

280.13E Realignment of high school athletics conferences — committee approval.

1. For purposes of [this section](#):

a. “*Extracurricular interscholastic athletics*” means a contest or competition for sports between different school districts or accredited nonpublic schools and outside the regular scope of a school district’s or accredited nonpublic school’s curriculum.

b. “*Organization*” means the Iowa high school athletic association or its successor organization, and the Iowa girls high school athletic union or its successor organization.

2. On or after July 1, 2025, a school district shall not expend any moneys, and an accredited nonpublic school shall not expend any moneys originating from the state, to pay dues or membership fees to an organization, and the school district or accredited nonpublic school shall not be a member of, participate in activities associated with, or receive services from an organization unless the organization develops and implements a policy that does all of the following:

a. (1) Establishes, in combination with the other organization, a committee known as the conference realignment committee. The conference realignment committee shall do all of the following:

(a) Take action to bring about a reasonable conference affiliation and relationship for high schools that are members of organizations. Reasonable conference affiliation and relationship with member high schools may include total movement of member schools, sport-specific relief, or scheduling assistance. When taking action to bring about a reasonable conference affiliation and relationship for member high schools, the committee shall consider all of the following:

(i) The current total enrollment of the member high schools and the projected total enrollment of the member high schools in the future.

(ii) Travel distances between member high schools.

(iii) The comparability of instructional programs provided by member high schools.

(iv) Traditional rivalries.

(v) The number of member high schools currently in the conference and the number of high schools that may be added to the conference.

(vi) The comparability of athletic programs and other school-sponsored programs provided by the member high schools.

(b) Review all requests that are submitted to the committee by school districts and accredited nonpublic schools that are members of an organization related to changing the extracurricular interscholastic athletics conferences the school belongs to, including moving a member school to a different conference. A request submitted under this subparagraph division must contain an analysis of how the change will affect the school district or accredited nonpublic school submitting the request along with how the change may affect other school districts and accredited nonpublic schools that are members of the organization.

(c) When determining whether to approve or reject the request, the committee shall consider the factors described in subparagraph division (a) and how to best bring about reasonable interscholastic athletics conferences that are beneficial to students enrolled in school districts and accredited nonpublic schools that are members of the organization. After making a decision, the committee shall provide a copy of the request and the committee’s decision to the applicable organization and order the organization to take all actions necessary to effectuate the committee’s decision. If the committee’s decision rejects the school district’s or accredited nonpublic school’s request, the committee shall recommend an alternative conference alignment or allow the school district or accredited nonpublic school to opt for independent status.

(d) Develop an expedited review process for requests to change an extracurricular interscholastic athletics conference membership that are submitted to the committee by all school districts and accredited nonpublic schools that may be affected by the change. The expedited review process must require the committee to provide a copy of the requests received under this subparagraph division to the applicable organization and to direct the applicable organization to take all actions necessary to effectuate the committee’s decision.

(e) Review extracurricular interscholastic athletics conference changes at least once every two years.

(f) Allow a school district or an accredited nonpublic school to appeal orders issued by the committee to the director of the department of education.

(2) (a) The conference realignment committee shall consist of eighteen members, subject to the following requirements:

(i) Nine members shall be superintendents employed by school districts or accredited nonpublic schools located in different geographical regions of the state.

(ii) Nine members shall be activities directors employed by school districts or accredited nonpublic schools located in different geographical regions of the state.

(b) A quorum of the committee shall consist of ten members. The members of the committee shall elect a chairperson of the committee.

(c) Each organization shall appoint nine members to the committee pursuant to a process established by the state board of education by rule.

b. Prohibits the organization from changing membership of extracurricular interscholastic athletics conferences, including moving a member school to a different conference, unless the conference realignment committee ordered the organization to make such change pursuant to paragraph “a”, subparagraph (1), subparagraph division (c) or (d).

c. Requires the organization to develop an expedited review and implementation process for orders received pursuant to paragraph “a”, subparagraph (1), subparagraph division (d).

d. Requires that, in order for a school district or accredited nonpublic school to be included in any extracurricular interscholastic athletics conference, the school must offer at least one extracurricular interscholastic athletics activity for boys and at least one extracurricular interscholastic athletics activity for girls in the fall, winter, and spring. Schools that are not coeducational must offer at least one extracurricular interscholastic athletics activity for boys or girls, as applicable, in the fall, winter, and spring.

e. Prohibits a member school district or accredited nonpublic school that withdraws from an extracurricular interscholastic athletics conference, without approval, from doing any of the following:

(1) Competing in the same extracurricular interscholastic athletics activity in any conference for the two years immediately subsequent to the date the member school district or accredited nonpublic school withdrew.

(2) Competing in a tournament sponsored by an organization in the same extracurricular interscholastic athletics activity for the two years immediately subsequent to the date the member school district or accredited nonpublic school withdrew.

3. The state board of education shall adopt rules pursuant to [chapter 17A](#) to administer [this section](#).

[2025 Acts, ch 166, §1](#)

NEW section