

Legislative Questions – Region 8 Move

1. Does the Board of Control have a written policy or set of guidelines for moving a school from one district to another? If such written policy or guidelines exist, please send a copy to us.

Yes. The basics of the policy are contained in 702 KAR 7:065, which is incorporated by reference. This is published in the KHSAA Handbook that is adopted through the regulatory process after review and recommendation by various groups including the KHSAA Board of Control, the Local Superintendent's Advisory Committee, the Kentucky Board of Education, the Administrative Regulations and Review Committee of the Kentucky General Assembly and the appropriate Secondary Education Committees of the House and Senate, based on whether or not the General Assembly is in session or is in the interim period. The currently adopted version is online at https://khsaa.org/common_documents/handbook/2024-2025//2024-25%20Handbook-04-Board%20of%20Control%20Approved%20Polices%20and%20Procedures.pdf.

The current policy has been relatively unchanged for several years. The policy contains necessary flexibility, as school teams add and delete teams on a sometimes-daily basis. Immediate necessary interim changes are handled through Sec. 1(a), and when wholesale or changes involving multiple teams are considered, then the process is more formal through the Board of Control.

From the Policy Document Detailed Above-

Policy- Alignments and Realignments

Sec. 1) Ongoing Alignment of Teams

- a) On an ongoing basis, the Commissioner shall ensure that staff maintains a current alignment of teams in each sport with the following review points considered, but which may be altered by the Board of Control in specific instances:*
- (1) If a single school adds a team (or individuals) or deletes a team (or all individuals), the alignment may be revised on an ongoing basis by the Commissioner;*
 - (2) The Board of Control may, at its own discretion, choose to realign all teams participating in a sport or sport activity, or teams in a specific area based on input from the Commissioner or submitted by schools desiring to change regions for geographic or travel reasons;*
 - (3) A realignment may also be caused by a previously adopted alignment having an expiration of its valid period. This is especially important in the enrollment-based sports (classified sports). Cross Country/Track and Field and Football are normally aligned on a four-year alignment period however that can be adjusted as needed with Board of Control approval;*
 - (4) Cross Country and Track and Field shall have the same alignment;*
 - (5) Football shall be aligned based on the average two-year enrollment of boys in the school, including the year in which the realignment project is completed, and the final alignment shall attempt to result in a final product being adopted six (6) to twelve (12) months' notice to the member schools for scheduling purposes;*
 - (6) Cross Country/Track and Field shall be aligned on a not less than every four year basis, using the average four-year enrollment of total students in the school (with single gender schools doubled for comparison purposes), including the year in which the realignment project is completed; and*

- (7) *Specific parameters about each sport alignment shall be contained in the Competition rules for the Sport or Sport Activity.*
- Sec. 2) Realignment Affecting Multiple Teams or Regions*
- a) *Whenever a sport or sport activity is to be realigned, the Board shall direct the Commissioner to produce the necessary information as to seed discussion by the Board of Control.*
- b) *The criteria and factors to be used in developing a draft alignment shall adhere to the following steps:*
- (1) Identification as to whether or not enrollment classifications will be used, and if so, what other available factors will be used to apply the Competition Rules provisions.;*
 - (2) Plot/Diagram the location of all competing schools;*
 - (3) Begin by looking at geographic clusters of schools. Geography (including specific travel route information) is an important criteria for placement in groups (regions, districts, etc.), but is not the sole determinant for placement;*
 - (4) Travel routes must be reviewed as a potential factor, as well as the identification of the existence of multiple travel routes;*
 - (5) In the non-classified team sports (baseball, basketball, field hockey, lacrosse, soccer, softball, volleyball), the basketball alignment should be an initial framework, specifically the region boundaries.*
 - (6) If possible in the non-classified team sports, the school district boundaries should be an important element, but the level of participation of the schools in the school districts are also a factor.*
 - (7) The unique factors of each sport, particularly the individual sports, must be reviewed, including available facilities; and*
 - (8) The participation and alignment history, both individual and teams, is a factor in consideration, but not the final determinant.*
- c) *When reviewing alternative suggestions for alignments, the Board shall prioritize the requests from the membership that affect the requesting school over those suggestions that result from suggestions about other schools without affecting the suggesting school.*
- d) *The following factors are NOT to be considered:*
- (1) Past success or failure, unless a universal factor is approved by the Board of Control during its review;*
 - (2) Enrollment (in a non-classified sport);*
 - (3) Socio-economic status and student body composition;*
 - (4) Type of school (A1, A5, B1, D1, F1, J1, M1, R1); and*
 - (5) Specific desires of coaches (input for the Commissioner and the Board must be from the administrative level).*

2. Upon what basis did the Board of Control decide to move Cornerstone into the 29th District?

For the 2025-2026 school year, the alignment in Region 8 (Districts 29-32) is as follows:

DISTRICT 29 – North Oldham, Oldham County, South Oldham

DISTRICT 30 – Anderson County, Collins, Cornerstone Christian, Shelby County, Spencer County, Woodford County

DISTRICT 31 – Carroll County, Eminence, Gallatin County, Henry County, Owen County, Trimble County

DISTRICT 32 – Grant County, Simon Kenton, Walton-Verona, Williamstown

Cornerstone was added to District 30 for the 2025-2026 school year, by the Commissioner, based on the adopted policy

In 2002, the Board of Control members at the time undertook a wholesale review of the basketball alignment. As the staff member responsible for that project, which lasted nearly two years, the challenges of this undertaking cannot be understated. Every move of a school from one region to another had the potential to disrupt rivalries, schedules and in many cases, long-standing traditions. In addition, many important ancillary groups to the management of schools, such as the principals' Association, athletic directors, regional policy boards necessitated by the 1971 Federal Court order, and other constituent groups, were formed along those regional boundaries.

This project, however, was not done because basketball is no more or less important than any other sport. It was because our member schools pushed to align our team sports consistently. Prior to that time, a school might have been in one district for soccer, another district for baseball, and even a different district for basketball. It was the desire that, because most of our schools play basketball, we would use that alignment as a framework and let that filter down to the other team sports where possible. As it turns out, it was not a completely feasible undertaking in soccer because we have so many fewer schools that play soccer than the other sports. But the determination was made to at least put all the schools in a sport into the same region and then determine the number of districts that might be necessary.

From that work, the Board members adopted staff recommendations on alignment parameters for whenever substantial changes were made in 2002 and have not been revised since that time and continue to guide operations.

These Objectives for that project at that time included –

1. ***If and where possible, eliminating three-team districts.*** *The perceived competitive advantage of schools in those districts has long been a debate point among the membership, and is in large part, the genesis for this project.*
2. ***If and where possible, eliminating six-team districts.*** *For the same reasons that the three-team districts are perceived to be an advantage, those in six-team districts appear to be just as much at a disadvantage.*
3. ***Where possible, leaving teams in their existing regions.*** *Doing this will attempt to preserve traditional rivalries and scheduling allowances.*
4. ***Using geographic proximity as the primary determinant for the placement of teams into districts.*** *The use of neighboring “clusters” of schools should be the most important criterion while reviewing the geography. The Board will attempt to remedy most situations where opponents were passing by other non-district schools to play district contests, but such may not always be possible, as there are many alternate ways to arrive at sites.*
5. ***Addressing the overcrowding in the 9th region and the loss of teams in the 6th and 7th regions.*** *School openings and closings have left too few teams for balanced districts without involving teams from outside of Jefferson County in Regions 6 and 7, and have yielded large districts in Northern Kentucky when compared to the rest of the state.*
6. ***In addition, the long-range impact on other sports that rely on the basketball alignment as a guide is being considered.***
7. ***It is desired to limit each district grouping to a minimum of four (4) teams and a maximum of five (5) teams.***

Other Priorities adopted during that project included (but were not limited to):

1. *Competitive ability or success/lack of success of any particular team is not to enter into the discussion;*

2. *The fact that consolidation of schools, particularly in the Eastern regions of the state (current Regions 13, 14 and 15) and in some cases, far Western parts of the state (e.g. Regions 1 and 2) impacts the alignment was noted in the last review. This means that the Board goals may not be accomplished without the movement of some teams from one region to another.*
3. *In moving teams, the Board is attempting to allow schools under the same Board of Education to remain in the same region, where possible, but not always.*
4. *The movement of teams across time zones and the potential impact of change is being considered, but in the end, the Board thus far concludes that this issue is not as significant as once thought;*
5. *Due to wholesale realignment, all other existing geographic alignment problems are to be addressed at that time.*

Over the years, Objective 4 above, with geographic clusters, has always proven to be the most challenging. It is entirely possible that, in a desire to keep clustered schools together, you are unable to adhere to the other objectives listed. This was certainly the case in the most recent consideration. The objectives listed above were adopted in order of priority.

Sports, at its very core, devolves into a discussion about competitive ability, or at least competitive equity. In most cases, schools' suggestions for change are rooted in a desire for greater success. However, in this case, the priorities of avoiding three- or six-team districts and keeping schools together in geographic clusters conflicted. That's what always makes it challenging for the board to look at issues such as this.

Another factor cannot be ignored. Post-pandemic, the association has experienced a growth spurt in the number of its schools. More than a dozen schools that were previously part of another organization have joined the association. The type of school is irrelevant. The association accepts all members who voluntarily join, and our association treats them all as member schools. When this topic was considered, the elements of the objectives above certainly pose potential conflicts. In some cases, deference was given to long-time members during the discussion.

It is also important to note the process that was used throughout this consideration. Beginning in August, when Cornerstone announced that the school wanted to be placed in a district for postseason play, work began on a solution to the alignment issue that was clearly on the horizon. The possibility of Cornerstone participating has been discussed since it initially re-joined the association in 2022. Until August 2025, Cornerstone had not sought to enter championship competition due to its enrollment and participation levels. Once the new Athletic Director/Designated Representative at the school issued official notice, staff began working with member schools on a solution.

While the Board of Control has the ultimate authority over team alignment, it has long been the practice of both the Commissioner and the board to first see if these issues can be resolved through consensus at the local level. This tactic has been successful in recent years in region 4, region 15, and more recently in the metro area of Louisville, with regions six and 7. In some cases, the schools have reached consensus, as in region 15, and it could be easily adopted by the board. In other cases, after a great deal of effort, the schools end up simply telling the association they're not going to be able to reach a local agreement and would need a state solution.

The member school Designated Representatives / Athletic Directors in the 8th meet regularly to discuss issues regarding the management of their events, the recommended selection and evaluation of assigning secretaries, and other activities needed by the KHSAA but better handled through local control.

The genesis of the desire to make any move at all centered on Objectives 1 and 2 above and on the potential competitive advantages teams in a three-team district gain over those in a six-team district. At multiple meetings, possible alignment alternatives were discussed. All 19 schools attended at least 2 meetings where this subject was discussed last fall. After the second meeting, the schools notified the association that they had reached a consensus by a 14-5 vote. At that point, the move would have been to take Collins High School from the 30th into the 29th district with North Oldham, Oldham County and South Oldham. This move was somewhat validated through work using artificial intelligence prompts and other methods, and it was presented to the board at its November meeting.

The Board also had available for its review, mileage and travel time charts for the teams in the districts. While travel time and distance may seem critical, it is important to note that, with district placement, there is generally one, or at most two, mandated games to establish a postseason seed. In its simplest form, in a district that has agreed to seed based on playing only once per year, travel to the required games would be once every other year. In a district that has agreed to play twice per year, travel to the required games would be one trip per team per year.

At that public meeting, which was noticed by all member schools on multiple occasions, many schools in the 8th region attended the public comment session on the subject. Those in attendance included: Collins High School, Gallatin County High School, Oldham High School, North Oldham High School and Grant County High School. Transparency is critical in discussions like this, and those schools provided the board with additional insight into their views on the future of that regional breakdown.

In November, the board decided to request additional information from the schools before making a final decision in January. The original recommendation was adopted by a closed vote of the designated Representatives. Much like the ballot box during an election, the schools at that time felt it better to vote anonymously to protect ongoing relationships and competitive concerns, and to fully express their opinions. In the end, when the Board of Control received the recommendation, they felt it necessary to find out how specific schools felt. The board at that time made an unprecedented determination that, in issues where they're seeking the schools' opinions in an area where the board will ultimately make the decision, they wanted the vote attributed to the specific schools. This was a safeguard against a group of schools railroading their preferred option through collusion among schools, as well as against trying to fully determine the membership's opinions. The results of that survey are attached.

It is difficult to discuss just the cornerstone issue without discussing the issues related to District 31. Several years ago, the member schools in Districts 31 and 29 brought a request to the Board of Control to allow District 31 to expand to six teams. This request was unanimously requested by the nine impacted schools at that time and placed six schools into the same district, regardless of the potential competitive sacrifices that move might have made. This move moved Trimble County High School from its previous placement in District 29 to District 31, leaving District 29 with only three teams. When the 8th region's designated representatives originally got together in the fall, one of their objectives was to align with the board's objectives stated above and eliminate the six-team districts. District 31 had previously been satisfied with

the composition of the six-team district and did not want to change as part of this consideration. The original vote of 14 to 5 was called into question because several felt the two issues should be separated. This was even more reason the additional survey was necessary.

The schools were given notice that, in January, the issue was likely to be considered for final adoption. Again, an opportunity for public comment was present, and this time only two schools attended the comment session: Collins High School and Gallatin County High School. Following consideration of an original motion to approve the recommended Collins movement, which did not pass, the board considered a second motion to move Cornerstone Christian into District 29. After much discussion and debate, that motion was approved.

It is always worth noting that membership attendance at the KHSAA Board meetings is available, as is the opportunity to speak to the Board via public comment, but no member school is required to attend. And of course, they have near constant access to Board members as most (14 of the 18) members are elected from within schools and school systems. Whether or not a member attended is not a factor in consideration, and the immediate publication of recordings of the Association meetings and attendance by statewide media members during the meeting allows for considerable public review and transparency.

Either decision in this matter approved by the board would have conflicted with one of the adopted objectives. In the end, the board felt comfortable leaving District 31 as a 6-team district, given the schools' consensus. And the move by Cornerstone Christian to eliminate the 3-team district in District 29 met the 1st objective of the process.

One additional consideration is travel between the schools, as shown in the Google Maps charts. From a direct comparison for Cornerstone Christian, if travel were necessary for all teams in District 30 because schedule rotations place the seeded game as an away game for them each year, the aggregate travel distance would be 80.9 miles. If Cornerstone Christian is placed in District 29, the aggregate amount of miles is 90.8. Whether or not that is significant is likely a matter of internal interpretation.

As has been stated, likely too often, this is definitely one of those cases where the normal objectives of the districting process cannot be accomplished without conflict. And while there are objective standards, subjective decisions will almost always be needed. Likely, any other discussed move would have had some member school express concern about the situation.

3. How many other KHSAA member schools are currently placed in districts outside their geographic area, requiring their sports teams to travel past multiple schools in their area to compete against schools farther away?

Please note this is not a simple question to quantify. In basketball, this happens minimally, and most district alignments have been in place for nearly 20 years and have been scrutinized by the member schools throughout those years.

Coincidentally, a requested move in the membership was approved at that January meeting, which actually depends on the road traveled, as Foundation Christian passes another school in a district to get to its newly requested district. That move was unanimously requested by the local schools in those districts, but it is an example. Another example exists in region 15, where Lawrence County High School, on the outskirts of the region, actually passes through one district to reach its district games (on an overlay map). But that has been in place again for several years, and was another discussion that involved many more issues than simply plotting

dots on a map, due to the declining number of schools in region 15 and the geographic layout of those schools.

It would be challenging at best to exhaustively say whether or not other situations exist simply because, as with several of your constituents, there are a variety of routes to get from point A to point B. You could easily say you're passing by a school when you can avoid passing by them by taking a different route.

There are also cases in which schools within a single county are in separate districts. In Laurel County, their two schools are in separate districts because, frankly, the line between those districts could be drawn right down the middle. And yet this is another example of the route you take, perhaps determining whether or not you're passing other schools. In Kenton County, their three schools are geographically spread throughout the county. Their current placement spans three regions, not just districts, and while some expressed trepidation at first, it has turned out to be a very geographically sound move. And certainly, when you get into the areas around the metropolitan areas, the route you take could skew the answer to this question. In most cases, teams do not pass through clusters of schools to reach district opponents. But as their original objective 1 stated, not all objectives can be fully complied with. Certainly, I suspect that, much like legislative districting, there is almost always a requirement to develop objective standards, and you have to make subjective decisions at some point.