



Utah High School Activities Association

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UHSAA Board of Trustees Contemplating New Procedure for Alignment of Schools

The Utah High School Activities Association (UHSAA) may adopt a new procedure to align member schools into classifications and regions. If approved, the new alignment procedure could be in place for the 2011-12 school year.

The proposal is an attempt by the UHSAA to make the realignment process more objective, efficient, timely and equitable for post season bracketing. The proposal addresses realignment on a number of dimensions, including:

- standardizing the number of schools in each classification;
- standardizing the number and size of regions in each classification;
- adjusting alignment every two years;
- eliminating regions split between classifications;
- using junior and senior class enrollment numbers; and
- creating a realignment classification committee

More detail about the proposal can be found at the UHSAA website at www.uhsaa.org.

In an attempt to get feedback from the various groups who have an interest in the change, the UHSAA will hold a public hearing at 5 p.m. on August 25, 2010, at the UHSAA office (199 E. 7200 S. in Midvale).

In addition to the hearing on August 25, 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>

At the current time, realignment takes place on a four-year cycle, with a window every two years to make “catastrophic” adjustments.

The most recent alignment, which began in 2009, has faced a number of challenges due to changing enrollment in many schools, the transient nature of many school populations, geographic challenges and concern about the definition of “catastrophic”.

Under the proposed procedure, members of the realignment classification committee will study enrollment data and trends and recommend the number of schools and regions for each classification. Each classification will have two or four regions, with an equal number of schools in each region. The 1A classification may be the exception out of geographic necessity.

Under the proposal, the UHSAA Board of Trustees will review and gather input from member schools and districts regarding the recommendation and adopt a final alignment plan prior to October 1.

As proposed, once October 1 enrollment numbers are released by the State Office of Education, schools will be assigned to a classification based on enrollment in grades eleven and twelve. This gives consideration to schools with high mobility rates, which may see a decline in enrollment between tenth and twelfth grades.

Once schools are assigned to a classification, they will be assigned to regions within their classifications. The assignment of schools to regions will be completed in November, allowing time for schools and the new regions to organize and schedule for the two-year alignment period.

The first contests under the new alignment will take place the following August. The enrollment data upon which the alignment is based will be less than one year old.

Under the current procedure, school enrollment data is more than 22 months old prior to the first contests. When the last contest is played under the current system, the enrollment numbers on which the alignment was based are nearly six years old.

A two year, rather than four year, alignment period allows for adjustments more often as enrollments rise and fall at a number of schools. It is hoped that this method of assigning schools to classifications will increase fairness and efficiency. The UHSAA Board of Trustees retains the responsibility for realignment. UHSAA member schools and districts maintain the ability to influence the alignment process through input in determining the number of schools and regions for each classification.

The ad-hoc committee which brought the proposal to the UHSAA Board of Trustees explained that the revisions are proactive rather than reactive. The number of schools in a classification is predetermined, rather than using enrollment figures with a cutoff number.

The proposal will reflect current trends in school enrollment as the process occurs every two years rather than four years. It provides for equity between regions in qualification for the post-season. In addition, with equal-sized regions, the seeding process into post-season tournaments may become more fair and consistent.

About the Utah High School Activities Association (UHSAA)

The UHSAA is the leadership organization for high school sports and fine arts activities in Utah. Since 1927, the UHSAA has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and fine arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The UHSAA reaches 138 member schools and over 85,000 participants in high school activity programs. The UHSAA sanctions 10 girls' sports and 10 boys' sports and music, drama and debate in five different classifications. The UHSAA is governed by a 28-member Board of Trustees made up of elected school board members and superintendents representing all regions and areas throughout Utah, principals from each of the five classifications and a state board of education representative. The organization is committed to stressing educational and cultural values, promoting skills involved in competitive activities, and fostering sportsmanship and mutual respect. For more information, visit the UHSAA website at www.uhsaa.org.