

July 22, 2013

Dear Members of the Arkansas General Assembly:

On behalf of the student athletes at Mountain Home Public Schools, we are asking the Legislature for assistance. Currently, our student athletes must travel an astronomical number of miles to compete in extra-curricular activities. We have been assigned by the Arkansas Activities Association (AAA) to the 7A/6A East conference. If we fail to participate in conference play, we are not eligible to participate in state tournaments. Also, if we fail to participate in conference play, we would not have anyone to play during the conference season. Our school district has asked the AAA and its Executive Director for assistance with the travel situation we face each year, which in turn creates loss of academic time for our students. Their response is, "Proposals are voted upon by the governing body and we only enforce them." Please see attached (A) which is our latest proposal to reduce travel and reduce the number of classifications from 7 to 6. This proposal will be voted on by the governing body on July 30, but with the Executive Committee putting a "Do Not Pass" recommendation by a 16-2 vote, it is not likely to pass.

To better understand the situation, following is a brief description of the structure of the AAA: The AAA is comprised of an Executive Director, five Associate/Assistant Directors, and the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee is comprised of 19 administrators, one each from the 15 activity districts plus three minority members and one female member. Proposals may be submitted from each activity district and each proposal, if passed out of the activity district, then goes before the Executive Committee for their recommendation of either "Do Pass", "No Recommendation", or "Do Not Pass". All proposals are then voted on by the governing body which is made up of all school districts in the state. The governing body most always goes along with the recommendation by the Executive Committee. The majority of the Executive Committee members are pleased with their current conferences and classifications. The Executive Committee is tasked with the charge to represent what is best for ALL students; however, in our opinion, they usually vote for what is best for their own school and the majority of schools in their activity district. If there is no change in the current AAA structure and voting method, we believe that we will continue to have students out of valuable academic time, as well as, excruciating and unrealistic travel. Please understand that we are not critical of any school, Executive Committee member, or the Arkansas Activities Association – it is just the structure and format for change that continues, in our opinion, to be so unfair and impractical for our students.

Under the direction of the Director and the Executive Committee, a reclassification sub-committee made up of 15 6A and 7A school representatives was formed in November of 2012. Although we have further travel than any team in the state, we were disappointed that we were not asked to be part of this sub-committee. The current make up of the 6A and 7A conferences has blended schools – meaning some 6A and some 7A schools are in each of the four conferences. The sub-committee voted 15-0 to support a proposal that would eliminate two of the blended conferences leaving the 6A south as all 6A schools and the 7A west as all 7A schools. A Special Ballot was mailed on January 15, 2013, to all 7A and 6A schools and although we voted against this proposal (due to loss of instructional time), it passed by a 2/3 majority vote. This proposal for the new conference assignments for the 2014-16 cycle is attached. (B1, B2, and B3). Since Bryant and Siloam Springs have been placed in the same conference, we believe the biggest concern among the majority of schools is the competition factor – more so than the travel. For us, we are gravely concerned about the loss of academic time out of class, as well as the extensive travel for our students.

Following are our current conference schools with mileage (one way) as well as enrollment.

Classification	School	Miles	Student Population
7A	West Memphis	187	1326
6A	Marion	184	994
7A	Little Rock Central	156	2041
7A	North Little Rock	156	2269
7A	Cabot	132	2199
6A	Jonesboro	124	1106
6A	Searcy	120	851
6A	Mountain Home		929

Mountain Home **AVERAGES 151.3 miles ONE WAY** to all conference games in the sports of: Football, Volleyball, Boys' Basketball, Girls' Basketball, Boys' Soccer, Girls' Soccer, Baseball, and Softball.

We listed enrollment size in addition to travel to illustrate that there are numerous schools closer to Mountain Home in both travel and enrollment. North Little Rock has 2269 students, while Mountain Home has 929 which is a difference of 2.44 times the enrollment. If we take 2.44 times the enrollment of 929, we get 380. There are 85 schools in the state with more than 380 students in grades 9 – 11 that we are closer to in enrollment than North Little Rock.

Listed below are schools closer to Mountain Home in **both** travel and enrollment than North Little Rock:

School	Miles	Student Population
Harrison	50	619
Highland	58	366
Berryville	81	404
Heber Springs	88	399
Batesville	91	623
Pocahontas	98	428
Huntsville	100	521
Greenbrier	116	657
Nettleton	124	686
Valley View	125	474
Jonesboro Westside	125	373
Green County Tech	130	756
Paragould	130	644
Beebe	132	710
Farmington	133	480
Vilonia	138	689
Jacksonville	142	804
Morrilton	147	530
Sylvan Hills	150	650
Lonoke	152	418
North Pulaski	153	662

These are just the schools closer in travel and within the 2.44 times enrollment.

Mountain Home Public Schools feel that we have exhausted all efforts through the Arkansas Activities Association in an effort to reduce loss of academic time out of class for our students, as well as requesting assistance to address the issue of extensive travel. As long as the AAA and the majority of the Executive Committee members will not support re-classification or re-structuring to reduce travel; and as long as all schools get to vote on these crucial decisions, it is our opinion that nothing is going to change for our students. We have been facing these previously stated issues for quite some time; however, we were optimistic that we could eventually get help from the AAA. We have attached a previous proposal - please see (C) - to show efforts that we have tried to work through the Arkansas Activities Association. This proposal also received a "Do Not Pass" from the Executive Committee and failed at the governing body meeting.

We have some suggestions that we would like the Legislature to consider:

1. Put an average mileage limit on conference games (possibly 125-130 miles). This would allow the AAA and the Executive Committee to come up with a plan to reduce travel for ALL students.
2. Encourage the AAA to think outside the box when it comes to the number of schools in a Conference (currently it is in the constitution that there shall be 8 schools per conference in the larger classifications). If there could be 9 or 10 teams placed in a conference (similar to the smaller classifications), it might reduce travel.
3. Encourage the AAA to come up with alternate conferences which consider travel as the top priority – followed by competition. (This could be done by placing the larger schools in close proximity into a conference and the next largest schools in close proximity to one another in a conference, and so forth). This could work for conference play only – then play in the state tournament according to classification size.
4. Consider the possibility that the Executive Committee could be comprised of individual members not attached or associated with any school – similar to the State Board of Education.
5. We are open to ideas, rules, regulations, suggestions, etc. that will reduce travel and loss of Instructional time for our students.

We hope that you share our significant concern on the loss of academic time for the students of Mountain Home Public Schools and assist us in our efforts to address this issue. It is our hope that we have shown there are solutions to our travel issues. We have made many efforts, offered suggestions and proposals to remedy our situation, and we are coming to you as a last resort. We appreciate your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lonnie Myers, Superintendent
Dana Brown, High School Principal
Janet Wood, Athletic Director

HANDBOOK AMENDMENTS

All proposals for amendments to the constitution or bylaws submitted at activity district meetings must first be presented in writing to the AAA office and the district president at least 72 hours prior to the meeting, and in proper form.
ONLY VOTING REPRESENTATIVES MAY SUBMIT PROPOSALS.

PROPER FORM MUST INCLUDE:

1. Activity District or organization submitting proposal
2. The article, section, rule and page number in AAA Handbook to be affected.
3. Wording of the proposal.
4. Purpose of proposal
5. Effective Date (immediately or deferred for 1 year, 2 years, etc).
6. Is proposal bylaw or constitution?

PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE CONSTITUTION OR BYLAWS

This form is to be used by member schools and statewide organizations in proposing a change in the AAA constitution or bylaws. Complete form and mail to your Activity District President and the AAA office.

THIS MUST BE RECEIVED AT LEAST 72 HOURS PRIOR TO THE MEETING.

1. This proposal is submitted by:

Name Lonnie Myers School or Organization Mountain Home Public Schools

2. This proposal deals with ARTICLE 1 SECTION 5 RULE 3 PAGE 18 of the current AAA Handbook.

3. Type the proposal using the general wording desired by deleting, substituting or adding to the original text. Wording of the proposal may be submitted separately.

Rule 3. CLASSIFICATIONS

- A. Class 6A – The largest 16 schools
- B. Class 5A – The next largest 48 football schools and all basketball schools whose enrollment numbers fall within these
- C. Class 4A – The next largest 48 football schools and all basketball schools whose enrollment numbers fall within these
- D. Class 3A – The next largest 48 football schools and all basketball schools whose enrollment numbers fall within these
- E. Class 2A – Basketball – The next 48 largest schools and the remainder of football schools
- F. Class 1A – The remainder of schools.

4. List the reasons for recommending the change.

1. Reduces amount of travel
2. Reduces the loss of class time for students
3. Eliminates play outside of classification and conference
4. Eliminates need for power rating
5. Does not affect the current 7A, 4A, 3A, 2A, and 1A classifications
6. Evens the discrepancy in enrollment from top to bottom of each conference.

5. Effective date 2014-2016 Classification Cycle

6. Please Check: Bylaw _____ (or) Constitution X

Arkansas Activities Association / 3920 Richards Road / North Little Rock, AR 72117
Phone 501-955-2500 Fax 501-955-2600 or 501-955-2521
www.ahsaa.org

SPECIAL BALLOT

January 15, 2013

SPECIAL BALLOT	7A/6A Conference Assignment 2014-2016 Classification Cycle
FROM: Arkansas Activities Association	

PURPOSE: To adopt 7A/6A Conference Assignments for the 2014-2016 Cycle and to approve the state play-off brackets for the sports of volleyball, football, basketball, baseball, softball, and soccer. (See attached)

EFFECTIVE: 2014-2012 Classification Cycle

VOTE: All 7A/6A High Schools May Vote

CONSTITUTION: Requires 2/3 Vote

BOARD OF DIRECTORS RECOMMENDS: No Recommendation

EXPLANATION FOR BOARD'S RECOMMENDATION: The board preferred that the schools involved make a decision as to whether this proposal would be beneficial to them.

***** PLEASE MARK ONE *****

<input type="checkbox"/>	FOR	** OR **	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	AGAINST
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Mtn Home
School Name (please print)

Dana Brown
Voting Representative or Superintendent's Signature

Deadline – Postmarked by February 5, 2013
Or fax to: 501-955-2600 or 501-955-2521

7A/6A Conference Assignment 2014-2016 Cycle

7A West

8-team conference
of 7A schools only

6A South

8-team conference
of 6A schools only

7A/6A Central

8-team conference
4 – 6A schools
4 – 7A Schools

7A/6A East

8-team conference
4 – 6A schools
4-7A schools

In the 6A South and in the 7A West Conferences, the top six teams will make the play-offs and be seeded for conference play within those conferences. The AAA tiebreaker system will be used for all ties.

In the 7A/6A Central and in the 7A/6A East, play-off determination will be based solely on the competition of like schools for each respective classification. Only the top three schools in 6A and the top three schools in 7A from each conference will advance to the play-offs from the 7A/6A Central and from the 7A/6A East. The AAA tiebreaker system will be used for all ties.

Teams would be placed on rotating bracket that is enclosed for the sports of volleyball, football, basketball, baseball, softball, and soccer. Schools must play against all schools assigned to their conference to compete for a conference championship and to qualify for the state tournament.

Golf, cross country, dance, cheer, swimming, track, wrestling, bowling, and tennis will remain the same as approved by 7A/6A voting representatives.

****No power point system needed! ****

6A/7A Reclassification Committee voted 15-0 to support this proposal.

<u>7A West</u>	<u>6A South</u>	<u>7A/6A Central</u>	<u>7A/6A East</u>
Bentonville	Benton	Bryant	Cabot
Fayetteville	El Dorado	Catholic/St. Mary's	Jonesboro
#Ft. Smith Northside	Lake Hamilton	Conway	LR Central
#Ft. Smith Southside	%JA Fair (LR Hall)	Greenwood	Marion
Rogers Heritage	LR Parkview	%LR Hall (Alma)	Mt. Home
Rogers High	Pine Bluff	Russellville	NLR
Springdale Har-Ber	Sheridan	Siloam Springs	Searcy
Springdale High	Texarkana	#Van Buren	WM

7A West would have 6 representatives for all state play-offs and they would be seeded based on conference play within the 7A West.

6A South would have 6 representatives for all state play-offs and they would be seeded based on conference play within the 6A South.

7A portion of the 7A/6A Central blend would have 3 representatives for all state play-offs based on conference play within the 7A schools. (Bryant, Catholic/St. Mary's, Conway, [VB, FSS, FSN].

7A portion of the 7A/6A East blend would have 3 representatives for all state play-offs based on conference play within the 7A schools. (Cabot, LR Central, NLR, WM).

Then, the 3 Central 7A schools & the 3 East 7A schools would still have to follow some type of point system to decide on how the #1 through #6 seeds would be determined overall for the play-off picture.

6A portion of the 7A/6A Central blend would have 3 representatives for all state play-offs based on conference play within the 6A schools. (Greenwood, LR Hall, Russellville, Siloam Springs)

6A portion of the 7A/6A East blend would have 3 representatives for all state play-offs based on conference play within the 6A schools. (Jonesboro, Marion, Mt. Home, Searcy)

Then, the 3 Central 6A schools & the 3 East 6A schools would still have to follow some type of point system to decide on how the #1 through #6 seeds would be determined overall for the play-off picture.

C

Submitted by: Dana Brown

School: Mountain Home

Article XII Section 1 Rule _____ Page 12

RULE 3. CLASSIFICATIONS

Proposal: Set the classifications based on enrollment so that no one school must play anyone more than twice their size. In other words, start with the school that has the highest enrollment and divide by 2. These would be in the top classification – Class 6A. Divide the remaining schools by 2 to determine the bottom of the next classification. Proceed on down. We are proposing that we have 6 classifications instead of 7.

1. Class 6A – All schools in top 50% enrollment. In other words, if one school has an enrollment of 2600 – the school in the bottom of that classification would be 1300.
2. Class 5A – All schools starting with 50% enrollment of top division and dividing that number by 2. In other words, if the top enrollment in Class 5A was 1300, the bottom enrollment would be 650.
3. Class 4A – All schools starting with 50% of previous split and dividing by 2. In other words, if the top enrollment was 650, the bottom of Class 4A would be 325.
4. Class 3A – All schools starting with 50% of previous split and dividing by 2. Example, if the top enrollment was 325, the bottom of Class 3A would be 162.5.
5. Class 2A – All schools starting with 50% of previous split and dividing by 2. Example, if the top enrollment was 162.5, the bottom of Class 2A would be 81.25
6. Class 1A – the remaining schools

PURPOSE. The purpose for this proposal is:

1. To reduce travel issues associated with having 7 classifications.
2. To make all classifications equitable with respect to the % discrepancy between the largest and smallest members within each classification.
3. Lessen the involvement of or the need for state legislation and lessen the possibility of a lawsuit (i.e. being forced to play against schools that are more than 3 ½ times larger than another school).

EFFECTIVE DATE: 2013-14 school year.