



Tackett, Julian <jtackett@khsaa.org>

RE: Track & Field/Cross Country Realignment

1 message

Farmer, Eugene <eugene.farmer@harlan.kyschools.us>
To: "Tackett, Julian" <jtackett@khsaa.org>

Tue, May 30, 2023 at 2:59 PM

Commissioner Tackett,

I sincerely appreciate your prompt response concerning this issue. As a lifelong resident of Harlan County and a huge proponent of consolidation within the Harlan County Public Schools, I feel strongly that the student-athletes, coaches, and the community of Harlan County desperately needed an advocate, which is why I accepted the Athletic Director position years ago.

As many who live here can validate, the entire community of Harlan County is struggling, evidenced by The Harlan County Public Schools being the largest employer in the county, retail being completely dead, and more vacant buildings in town than ones that are occupied. With that being said, my goal is never to be defiant, rebellious, or recalcitrant, but rather it is simply to fight for these kids who just so happen to live in the worst geographic part of our state as it pertains to accessibility, roads, and natural barriers.

Once again, I appreciate your timely response to our review request.

H. Eugene Farmer

Athletic Director

Harlan County High School

Ph.: (606) 273-7410

E-mail: eugene.farmer@harlan.kyschools.us

From: Tackett, Julian <jtackett@khsaa.org>

Sent: Tuesday, May 30, 2023 1:56 PM

To: Farmer, Eugene <eugene.farmer@harlan.kyschools.us>

Cc: Bridenbaugh, Sarah <sbridenbaugh@khsaa.org>; Thompson, Russell <russell.thompson@pineville.kyschools.us>

Subject: Re: Track & Field/Cross Country Realignment

Thanks for sharing your thoughts Mr. Farmer. We will pass this information to the Board at its July meeting.

As was in the public meeting of the Board of Control in April, the draft alignment was reviewed and accepted with any opportunity for final consideration at the July meeting. I would like to clarify a few items for you, however. A final reminder will go to the schools next week following the state track meet reminding the schools of the process the Board follows. But I will share most of that information with you as a bit of a refresher.

Mrs. Bridenbaugh does an absolutely stellar job as our primary track liaison but our assigned sport primary contacts do not deal in the alignment of teams. For nearly two decades, that is a board issue staffed by the Commissioner as the reviews can likely hardly be described as "no brainers" as there is a balancing act always under consideration as teams in areas move up and down. To illustrate-

1) In enrollment-based sports, where a team was placed prior is of little or no relevance due to enrollment size shifts. The simple fact is that the population has shifted tremendously in the last few years, and many of those old alignments are simply not valid. A good example is in this year's data where both Whitley County and Johnson Central, two formerly 3A schools, will now drop down in class due to enrollment shifts of the entire state. That is one of the fundamental problems with classifying schools by enrollment in that those enrollments do shift, and buildings of schools that are like sized are seldom built near each other with the exception of population centers.

2) All six schools in the basketball 13th region that qualify for Class 2A in the division of schools are drafted into Region 5. Those schools are Bell County, Clay County, Corbin, Harlan County, Knox Central, and Whitley County. All are placed in Region 5 which is composed of the track schools in class 2A in basketball regions 12 and 13. The teams that are in Region 7 include those from basketball regions 14 and 15, along with two schools from basketball region 16.

3) The Board's directed principles for drafting alignments are straightforward, using geographic groupings by basketball regions and then in the classified sports, the enrollment cutoffs.

4) As you can tell from the draft, the movement of schools like Johnson Central and Whitley certainly change the geographics of the class. But you also can see how that could have shifted the other way but for less than 1 student on a three-year average, Harlan County would have been aligned in Class 3A.

So there remain a lot of variables moving.

Though they have been public, I would point you back to the information that was shared with the Board in April. The draft alignment of teams is at <https://khsaa.org/track/realignment/2022/draft%20track%20and%20field%20%20cross%20country%20alignment%20of%20teams%202023-24%20to%202026-27.pdf>, the enrollment reports are at

<https://khsaa.org/track/realignment/2022/trackandxcdraft2023-2026enrollments.pdf> and the maps are located at <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1szlXST91NaEdgrHP2kFCuoAo3EgDeUg&ll=38.33672779999138%2C-86.46376832538876&z=9> and different classes can be turned on and off within the map legend.

I just wanted to clarify a couple of facts that you may not have noticed when the alignment was published back in April. Clearly, no one on the staff, including myself, have a vote in any alignment's final adoption. It is our role to point out consistent application and adherence to those principles, and their role to make the final determinations. They also remain generally receptive when there is public consensus to alignment adjustments provided they can be geographically defended. Anything any school submits will be shared with the Board members as part of their agenda for the upcoming meeting.

Feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

On Sun, May 28, 2023 at 12:30 PM Farmer, Eugene <eugene.farmer@harlan.kyschools.us> wrote:

Good Afternoon Commissioner Tackett and Assistant Commissioner Bridenbaugh!

I'm writing today to formally submit this letter on behalf of the student-athletes, coaches, and administrators of Harlan County High School. We sincerely hope that you'll consider the ten points made in this letter when making a final decision concerning Track & Field as well as Cross Country realignment.

Thank You So Much for your time in advance and Happy Memorial Day Weekend!

H. Eugene Farmer

Athletic Director

Harlan County High School

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Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Today's Challenge - Be a Leader!

"Ultimately, a genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus. And on some positions cowardice asks the question is it safe? Expediency asks the question is it politics? Vanity asks the question is it popular? The conscience asks the question is it right? And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe nor politics nor popular but he must do it because conscience tells him it is right." —Dr. Martin Luther King

Julian Tackett, Commissioner

Primary Sports Event Contact- Boys and Girls State Basketball, Football

Playing Rules Interpreter – Basketball, Football

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