



For over 100 years the KHSAA has placed sports teams in districts and regions as means to use a tournament format to ultimately get to a state championship. There have been multiple tweaks and changes over those 100 years. Teams were moved about. Sometimes that made sense but many times it was done with other motives in mind.

Alignments, for many years, were based on the fact that some counties across the state had 7, 8, 9 or more schools in the county. Transportation in many areas was substandard and consideration had to be given for teams travel issues. Fast forward 100 years and those reasons are no longer viable. With that being said, it is time for a major transformation of how the teams are divided in the state in the sports that are not operated on the class system. Former Board of Control member and longtime coach, the late Stan Steidel made this same assertion 30 years ago and his idea gained little traction. This proposal will show how the KHSAA can undergo the major realignment that Mr. Steidel envisioned, in a 21st century way. This proposal will show how the non-classed sports, particularly basketball, can be realigned, reimagined and reenergized.

- This proposal, by using the conference format, will allow for any new schools that may join the KHSAA to be easily placed in a conference without having to worry about realignments every few years. The same is true if schools merge or close for whatever reason.
- This proposal will take "politics" out of the equation. Once the conferences are established there will be no need for schools and supporters to lobby for their school to be moved. As Commissioner Tackett said when he was the assistant commissioner said about football realignment, "we need to take the politics out of it, or at least the perception of politics."
- This proposal not only realigns and reimagines the way the KHSAA teams reach the state tournament, it will reenergize many fan bases and many areas that have become stale.
- This alignment mirrors the historical alignments from the 1940's and 1950's, considered by many to be the glory years of high school basketball in the state.
- In the words of Stan Steidel, "realignment is something that needs to be done for the good of high school basketball in this state."

The Rationale, the Process and the Product

1. Do away with districts and regions. Do as some other states do and have the teams in conferences as the means of alignment. North Carolina, for example, has conferences. The schools can play for the regular season conference title and the conference tournament champion, of course, goes to the state tournament. Currently, regular season games ultimately have no emphasis other than district tournament seeding. By having conferences, with a regular season title on the line, the regular season games will have a greater importance. Many regular season games are poorly attended. Conference alignments, with a regular season title on the line, should increase attendance for most schools. The days of having an equal number of teams in each "region" are gone. Populations have changed. Having teams in conferences based on their area easily allows for the addition or subtraction of schools if the need arises. Teams have to play a minimum of 16 games against other conference teams to qualify for the regular season title. The conference tournaments will be conducted in a tournament format. The tournament will be seeded based on RPI. It will not alter the length of the season or tournaments. The conference tournaments will be conducted on the weeks previously used for the district and regional tournaments. Conferences were an important part of high school sports in Kentucky for many, many years. The KHSAA, in its magazine "The Athlete", actually used to print the conference standings so this is not necessarily a new idea. In a nod to history, those old conference names can make a return.
2. The rationale behind realignment is strong.. Since classes will never be part of the equation, this alignment gets the new conferences aligned by proximity and student population whenever possible. With the exception of one conference, they all have roughly the same average enrollment. It also puts schools in the same time zone together. Currently there are two "regions" with some schools in the eastern time zone and some in the central time zone. This alignment also took into consideration the best or most used facility to host the current regional tournaments. Those facilities were used as a center hub and the mileage from the schools to the hub was taken into account. Using geography, as Stan Steidel said, "takes the emotions out of it. If longtime rivals wind up apart so be it. This proposal keeps the travel to a time frame that is easier for schools to get to games after school and back home on school nights at a reasonable time. This realignment will bring a new excitement to many schools and many areas. Some schools may be realigned in such a way that they may have a better chance of appearing in the Sweet 16. Conferences can have events against each other. Imagine a Saturday shootout between teams from the Central Kentucky Conference and the Cumberland Valley Conference at the Corbin Arena.
3. In looking at scheduling habits of schools, many play a vast majority of their games against schools not currently in their region. They schedule teams that are in neighboring regions. Typically they are scheduling teams that are closer to their enrollment size or that are closer to them in competition level. This proposal has teams

that are more aligned based on those factors. There has been precedent by the KHSAA toward that same goal. In 1939 the KHSAA moved all Louisville and Jefferson County schools and the other schools that were in the 7th region to other regions. They left St. Xavier, Male and duPont Manual as the only teams in the 7th region. They did away with the district tournament for those three. They moved teams like Lawrenceburg, Shelbyville, Cropper and Valley to other regions. From the Courier-Journal, the reasoning was so they would be placed in regional tournaments in which their chances of attaining the state championship are better.

The Realignment:

The Jackson Purchase Conference (16 teams) (enrollments are in parentheses): Christian Fellowship (76), Fulton City (79), St Mary's (93), Community Christian (116), Fulton County (175), Carlisle County (205), Hickman County (208), Ballard Memorial (260), Livingston Central (328), Mayfield (545), Murray (553), Calloway County (860), Tilghman (882), Graves County (1099), Marshall County (1255), McCracken County (2002) ***The average enrollment would be 546.***

The West Kentucky Conference (17 teams): Heritage Christian (129), Dawson Springs (144), UHA (160), Lyon County (298), Russellville (334), Ft Campbell (394), Crittenden County (430), Caldwell County (546), Todd County Central (551), Trigg County (618), Union County (629), Webster County (678), Hopkins Central (778), Logan County (958), Hopkinsville (965), Christian County (1187), Madisonville-North Hopkins (1193). ***The average enrollment is 588.***

The Pennyrile Conference (15 teams): Whitesville Trinity (82), Cloverport (98), Mclean County (413), Owensboro Catholic (417), Hancock County (484), Edmonson County (592), Butler County (638), Breckinridge County (923), Ohio County (1145), Muhlenberg County (1147), Grayson County (1260), Owensboro (1336), Apollo (1511), Daviess County (1737), Henderson County (1968). ***The average enrollment is 916.***

The Mammoth Cave Conference (19 teams): Foundation (67), Caverna (209), Cumberland County (295), Clinton County (426), Metcalfe County (458), Green County (467), Monroe County (518), Glasgow (590), Hart County (679), Adair County (794), Franklin-Simpson (819), Russell County (841), Allen County-Scottsville (889), Warren Central (1027), Warren East (1031), Bowling Green (1295), Greenwood (1373), Barren County (1399), South Warren (1501). ***The average enrollment is 773.***

The Salt River Valley Conference (19 teams): North Hardin Classical (97), Bethlehem (296), Campbellsville (329), Ft Knox (386), Washington County (560), Bardstown (656), Thomas Nelson (668), Marion County (674, Larue County (744), Nelson County (787), John Hardin (801), Taylor County (822), Elizabethtown (829), North Bullitt (1149), Bullitt Central (1364), Meade County (1519), Bullitt East (1570), North Hardin (1667), Central Hardin (1930). ***The average enrollment is 887.***

The Metro West Conference (17 teams): Evangel (38), Beth Haven (48), Whitefield Academy (184), Louisville Holy Cross (236), Desales (319), Mercy (511), Western (876), Jeffersontown (946), Doss (952), Valley (970), Iroquois (1098), Moore (1293), Fairdale (1393), Southern (1393), Butler (1422), Pleasure Ridge Park (1518), Fern Creek (1698). ***The average enrollment is 745.***

The Metro East Conference (22 teams): Portland Christian (131), Francis Parker (149), Presentation (153), Highlands Latin (155), WEB Dubois (171), Brown (231), Collegiate (269), Ky Country Day (298), Shawnee (426), Christian Academy-Louisville (640), Sacred Heart (750), Assumption (832), Waggener (867), St Xavier (1090), Trinity (1173), Central (1226), Seneca (1338), Atherton (1464), duPont Manual (1931), Male (1991), Ballard (2020), Eastern (2043). ***The average enrollment is 879.***

The Ohio Valley Conference (16 teams): Cornerstone Christian (60), Eminence (264), Frankfort (315), Trimble County (358), Gallatin County (494), Owen County (557), Carroll County (574), Henry County (625), Western Hills (822), Spencer County (992), North Oldham (996), Shelby County (1001), Collins (1183), Anderson County (1193), South Oldham (1342), Oldham County (1663). ***The average enrollment is 777.***

The Northern Kentucky Conference (17 teams): Heritage (36), Covington Latin (147), Villa Madonna (166), Newport Central Catholic (211), Ludlow (231), Dayton (259), Covington Holy Cross (322), St Henry (454), Covington Catholic (470), Beechwood (496), Notre Dame (497), Lloyd Memorial (693), Holmes (884), Boone County (1283), Conner (1444), Cooper (1462), Ryle (2014). ***The average enrollment is 651.***

The Licking Valley Conference (18 teams): Augusta (111), Calvary Christian (119), Robertson County (148), Williamstown (227), Bellevue (244), Bishop Brossart (305), Newport (363), Bracken County (368), Walton-Verona (549), Pendleton County (699), Mason County (841), Harrison County (868), Highlands (1014), Grant County (1079), Scott (1112), Campbell County (1557), Dixie Heights (1567), Simon Kenton (1866). ***The average enrollment is 724.***

The Central Kentucky Conference *18 teams): Frankfort Christian (83), Paris (222), Model (241), Sayre (244), Lexington Christian (460), Lexington Catholic (711), Bourbon County (794), Franklin County (966), Scott County (1198), George Rogers Clark (1649), Frederick Douglass (1714), Bates Creek (1741), Great Crossing (1793), Bryan Station (1896), Paul Lurance Dunbar (1952), Henry Clay (2036), Madison Central (2225), Lafayette (2440). ***The average enrollment is 1243.***

The Wilderness Trace Conference (16 teams): KSD (24), Trinity Christian (66), Danville Christian (75), Burgin (150), Berea (355), Danville (481), Casey County (608), Mercer County (735), Garrard County (801), Rockcastle County (819), Boyle County (884), Lincoln County

(951), East Jessamine (1179), Madison Southern (1209), West Jessamine (1305), Woodford County (1305). ***The average enrollment is 684.***

The Cumberland Valley Conference (19 teams): Somerset Christian (74), Pineville (187), Harlan (197), Barbourville (200), Lynn Camp (260), Williamsburg (282), Middlesboro (357), Somerset (524), Bell County (697), McCreary Central (735), Knox Central (765), Corbin (837), Wayne County (944), Whitley County (997), Harlan County (1002), South Laurel (1109), Pulaski County (1214), Southwestern (1271), North Laurel (1301). ***The average enrollment is 682.***

The Heart of Appalachia Conference (18 teams): , Red Bird (56), Oneida Baptist (71), Cordia (74), Jackson City (80), Buckhorn (124), Jenkins (157), Owsley County (211), Lee County (264), Hazard (277), Wolfe County (368), Leslie County (470), Breathitt County (519), Jackson County (546), , Estill County (646), Powell County (649), Clay County (720), Letcher County Central (724), Perry County Central (872). ***The average enrollment is 363.***

The Big Sandy Conference (17 teams): June Buchanan (24), Phelps (155), Paintsville (215), Pikeville (326), Betsy Layne (405), East Ridge (410), Prestonsburg (490), Martin County (529), Belfry (531), Shelby Valley (531), Floyd Central (557), Knott County Central (558), Morgan County (597), Pike Central (603), Magoffin County (639), Lawrence County (739), Johnson Central (955). ***The average enrollment is 486.***

The Northeast Kentucky Conference (18 teams): Rose Hill (33), St Patrick (63), Fairview (199), Menifee County (286), Nicholas County (295), Elliott County (302), Raceland (305), West Carter (525), Bath County (619), Lewis County (624), Fleming County (658), Russell (669), East Carter (727), Greenup County (849), Ashland (895), Boyd County 915), Rowan County (1020), Montgomery County (1289). ***The average enrollment is 570.***