



## MEET THE ATHLETIC COUNCIL

**Marisa Fallacaro-Dougherty**  
**West Seneca Central Schools**

**Female Representative to the Executive Committee**

The vast majority of us are cautious by nature. Most of us survey the scene, stick a toe in the water, and observe how others behave in new surroundings. We gradually feel more comfortable and make the decision to engage or not. Then there is Marisa.

In a span of just 9-lightening quick years as the Athletic Director at Eden Central and now in her first year with the West Seneca Central Schools, Fallacaro-Dougherty (F-D) has taken every opportunity with her league, Section and State and has jumped in head first. Her energy level and willingness to get involved are traits to be respected. Sitting on the sideline isn't anywhere in her personality or plan.

The Cheektowaga Central graduate has served two years as ECIC Girls Basketball Chair and an active member of the Girls Activity Board for nine years. She has been the Girl's Rep to the Section Executive Committee for six years, which includes a seat at the table for the New York Public High School Athletic Association's (NYSPHSAA), Executive Committee. Marisa oversees Professional Development opportunities for all of the athletic directors in Section VI. She has also been a part of three NYSPHSAA committees including Handbook, Compensation and Strategic Planning.



Pictured left to right: Jim Graczyk (Male Rep. to the Section VI Executive Committee), Marisa Fallacaro-Dougherty (Female Rep. to the Section VI Executive Committee), Timm Slade (Section VI Executive Director), and Jim Spanbauer (former Principals' Rep. to the Section VI Executive Committee)

As a Cheektowaga Warrior, F-D competed in soccer for six years and basketball for five. She attended Roberts Wesleyan for two years, playing both sports while also studying Nursing. The draw of athletics was too much to fight off and Marisa transferred to Canisius College where she earned both degrees in Physical Education.

“I believe that Education chose me’, Marisa recalls. “I came home from Roberts Wesleyan for the summer and had knee surgery. My summer job was as a secretary at the NICU at Children’s Hospital. From that, I learned that Nursing was not for me. Instead, I went back to the one place where I always found answers; the soccer field and I began coaching. Coaching reminded me of how important athletics was to me throughout high school, how much athletics taught me and how much athletics was there for me when I needed it most”.

Fallacaro-Dougherty has a vast coaching resume serving as the head varsity coach for three Sports at Eden; Softball, Field Hockey and for eight years, Girls Basketball. She also served as the varsity basketball coach at Cheektowaga Central. In 2014, she was named NYS Class B Softball Coach of the Year and in 2010, as the Section’s Most Sportsmanlike Coach.

Not surprisingly, Marisa’s personal life mirrors her professional life-Full Speed ahead. She met husband Joe Dougherty through basketball, and together they are running around Western New York trying to keep up with five incredibly active children and a grandchild, not to mention 10-month old pup, Max. Joe, a well-known coach and official, is in his 34th year as a distinguished and honorable, NYS State Trooper.

The 2018 Section AD of the Year, F-D feels very fortunate for the professional role models that she has worked with. “I have been very blessed throughout my entire life with educators who have helped me become the professional I am today. As a young coach working under Nick Bordonaro (my HS coach), and then for Athletic Directors, Cheryl Buggs and Brian Hickson, they were great experiences. I was able to learn so much from the daily guidance that they offered.

“Cheryl Buggs was the one who urged me to apply at Eden and I am beyond grateful. Years later her husband, who happened to be my new superintendent, offered me the role that changed my life; TOSA in charge of Athletics. It was soon after that Sandy Anzalone and many of the amazing coaches I’ve had the opportunity to work with at Eden, encouraged me to pursue my education and become a certified administrator.”

If you are not careful, you will be swept up in the wake that Marisa creates. Her work rate and energy level is impressive. Her self-described, ‘two most important role models’, Mom & Dad, raised a person with a burning intensity, a dedication to young athletes and the attributes and pride of an extreme hard-worker. Jump on the Rocket Ship and hold on.