

OHIO HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

4080 Roselea Place, Columbus, OH 43214
Phone 614-267-2502 | Fax 614-267-1677
www.ohsaa.org



A Guide to the 2012 Revised Competitive Balance Proposal (Last Updated 3-28-12)

Why Competitive Balance Was Addressed

A concern about competitive balance in Ohio High School Athletic Association tournaments was raised by a group of school administrators in northeast Ohio a few years ago, and a study showed that 43 percent (146 of 340) of the state championships in selected team sports between 1999 and 2010 were won by non-public schools, even though non-public schools make up only 17 percent of the total membership of the OHSAA.

Ohio History on Competitive Balance

Concern about competitive balance is neither unique nor new to Ohio. In fact, there were referendum issues to separate the tournaments between public and non-public schools brought before the OHSAA membership by school administrators in both 1978 and 1993, and both were defeated (83.9 percent to 16.1 percent in 1978; 66.8 percent to 33.2 percent in 1993). In addition, a committee was formed to discuss competitive balance during the 2006-07 school year, and no recommendations were made since a consensus could not be reached.

While there is a concern across the state from Ohio's public school coaches and administrators that the current system may not be as fair as they would like, coming forward with a recommendation to improve the system has proven challenging to say the least. While a better solution seems elusive, what does seem to be fairly universal is the comment heard from most coaches and administrators that "in order to be the best, we want to compete against the best." Still others believe separate tournaments are the only way to go, and some have even suggested that an enrollment multiplier be used only for non-public schools.

The Competitive Balance Committee and its Charge

The OHSAA Competitive Balance Committee was formed in January 2010 and has met on a continuing basis. It was originally comprised of 29 school administrators and coaches from across the state from public and non-public schools both large and small along with members of the OHSAA Board of Directors and administrative staff and representatives from both the state superintendents' and state principals' associations. There are currently 23 members on the committee.

The Competitive Balance Committee's charge was to attempt to identify what factors account for the disproportionate number of championships being won by an equally disproportionately smaller group of member schools, and what the OHSAA could do to balance out these factors for all member schools.

This meant that the criteria chosen for a new plan must:

- Move toward a more competitive balance in all chosen sports;
- Maximize sustainability;
- Minimize complexity as much as possible;
- Maximize support from both the OHSAA membership and all interested constituents.

2011 Referendum Results and Why The Proposal Is Being Addressed Again

In last spring's referendum voting, the Competitive Balance Proposal was narrowly defeated, 332 to 303. Because this vote was so close and the fact that the Competitive Balance Committee is dedicated to address what principals who were surveyed in August 2011 said they believe is a systemic concern, the decision has been made to move forward with a similar but slightly revised Competitive Balance Proposal.

The Revised Competitive Balance Proposal

The committee's recommendation is that all member schools of the OHSAA pass through the same "filter." This means that school enrollment will continue to be the beginning basis for placing schools into their respective tournament divisions. Once that data is received, in the team sports of football, soccer, volleyball, basketball, baseball and softball (and team dual wrestling beginning in 2017-18) schools will be placed into their respective tournament divisions based on their sport-by-sport "athletic counts." Three factors will be used to determine "athletic counts" for each school:

- School Boundary Factor (how students enter the school);
- Socioeconomic Factor (the ability of the student to access additional resources for successful competition), and
- Tradition Factor (the success of a specific program over a long period of time).

School Boundary Factor (no change from 2011 proposal)

The Competitive Balance Committee identified school boundary as a key factor in competitive balance. From where and how a district receives its students does affect athletic success. Percentages proposed by the committee:

1. Non-public schools with no boundaries: 10 percent times enrollment will be added;
2. Non-public schools with limited boundaries: 8 percent times enrollment will be added;
3. Public schools with statewide open enrollment: 6 percent times enrollment will be added (*);
4. Public schools with adjacent districts open enrollment: 4 percent times enrollment will be added (*);
5. Public schools with no open enrollment: no percentage added.

(*) Indicates that this percentage will **NOT** be applied to public schools with open enrollment if their net number of open enrollment students is negative (i.e. have more open enrollment students leaving the school than coming into the school).

Beginning Enrollment x School Boundary Factor = number to be added to the Beginning Enrollment.

Note: The school boundary factor would be gender specific (i.e. the same percentage would be placed on a school's boys enrollment for use in boys sports and on a school's girls enrollment for use in girls sports).

Socioeconomic Factor (no change from 2011 proposal)

The Competitive Balance Committee determined that the socioeconomic makeup of a district is a key factor in competitive balance just as it is in the probabilities of educational success. If a district is disadvantaged, the participants may have fewer resources available to participate and be successful in interscholastic athletics.

The committee chose an objective measure for the socioeconomic factor, which is the number of free lunch applications that a high school reports to the Ohio Department of Education. This number cannot be manipulated by schools, and many schools, including non-public schools, have students who participate in the program. The percentage proposed by the committee:

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

Beginning Enrollment x Percent of the Free Lunch Number of a High School = the number to be reduced from the Beginning Enrollment.

Tradition Factor (modified from 2011 proposal)

The Competitive Balance Committee determined that tradition is also a factor that impacts athletic success — success breeds success, as they say. Student-athletes often want to go to a program that has a tradition of success. While this is not recruiting, it is a factor that cannot be discounted when combined with the other factors identified by the committee.

A school's enrollment could increase on a sport-by-sport basis by adding a percentage based on the school's tradition of reaching the Sweet 16 and/or state tournament in four of the previous eight seasons.

The percentages proposed by the committee:

1. Appearances in the Sweet 16 (which in all team sports with the exception of football means the regional tournament; football would be the regional semifinals): 6 percent of enrollment will be added, or
2. Appearances in the state tournament: 10 percent of enrollment will be added.

Note: By meeting the tradition threshold of reaching the Sweet 16 and/or state tournament in four of the previous eight years, a school could have a maximum of 6 percent added to its enrollment should it reach the Sweet 16 four times during that period, or it could have a maximum of 10 percent added to its enrollment should it reach the state tournament four times during that period. Again, this factor would be determined and added in on a sport-by-sport basis.

Beginning Enrollment x the Tradition Factor in four of the past eight years = number to be added to the Beginning Enrollment on a sport-by-sport basis.

Change From 2011: The 2011 Tradition Factor percentages that were voted upon by the membership during last May's referendum voting were:

1. Appearances in a regional final: 6 percent of enrollment will be added;
2. Appearances in state tournament: 8 percent of enrollment will be added, and
3. Appearances in state finals: 10 percent of enrollment will be added.

Note: While the highest percentage would be used for each individual year, the total percentage for all four years would be added together to arrive at the tradition factor.

Beginning Enrollment x the Tradition Factor over the past four years = number to be added to the Beginning Enrollment on a sport-by-sport basis.

The Final Formula

As mentioned, once all three factors are derived, schools will be placed into their respective tournament divisions based on their sport-by-sport "athletic counts." The final "athletic count" formula is achieved by:

Beginning Enrollment

- + **Boundary Factor**
- **Socioeconomic Factor**
- + **Tradition Factor**

OHSAA Board of Directors Action on March 23, 2012, and the Next Steps

The OHSAA Board of Directors accepted the Competitive Balance Committee's revised proposal, with implementation scheduled for the 2013-14 school year. By approving the proposal, the Board placed the following up for a vote of OHSAA member schools during the annual referendum voting process that will take place between May 1 and 15 (Addition to Bylaw 2, Classification and Organization):

"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 for the current school year are listed in the General Sports Regulations — Tournaments."

As mentioned, the Board of Directors' plan, which would be spelled out in the companion Sports Regulation, is that only team sports will initially be affected by the proposal. Those sports are football, soccer and volleyball in the fall; basketball in the winter, and baseball and softball in the spring. Team dual wrestling will be added in 2017-18. Consideration will be given to add other sports in the future.

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

Additional Comments

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

- 1.) Adjust the Tradition Factor so that 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.
- 2.) Help the member schools become more informed by allowing them to see how the formula will affect each school prior to the referendum voting.
- 3.) Ensure that any significant changes to the current proposed formula will not be made without feedback from the member schools.
- 4.) Address the enrollment disparity issue in Division I and, in particular, in the sport of football. The Board of Directors may still do this via changes to the OHSAA Sports Regulations prior to the referendum voting in May.

A few other points that the Competitive Balance Committee and Board of Directors would like for the membership to understand:

- 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.
- 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 outlined in this document is preferred to a separation of an Association with over 100 years of service to Ohio's schools.

OHSAA