



Utah High School Activities Association

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UHSAA Board of Trustees Contemplating New Procedure for Alignment of Schools

At their meeting on June 17, 2010, The Board of Trustees (BOT), the policy making body of the Utah High School Activities Association, considered a proposal to adopt a new procedure for aligning member schools into classifications and regions. The change in procedure is intended to make the process more objective, efficient, timely and equitable for post season bracketing. The proposal provides for the re-alignment of schools every two years instead of the current four years. The BOT will again consider the proposal at their August 26, 2010, meeting. On August 25, 2010, at 5:00 p.m. at the UHSAA office, the BOT will hold a public hearing to receive comment from concerned parties regarding the proposed change. The proposal is the work of an ad-hoc committee created by the BOT in response to issues and concerns from member schools with the current realignment procedure.

Under the proposed procedure, members of the realignment classification committee, established for this specific purpose, will study enrollment data and trends in enrollment and recommend to the BOT the number of schools and regions to be included in each classification. Each classification will have either two or four regions with an equal number of schools in each region. The 1A classification may be the exception out of necessity. The BOT will review and gather input from member schools and districts regarding the recommendation. The BOT having considered the number of schools and regions within a classification in at least two meetings will adopt a final alignment plan that sets the number of schools and regions in a classification prior to October 1.

When October 1 enrollment numbers are released by the State Office of Education, schools will be assigned to a classification based on the school's rank in size using enrollment in grades eleven and twelve. In using only eleventh and twelfth grade enrollments, the proposal gives consideration to those schools which experience high mobility rates and see declines in enrollment between tenth and twelfth grades. By including the eleventh grade enrollments, possible anomalies in the size of a particular class at a school are taken into account. This also includes a grade which will actually participate during the alignment period.

The BOT will assign schools to regions once schools are assigned to a classification. The number of schools in each region will have been predetermined and approved by the BOT as a part of the alignment plan. The assignment of schools to regions will be completed no later than the November BOT meeting, allowing time for schools and the new regions to organize and schedule.

The first contests under the new alignment will take place the August following final action by the BOT at their November meeting. The enrollment data upon which the alignment is based will be the most current and reliable data available. When the last contests take place in May, two years later, the data upon which the alignment was based will be nearly as current as the enrollment data at the beginning of the alignment period under the current procedure.

The two year, rather than four year, alignment period allows for proper adjustments more often as enrollments rise and fall at a number of schools. The objective method of assigning schools to classifications increases fairness and efficiency. The Board of Trustees retains the responsibility of assigning schools to regions. Input from member schools and districts in determining the number of schools per classification maintains the ability of UHSAA member schools and districts to affect the alignment process.

In comparing the current procedure for re-alignment, schools are aligned in classifications and regions every four years by the BOT. In order to complete the current process, school enrollment data is collected from the October 1 count more than 22 months prior to the first contests in the new alignment. Once those numbers are available, the BOT establishes the number of classifications. The BOT then determines the minimum number of students in order for a school to be placed in a particular classification. Based on that decision an initial proposal is released and input is sought. At a subsequent meeting of the BOT, input is received from schools and districts. Presenters to the BOT give reasons why their school or school(s) into their district should be classified in a classification other than the one their enrollment numbers would indicate. Other presenters will give reasons why those larger schools should not be allowed into the smaller classification. Still others seek to make a case for adjustments in the region alignment. Once the presentations conclude, the members of the BOT look at the initial proposal and decide if changes are warranted based on the information they have been given. A second proposal is drawn up and publicized. Schools and/or districts who have not presented previously are given a chance to do so. The BOT again reviews the proposal in light of the additional information gathered from the second hearing. The BOT then issues a third proposal for an initial vote. The proposal is considered for a second time in a subsequent meeting and if approved is adopted as the alignment of schools. This process is targeted to be finished by June. The alignment plan goes into effect 14 months afterward for a period of four years. The school year following the adoption of the re-alignment is the last year under the previous alignment. It is also a year used to plan schedules and organize the new regions. When the last contest is played under the current system, the enrollment numbers on which the alignment was based are nearly six years old.

The ad-hoc committee which brought the proposal to the BOT explained that the revision to the re-alignment procedure is proactive in nature as it determines the number of schools in a classification rather than a cut-off enrollment for each classification. The proposal will reflect trends in school enrollment as these are continually studied and the process occurs every two years rather than four years. It provides for equity between regions in qualification for the post-season and the seeding process into post-season tournaments becomes more fair and consistent.

In addition to the hearing on August 25, 2010, the UHSAA is seeking comment on the proposed changes. To provide input on the proposed alignment procedure, please use the following link:

<http://www.uhsaa.org/realignment/comment.htm>