek was young when he became involved through the YMCA and Denise helped in any way she could. Derek grew through the YMCA program and he became involved at the high school level where Denise was able to contribute as well. At the close of 2016 she worked with the YMCA to create a merger of all the Special Olympics teams on the island to make 1 very large Special Olympic team which runs out of the YMCA. She has been involved in fundraising for the program in many different capacities. She helped to organize/implement dances for the athletes, being able to witness the athletes having fun and interacting socially. Denise helped organize/implement a golf tournament which was their biggest fundraiser, her main contribution was running the silent auction and raffle event.

For 18 years, while her son Derek was growing up she was a real estate agent, so she could work her schedule around his needs. Since his graduation she has come to realize the large valley there is for socially awkward young adults. She recognized that they really have no help learning to interact or create friendships. She feels that society is trying to create an “equality for all” in school/work places but we are forgetting how to teach them to be friends and good people as well. Denise made it her mission to start a social program for young adults, 21 and over, in Newport. Her program, RISSA, Rhode Island Social Skills Academy, opened in October 2018 at the Boys and Girls Club Newport with 7 students and hope of continued growth as we move forward.

Denise has been part of the Challenger Little League for 15 years and they are now running the yearly Jamboree for over 500 athletes and their families.

Denise is an example of how coaching flows out beyond the gym/field and into our communities and real life experiences.

**HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES:**

Amelio Emo Dinitto – Warwick Schools

Cindy Neal – St. Mary Academy Bay View

Frederick T. Adams – Classical HS

Ray McGee – Shea HS