



News Release

Ohio High School Athletic Association
4080 Roselea Place
Columbus, OH 43214
Main: 614-267-2502
Fax: 614-267-1677
www.ohsaa.org

Commissioner Daniel B. Ross, Ph.D.

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OHSAA Board Adopts Revised Competitive Balance Proposal *Member School Principals to Vote on Referendum Issue in May*

COLUMBUS, Ohio – The Ohio High School Athletic Association’s Board of Directors held a special meeting on Friday, March 23, and approved five additional items to place before the membership during the annual referendum voting process that will be held between May 1 and 15. Among the items that will be voted upon by member school principals is a slightly revised Competitive Balance Proposal that, if adopted, would place schools into their respective tournament divisions in team sports based on a sport-by-sport athletic count. The formula for calculating the athletic count includes factors related to how students enter the school (boundary factor); the ability of students to access additional resources for successful competition (socioeconomic factor); and the success of a specific program over a long period of time (tradition factor). If adopted by the membership, the change would become effective for the 2013-14 school year. The proposal was recommended to the Board by the OHSAA Competitive Balance Committee.

The referendum language adopted by the Board of Directors to add to Bylaw 2, Classification and Organization, which will be voted upon by the principals is:

“Each school shall be placed into tournament divisions based on its sport-by-sport athletic count. The formula for determining athletic counts and to which sports the athletic count shall be applied will be recommended by the standing Competitive Balance Committee and approved by the Board of Directors on a biennial basis. The formula for calculating athletic counts and the sports to which they are applied are listed in the OHSAA’s General Sports Regulations — Tournaments.”

A Competitive Balance Proposal was narrowly defeated during last May’s referendum voting, 332 to 303. Adjusted in this year’s proposal is the tradition factor, where the emphasis is on the long-term success of a program rather than “punishing” a school for having one great class leading it to success. Just like the 2011 proposal, though, the general concept of the Competitive Balance Formula for determining athletic counts will be: **Beginning Enrollment + Boundary Factor — Socioeconomic Factor + Tradition Factor.**

The **school boundary factor** is (no change from 2011 proposal):

- Non-public schools with no boundaries - 10 percent times enrollment will be added;
- Non-public schools with limited boundaries - 8 percent times enrollment will be added;
- Public schools with statewide open enrollment - 6 percent times enrollment will be added (*);
- Public schools with adjacent open enrollment - 4 percent times enrollment will be added (*), and
- Public schools with no open enrollment - no percentage added.

(*) indicates that this percentage will not be applied if the net number of open enrollment students is negative.

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The **socioeconomic factor** is (no change from 2011 proposal):

- The number of free lunch applications within the high school times 10 percent equals the number to be subtracted from enrollment.

The **tradition factor** is (modified from 2011 proposal):

- Six (6) percent of enrollment will be added on a sport-by-sport basis for appearances in the Sweet 16 (regional tournament for all team sports except football, which would be the regional semifinals), in four of the last eight seasons, or
- Ten (10) percent of enrollment will be added on a sport-by-sport basis for appearances in the state tournament in four of the last eight seasons.

If approved, the Competitive Balance Formula would be applied to the team sports of football, soccer, volleyball, basketball, baseball and softball. Team dual wrestling would be added in 2017-18. Consideration may be given to add other sports in the future.

The OHSAA Competitive Balance Committee will meet on a regular basis and may make recommendations to the OHSAA Board of Directors to modify the Competitive Balance Formula biennially. Should any significant changes be recommended to modify the current formula, the OHSAA will survey the membership to gauge interest on any modification(s).

By slightly modifying the proposal, the OHSAA Competitive Balance Committee and OHSAA Board of Directors have responded to the concerns addressed by the membership following last year's referendum voting. Those concerns were:

- Adjust the tradition factor (see information earlier in this news release regarding this change);
- Help the member schools become more informed by allowing them to see how the formula will affect each school prior to the referendum voting (a sport-by-sport listing will soon appear on www.ohsaa.org);
- Ensure that any significant changes to the current proposed formula will not be made without feedback from the member schools.

In addition, the OHSAA Board of Directors is considering addressing the enrollment disparity that exists in Division I in the sport of football prior to the referendum voting in May via a change in the OHSAA Sports Regulations.

Additional points the Competitive Balance Committee and Board of Directors emphasized are: 1.) The revised Competitive Balance Proposal is not envisioned as a formula that will solve all issues, nor is it a one-time solution. Rather, this proposal is envisioned as the first step of an on-going process; 2.) The general philosophy of the Competitive Balance Committee has not been to make any decisions for modifications based on what these changes will do to a specific school(s) but rather to address what are perceived to be inequities in the overall OHSAA tournament system, and 3.) While this may not be the ultimate solution or one that everyone would list as their first choice, a realistic view is that a formula built on the principles being addressed is preferred to a separation of an Association with over 100 years of service to Ohio's schools.

Additional information on all of the 2012 referendum issues and a Guide to the 2012 Revised Competitive Balance Proposal will be posted soon on the OHSAA website (www.ohsaa.org).

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