

Application Materials for Expedited (Fast Track) Review

Documents required to verify that unanimous approval exists for a change to conference membership.

1. School Board Minutes or Board Resolution
 - A. Signifies community approval of a change in conference membership, and
 - B. The date when the school will join the new conference.

2. Letter of Exit
 - A. Verifies all conference members approved of the change to conference membership, and
 - B. The date when the school will no longer compete as a conference member.

3. Letter of Acceptance
 - A. Verifies all conference members approved of the change to conference membership, and
 - B. The date when the school will no longer compete as a conference member.

4. Additional Relevant Documents
 - A. The member school may provide additional documents as so desired.

Application Materials for Standard Review

Petitioner(s): member school(s) requesting a change in conference affiliation

1. Cover Letter
 - A. Summarize the member school's position detailing how the new conference will provide a more meaningful opportunity for students than what is currently being offered, may include:
 - 1) Rationale for leaving the current conference,
 - 2) Efforts, attempts and actions taken to resolve conference affiliation,
 - 3) Review of the schools and conferences in support and opposed to the proposed change,
 - 4) Impact to traditional rivalries and development of new rivalries, and
 - 5) Additional relevant information.
2. Enrollment Data: for each current and proposed conference member
 - A. Minimum of three (3) years of 9th-11th grade BEDS enrollment history,
 - 1) To include free and reduced lunch percentage,
 - B. Minimum of three (3) years of 9th-11th grade BEDS enrollment history,
 - C. Additional relevant enrollment information as determined by the local district.
3. Travel: to each current and proposed conference member
 - A. Miles and
 - B. Estimated time.
4. Instructional Programs, Athletic Programs, and Extra-Curricular Activities
 - A. Identify the programs and levels offered,
 - B. Additional relevant information as determined by the local district, which may include but is not limited to the following:
 - 1) A narrative describing the hardship experienced in the current conference and the benefit of joining/creating a new conference, and/or
 - 2) Description of the instructional programs and extra-curricular activities offered by the member school, and/or
 - 3) Participation data at the varsity, junior varsity, junior varsity reserve/freshmen, middle school, or youth levels – demonstrating how they have/are projected to change over time.
5. Additional Documentation for Consideration
 - A. School board minutes or resolution verifying the community's commitment to changing athletic conferences,
 - B. Conference bylaws,
 - C. Letter of exit from the current conference,
 - D. Letter of acceptance to the new conference, which may also include
 - 1) Letters of support, school board minutes/resolutions from member schools in support of the change in conference affiliation.
 - E. Letters of summary from the IHSAA and IGHS AU relating to relevant sportsmanship data to include ejection data for student-athletes and coaches from the previous three (3) years,
 - F. Athletic records for varsity competitions for a minimum of three (3) years, and
 - G. Additional relevant information as determined by the local district.

Respondent(s): member school(s) opposing conference realignment

1. Cover Letter
 - A. Summarize the member school's position include a description of the undue hardship that will be faced if a change is made,
 - B. Rationale for maintaining the current conference composition, and
 - C. Impact to traditional rivalries and/or development of new rivalries.
 - D. Additional relevant information as determined by the local district.

Prioritizing Applications

The conference realignment committee shall prioritize realignment applications based upon the following criteria:

1. A new school has been organized, reorganized, or chartered,
2. Competing as an independent,
3. Change in enrollment,
 - A. Growth or decline has led to cancellation of or the inability to schedule varsity or other non-varsity contests,
 - B. Socioeconomic factors within the community has led to a decline in participation.
4. Increased travel,
 - A. Has led to loss of instructional time and/or
 - B. Increased financial burden.
5. Competing in a conference impacted by previous realignment that has resulted in unintended consequences,
6. Other compelling arguments:
 - A. Increase or decline in programs offered by the school or conference,
 - B. Scheduling relief needed due to a conference experiencing a number of schools unable to offer a specific sport due to declining participation and/or cooperative sharing,
 - C. Number of schools in a conference due to realignment, or
 - D. Other criteria not listed but presented by the petitioner.

Process & Timeline for Review of Applications

By October 1

- Deadline to Initiate Conference Realignment Application
- Email to the Executive Directors of the IHSAA and IGHS AU to notify the union and association of the intent of the member school to change conference membership.

By November 1

- Conference Realignment Application Deadline
- Member school(s) must complete the conference realignment application by 5:00 p.m., November 1.

November

- Applications Assigned to Review Subcommittees
- The Chair and Vice-Chair will be responsible for assigning all applications to a subcommittee for review before consideration of the full conference realignment committee.
- Each subcommittee will:
 1. Review the application materials submitted by the petitioner(s) and respondent(s),
 2. Consider additional member schools and conferences not included in the application, and
 3. Request additional information from schools and conferences as desired.

December 1-December 8

- Meeting of the full conference realignment committee
- Review, approve or deny fast track applications
- Hear reports from review subcommittees
- Prioritize application hearings
- Schedule hearing dates
- Notify member schools and conference commissioners of hearing dates, or denial of hearing due to the volume of applications.

By January 1

- Newly considered schools and conferences cover letter(s) and supporting documents due for review

January

- Conference realignment hearings held

By January 31

- Conference realignment committee meets to:
 - Approve realignment, or
 - Reject and recommend an alternative conference alignment.
- Notify petitioner(s) and respondent(s) of the committee's decision.
- Publish realignment decisions of the IHSAA and IGHS AU websites.

April 1

- A member school may appeal a committee's decision to the director of the Iowa department of education within 60 days of the date of the decision.
- The director will receive records of the committee, and no new evidence will be permitted, except for good cause shown. The committee's decision is presumed correct, and the appellant has the burden of demonstrating the committee's decision is based on a failure to follow the process and standards set out in Iowa Code section 280.13D as enacted by House File 278, on factual findings that have no evidentiary basis, or on legal conclusions that are manifestly erroneous. The director may refer the matter to an administrative law judge for a proposed decision.

June 1

- The director's decision is due within 60 days of the date of the appeal.