November 2019

Dear IGHSAU and IHSAA Classification Committee and Cross-Country Advisory Committee,

Please accept this letter as a formal request to discuss and ultimately modify the current classification alignment for high school boys and girls cross country in the state of Iowa. It is our hope that the number of schools assigned to each classification will be re-examined and ultimately adjusted to better reflect the population shifts across the state. This request comes with the following points in mind:

1. **Creating competitive balance.**

The state of Iowa has already recognized the need to adjust classification in football (reducing from 48 schools in class 4A to 42), girls basketball, softball, volleyball (all with the creation of five classes). We know that this is a complicated issue. However, a change could be made by making minor adjustments to help lower the % increase from smallest to largest schools in all classes.

According to *Des Moines Register* reporter [Cody Goodwin’s October 2017 article on the football reclassification](https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/sports/high-school/2017/10/25/iowa-high-school-football-classifications-ihsaa-new-football-classes-2018-19-season/800861001/), the Iowa High School Athletic Association’s Classification Committee cites the following advantages for reclassification: to improve competitive balance, potentially increase participation, and trim enrollment gap in Iowa’s largest class. These points are equally applicable to the sport of cross country in Iowa.

The following chart gives a snapshot of the current Girls reality and how different proposals affect classifications.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Girl's XC Comparisons by Class Possibilities** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Enrollment Comparisons** | | | | | | **State Meet Information** | | | | |
|  | **# of Schools in Class** | **# of complete teams**  **(Districts 2019)** | **# of kids in Class**  **(BEDs)** | **# of kids in XC** | **% increase from smallest to largest** | **% of boys & girls that qualified (BEDs)** | **% of girls that qualified (participation)** | **% of possible schools that qualified** | **% of complete teams that qualified for State Meet** | **# of state qualifiers 2019** |
| 4A | 48 | 45 | 56136 | 1628 | 238% | 0.45% | 7.7% | 31.3% | 33.3% | 126 |
| 3A | 64 | 56 | 26103 | 1243 | 117% | 0.99% | 10.4% | 23.4% | 26.8% | 129 |
| 2A | 72 | 64 | 15974 | 771 | 60% | 1.72% | 17.9% | 20.8% | 23.4% | 138 |
| 1A | 144 | 96 | 17313 | 919 | 771% | 1.62% | 15.1% | 10.4% | 15.6% | 139 |
| Proposal #1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4A | 42 | 40 | 51885 | 1482 | 174% | 0.48% | 8.5% | 35.7% | 37.5% | 126 |
| 3A | 64 | 56 | 28503 | 1301 | 151% | 0.91% | 9.9% | 23.4% | 26.8% | 129 |
| 2A | 78 | 69 | 17825 | 859 | 72% | 1.54% | 16.1% | 19.2% | 21.7% | 138 |
| 1A | 144 | 96 | 17313 | 919 | 771% | 1.62% | 15.1% | 10.4% | 15.6% | 139 |
| Proposal #2 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4A | 40 | 39 | 50271 | 1450 | 160% | 0.50% | 8.7% | 37.5% | 38.5% | 126 |
| 3A | 64 | 56 | 29478 | 1320 | 153% | 0.88% | 9.8% | 23.4% | 26.8% | 129 |
| 2A | 80 | 70 | 18464 | 872 | 75% | 1.49% | 15.8% | 18.8% | 21.4% | 138 |
| 1A | 144 | 96 | 17313 | 919 | 771% | 1.62% | 15.1% | 10.4% | 15.6% | 139 |
| Prosal #3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5A | 40 | 39 | 50271 | 1450 | 160% | 0.50% | 8.7% | 37.5% | 38.5% | 126 est |
| 4A | 48 | 42 | 23883 | 1008 | 121% | 1.05% | 12.5% | 31.3% | 35.7% | 126 |
| 3A | 65 | 57 | 18358 | 905 | 72% | 1.41% | 14.3% | 23.1% | 26.3% | 129 |
| 2A | 80 | 65 | 14013 | 777 | 47% | 1.96% | 17.8% | 18.8% | 23.1% | 138 |
| 1A | 95 | 58 | 9001 | 421 | 571% | 3.12% | 33.0% | 15.8% | 25.9% | 139 |
| Proposal #4 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4A | 40 | 39 | 50271 | 1450 | 160% | 0.50% | 8.7% | 37.5% | 38.5% | 126 |
| 3A | 64 | 56 | 29478 | 1320 | 153% | 0.88% | 9.8% | 23.4% | 26.8% | 129 |
| 2A | 87 | 75 | 20075 | 965 | 83% | 1.37% | 14.3% | 17.2% | 20.0% | 138 |
| 1A | 137 | 91 | 15702 | 826 | 733% | 1.79% | 16.8% | 10.9% | 16.5% | 139 |

More in depth data on Girls XC [Enrollment comparison by class possibilities](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1pqP3qvskeKzoYgvXCpZIR-DoOwyJwpEWfPkf1Tm_rOQ/edit?usp=sharing)

* % increase from smallest to largest school by classification (taken from 9-11 BEDs)
* % of kids who qualified for State Meet by classification (participation data from IHSAA)
* % of complete teams qualifying for State Meet by classification

The following chart gives a snapshot of the current Boys reality and how different proposals affect classifications.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Boy's XC Comparisons by Class Possibilities** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Enrollment Comparisons** | | | | | | **State Meet Information** | | | | |
|  | **# of Schools in Class** | **# of complete teams**  **(Districts 2019)** | **# of kids in Class**  **(BEDs)** | **# of kids in XC** | **% increase from smallest to largest** | **% of boys & boyss that qualified (BEDs)** | **% of boys that qualified (participation)** | **% of possible schools that qualified** | **% of complete teams that qualified for State Meet** | **# of state qualifiers 2019** |
| 4A | 48 | 47 | 56136 | 1887 | 238% | 0.45% | 6.6% | 31.3% | 31.9% | 124 |
| 3A | 64 | 61 | 26103 | 1499 | 117% | 0.99% | 8.7% | 23.4% | 24.6% | 130 |
| 2A | 70 | 68 | 15974 | 1017 | 60% | 1.72% | 13.5% | 21.4% | 22.1% | 137 |
| 1A | 146 | 117 | 17313 | 1190 | 771% | 1.62% | 11.9% | 10.3% | 12.8% | 142 |
| Proposal #1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4A | 42 | 41 | 51885 | 1745 | 174% | 0.48% | 7.1% | 35.7% | 36.6% | 124 |
| 3A | 64 | 61 | 28503 | 1518 | 151% | 0.91% | 8.6% | 23.4% | 24.6% | 130 |
| 2A | 76 | 74 | 17825 | 1140 | 72% | 1.54% | 12.0% | 19.7% | 20.3% | 137 |
| 1A | 146 | 117 | 17313 | 1190 | 771% | 1.62% | 11.9% | 10.3% | 12.8% | 142 |
| Proposal #2 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4A | 40 | 39 | 50271 | 1700 | 160% | 0.50% | 7.3% | 37.5% | 38.5% | 124 |
| 3A | 64 | 61 | 29478 | 1535 | 153% | 0.88% | 8.5% | 23.4% | 24.6% | 130 |
| 2A | 78 | 76 | 18464 | 1168 | 75% | 1.49% | 11.7% | 19.2% | 19.7% | 137 |
| 1A | 146 | 117 | 17313 | 1190 | 771% | 1.62% | 11.9% | 10.3% | 12.8% | 142 |
| Proposal #3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5A | 40 | 39 | 50271 | 1700 | 160% | 0.50% | 7.3% | 37.5% | 38.5% | 124est |
| 4A | 48 | 46 | 23883 | 1184 | 121% | 1.05% | 10.5% | 31.3% | 32.6% | 124 |
| 3A | 65 | 63 | 18358 | 1147 | 72% | 1.41% | 11.3% | 23.1% | 23.8% | 130 |
| 2A | 80 | 76 | 14013 | 959 | 47% | 1.96% | 14.3% | 18.8% | 19.7% | 137 |
| 1A | 95 | 69 | 9001 | 603 | 571% | 3.12% | 23.5% | 15.8% | 21.7% | 142 |
| Proposal #4 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4A | 40 | 39 | 50271 | 1700 | 160% | 0.50% | 7.3% | 37.5% | 38.5% | 124 |
| 3A | 64 | 61 | 29478 | 1535 | 153% | 0.88% | 8.5% | 23.4% | 24.6% | 130 |
| 2A | 87 | 84 | 20075 | 1285 | 83% | 1.37% | 10.7% | 17.2% | 17.9% | 137 |
| 1A | 137 | 109 | 15702 | 1073 | 733% | 1.79% | 13.2% | 10.9% | 13.8% | 142 |

More in depth data on Boys XC [Enrollment comparison by class possibilities](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/17jtAF7LbGee1IWbqkhVk9xVcGepxkBiDDXhtA97lyPw/edit?usp=sharing)

* % increase from smallest to largest school by classification (taken from 9-11 BEDs)
* % of kids who qualified for State Meet by classification (participation data from IHSAA)
* % of complete teams qualifying for State Meet by classification

1. **Allowing greater opportunities for more athletes to experience a state tournament.**

The data shown in link below demonstrates the correlation of student enrollment and state qualification for boys and girls cross country. This document is linked in [XC Classification Data--MP](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1i8LV8W0YXWclwGgEb8y07wFgazopzFTBB066wFKxsys/edit?usp=sharing)

The following table shows a snapshot of 4A Girls XC State Qualifiers over the last five years:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **4A XC Girls** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **2015** | | | **2016** | | | **2017** | | | **2018** | | | **2019** | | |
|  | **Avg BEDs Rank** | **Avg enrollment** | **Avg SES** | **Avg BEDs Rank** | **Avg enrollment** | **Avg SES** | **Avg BEDs Rank** | **Avg enrollment** | **Avg SES** | **Avg BEDs Rank** | **Avg enrollment** | **Avg SES** | **Avg BEDs Rank** | **Avg enrollment** | **Avg SES** |
| **Top 3 Team** | 26 | 1084.3 | 25.7 | 9.3 | 1438.3 | 30.8 | 9.3 | 1655.7 | 24.3 | 4.7 | 1808.0 | 30.8 | 10.7 | 1495.7 | 26.6 |
| **State Qualifier** | 19.4 | 1268.0 | 27.1 | 18.9 | 1272.9 | 25.3 | 17.1 | 1330.9 | 28.4 | 14.5 | 1424.6 | 27.8 | 17.9 | 1343.8 | 31.5 |

Additional links that show trending data patterns in qualifying teams:

* Girls [State Qualifying % by school](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1pqP3qvskeKzoYgvXCpZIR-DoOwyJwpEWfPkf1Tm_rOQ/edit?usp=sharing) (Tab at bottom of google sheet)
  + Class 4A
    - % qualifying for state the last 28 years
    - % of placing top 3 as a team for the last 28 years
  + Class 1A, 2A, 3A (State moved to 4 classes 17 years ago)
    - % qualifying for state the last 17 years
    - % of placing top 3 as a team for the last 17 years

The following table shows a snapshot of 4A Boys XC State Qualifiers over the last five years:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **4A XC Boys** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **2015** | | | **2016** | | | **2017** | | | **2018** | | | **2019** | | |
|  | **Avg BEDs Rank** | **Avg enrollment** | **Avg SES** | **Avg BEDs Rank** | **Avg enrollment** | **Avg SES** | **Avg BEDs Rank** | **Avg enrollment** | **Avg SES** | **Avg BEDs Rank** | **Avg enrollment** | **Avg SES** | **Avg BEDs Rank** | **Avg enrollment** | **Avg SES** |
| **Top 3 Team** | 19.0 | 1147.3 | 21.2 | 23.3 | 1144.0 | 21.3 | 23.0 | 1147.3 | 21.2 | 23.7 | 1119.3 | 39.8 | 23.0 | 1147.3 | 21.2 |
| **State Qualifier** | 18.5 | 1297.3 | 29.2 | 17.1 | 1352.4 | 27.5 | 16.7 | 1365.1 | 30.4 | 16.5 | 1360.9 | 16.5 | 18.5 | 1297.3 | 29.2 |

Additional links that show trending data patterns in qualifying teams:

* Boys [State Qualifying % by school](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1pqP3qvskeKzoYgvXCpZIR-DoOwyJwpEWfPkf1Tm_rOQ/edit?usp=sharing) (Tab at bottom of google sheet)
  + Class 4A
    - % qualifying for state the last 28 years
    - % of placing top 3 as a team for the last 28 years
  + Class 1A, 2A, 3A (State moved to 4 classes 17 years ago)
    - % qualifying for state the last 17 years
    - % of placing top 3 as a team for the last 17 years

We have four proposals that we have shared and the data to show the effects from each proposal.

Proposal #1 and #2 have the 40-42 largest schools based on each year’s BEDS count compete in class 4A, therefore dropping 6-8 schools into class 3A, and subsequently moving the bottom 6-8 schools in class 3A to class 2A. Class 1A would be left as it currently stands or moving more teams up to 2A due to the already large amount of teams competing in class 1A. This simple realignment allows for greater competitive balance across the board. Removing a few schools from class 4A and adding a few schools to classes 3A and 2A does not change the existing state qualifying meet format. For class 4A, there could then be eight teams at five qualifying sites and one to two additional teams at each site for classes 3A and 2A.

Proposal #3 would be possible but would add two races to the State Meet. We are also aware of District hosting issues. However, we think this could be overcome by double districts similar to 1A/4A sites.

Proposal #4 is similar to #2 with the addition of taking the biggest 8 teams out of 1A and moving them to 2A as well*.*

*Credit for data collection: Matt Pries, Dallas Center-Grimes boys cross country coach, Justin Droppert, Dallas-Center Grimes girls cross country coach, Tyler Ketelsen, Mason City cross country coach, Shane Knoche, North Scott Principal, Iowa Department of Education, IGHSAU and IHSAA*

Thank you for taking the time to thoroughly discuss this issue as we believe these proposed changes will ultimately benefit student athletes and the sport of cross country in the state of Iowa.

Sincerely,

Tyler Ketelsen, head boys and girls cross country coach, Mason City

Barry Andersen, athletics/activities director, Mason City

Matt Pries, head boys cross country coach, Dallas Center-Grimes

Justin Droppert, head girls cross country coach, Dallas Center-Grimes

Amy Knoche, head boys and girls cross country coach, North Scott

Shane Knoche, high school principal, North Scott

Taylor May, head boys and girls cross country coach, Lewis Central

Dave Versteeg, superintendent of schools, Mason City

Joe Jackson, head boys and girls cross country coach, Fort Dodge

Kellen Schneeberger, head boys and girls cross country coach, Clinton

Tim Heinitz, head boys and girls cross country coach, Spirit Lake

Dan Long, high school principal, Mason City

Andy Eberhart, athletics/activities director, Clinton

Steve Weeks, head boys cross country coach, Newton

Chris Foxen, head boys cross country coach, Muscatine

Mike Moffitt, head boys and girls cross country coach, Notre Dame/West Burlington

Bill Plein, athletics/activities director, Notre Dame/West Burlington

Kevin Barnes, head boys cross country coach, Indianola

Al Lammers, athletics/activities director, Norwalk

Michelle Wiedmann, head girls cross country coach, Norwalk

Chad Larson, head boys cross country coach, Norwalk

Zach Shay, athletics/activities director, Burlington

Jim Hofmann, head boys cross country coach, Burlington

Madison Tucker, head girls cross country coach, Burlington

Nick DiMarco, head boys and girls cross country coach, Clear Lake

Mike Hale, athletics/activities director, Lewis Central

Brett Jones, athletics/activities director, Anamosa

Justin Bader, head boys and girls cross country coach, Anamosa

Tyler Lown, athletics/activities director, Western Dubuque at Epworth

Mark Digmann, head boys and girls cross country coach, Western Dubuque at Epworth

Jason Schroeder, athletics/activities director, North Scott

Brian Ehlinger, athletics/activities director, Davenport Central

Dave Terronez, head boys cross country coach, Bettendorf

Matt Elsbecker, assistant principal, Fort Dodge

Mike Czarnecki, head boys and girls cross country coach, West Liberty

JR Kuch, high school principal, Clinton

Dr. Ken Hayes, high school principal, Fort Dodge

Dale Ludwig, athletics/activities director, Clear Lake

Dr. Jesse Ulrich, superintendent of schools, Fort Dodge

Kevin Astor, athletics/activities director, Fort Dodge

Jon Means, head girls cross country coach, Des Moines Hoover

Jerry Rohach, head boys cross country coach, Des Moines Hoover

Jacob Burke, athletics/activities director, Des Moines Hoover