

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE REPORT TO THE WIAA EXECUTIVE BOARD 5/22/2021

This document is intended for WIAA board review and if favorably received, will need to be edited/modified prior to general distribution to member schools. The information included here would need to be condensed and formatted to be consistent with WIAA distribution policies.

In 2016, the WIAA Executive Board in alignment with WIAA 9.1.0, established a committee to examine the governance structure of the WIAA and its activity districts. In establishing this committee, the Board was following the directive outlined in WIAA rule 5.1.1, a constitutional requirement to conduct, **“a study of the activity districts shall be made at least once in every ten years”**. Since 2016, committee members have changed, and the current committee members are:

- District 1: Harlan Kredit – Co chairperson – WIAA board
- District 2: Jeff Lowell – Athletic Director
- District 3: Tim Thomsen – Athletic Director – WIAA board
- District 4: Tim Graham – District Director
- District 5: Kent Andersen – District Director
- District 6: Dave Cullen – District Director
- District 7: Jeff Pietz – Athletic Director
- District 8: Mike Edwards and Paul Manfred – Co chairperson – Asst. Principal/WIAA board
- District 9: Ken Lindgren (2016 - 2020) – athletic director – WIAA board
- Art Jarvis: Superintendent
- Andy Barnes: WIAA staff
- Leah Francis: WIAA staff

The Governance Committee has met approximately thirty times since 2016 and during this time carefully examined the constitutional language of the WIAA as outlined in the first nine rules in the WIAA handbook. Some of the earlier recommendations of the committee were approved through the 2019 representative assembly process. Those recommendations included new adjudication procedures and expanding board authority in unusual and pressing circumstances (WIAA rules 18.27.3.c and 19.13.2.A.4). Governance committee discussion for the 2020-21 school year focused primarily on:

- Developing best practices for WIAA districts,
- Issues that arise when WIAA districts utilize ‘glue’,
- The current number of WIAA districts, and
- Selection procedures of executive board members.

Discussions at times were difficult as these topics can be emotional, but it became clear to the committee that changes in these areas are necessary for the WIAA and WIAA districts to operate efficiently in an arena that is quite different than when the present policies were formulated. The committee recommendations are presented to the WIAA Executive Board for their consideration. Rationale for the recommended changes is outlined below.

Rationale for redistricting:

What follows is a compilation of background information and rationale why we need to realign the operations of WIAA districts to comply with the constitution of the WIAA and to achieve maximum efficiency for the Association.

The work of the Governance Committee relied on input from district directors, WIAA athletic directors, WIAA staff, Governance Committee members and a study by Todd Link. For his master's thesis work from the Harvard Kennedy School of Public Policy, Todd did an analysis of the activities governance model for every state, with an emphasis on Washington and the structure of the WIAA. A thirty-eight-page summary document of his findings and recommendations was used by the Governance Committee to help formulate some of our proposals. Additionally, the committee conducted a session on governance at the WSSAAA conference, addressed it at several representative assemblies, and discussed it at various league and district meetings.

There are many different systems of governance used around the country by state activities associations. Some utilize districts (or their equivalent) and many do not. Washington is one of the states that has utilized a system of districts for most of its existence. The WIAA constitution states in Rule 5.1.0 **"each (district) representing a geographical area of the state, and each functioning as an operational subdivision of the Association."** In actuality, while all of the WIAA districts are set by geographical boundaries, they may not represent all of the schools in that geographical area. Recently some schools/leagues have moved from their geographical WIAA district to another WIAA district that is outside of their "neighborhood." This has caused considerable angst among some schools and leagues. Additionally, it would appear that the WIAA is not following its constitution because districts operate quite independently, which conflicts with WIAA rule 5.3.0, which states that **"the (WIAA) activity district has responsibilities delegated by the WIAA"**. This implies that the districts should not be acting completely independently, as this rule states that WIAA districts were created to use the delegated authority to meet the needs of the Association.

The present system of nine WIAA districts (five districts in eastern Washington and four in western Washington) has been in existence for at least forty years and has generally served us well. However, as technology has developed, finances have become more problematic, organization of activities have become more complicated, legal issues of parity and equality have become more critical, the governance committee was formed five years ago to carefully examine our present structure. The goal was to recommend any changes to our membership that would make our organizational plan more efficient and equitable.

Clearly, we need to continue utilizing WIAA districts and district directors while continuing the decision-making system through the representative assembly.

Summary of Governance Committee Discussions:

The following is a summary of the Governance Committee's discussion related to necessary changes to the WIAA's governance structure and rationale for why such changes would be positive for the Association.

1. ***Redistricting, so that WIAA districts are of like size:*** There are important financial considerations for this recommendation.
 - a. WIAA expenses continue to increase. The Association receives about 60% of its income from tournaments, specially basketball and football and the reality is that tournament attendance nationwide is on a decline. While there remains a constant investigation into ways to reduce expenses, there is also a constant request to expand the number of activities that the WIAA promotes and regulates. The WIAA is a "big business" and need to operate as efficiently as we can to survive difficult economic times. If the WIAA operates on a deficit level, there is basically no other option but to reduce services.
 - b. There is a strong financial connection between the districts and the WIAA. However, some of our districts have significant reserves while others essentially have no reserves. For example, the WIAA

ball contract is much lower this year (and will remain low over the next three years) because some districts developed their own ball contracts with other companies.

- c. This same financial impact on the WIAA is seen when reviewing WIAA district contracts involving media and technology. When some districts sign their own media contracts, the result is that the WIAA does not receive the revenue that they could if all districts were utilizing the same platform.
- d. If the WIAA cannot financially “make it,” the only alternative is to raise membership fees for member schools who are also already in difficult financial circumstances due to COVID-19 and other factors.
- e. Basically, all schools **are** the WIAA and the only reason for existence of the WIAA is to serve our member schools in the most efficient manner possible. Therefore, consolidation of efforts, utilizing the same policies and similar operational procedures makes financial sense.
- f. The committee, after a review of current WIAA district operations believe that having between 40 and 90 schools in a district can create necessary stability. Less variation in the number of schools in each WIAA district allows for commonality of structure. WIAA districts will also benefit from a common developed system of fees and other financial procedures, providing continuity and cohesion rather than the current model of nine different, distinct ways of WIAA districts conducting their financial business.
- g. Given all of the financial concerns relating to COVID-19 issues, it will not be easy for some districts and the WIAA to remain solvent with little income other than fees. As one district director stated, “we will survive better together than separately”.

2. ***WIAA districts need to maintain appropriate levels of liability coverage:*** Legal issues continue to be problematic at every level of the Association and we need to be sure there is adequate insurance coverage for member schools, WIAA districts, and the Association.

- a. The WIAA could provide guidance to the districts as they address their own legal concerns. This has been and will continue to be an area of major concern that requires continuous monitoring.
- b. We believe this to be a critical issue and given the changing field of liability, this is an important area for all of us to address.

3. ***Common procedures have brought stability to the WIAA at all levels of the Association:*** Common eligibility procedures have been a strength of the Association and these updated procedures have been noted and praised across all areas of the state.

- a. The development of common accounting procedures, violation reports, site selection procedures, WIAA communication guidelines, and press reports among other areas of responsibility would be of great benefit to individual schools, districts and the WIAA staff.
- b. Currently each WIAA district utilizes a different accounting system with different IRS designations leading to confusion, making it more difficult for the WIAA and WIAA districts to work closely together.
- c. With a vastly different number of schools current in each WIAA district, it is difficult to establish and utilize common procedures.
 - i. Eligibility Hearings: during a school year, it is not uncommon for a WIAA district to have over thirty times the number of eligibility hearings than a smaller WIAA district.
 - ii. Rules Violations: There is a noticeable discrepancy in the number of rules violations and the reported remediation for such violations from each WIAA district. The same violation may occur in two different districts but be dealt with entirely differently. Increased standardization would be beneficial to our schools when looking at the enforcement of WIAA rules.
 - iii. If the number of schools in each district falls between 40 – 90, it makes it more likely that consistency may be applied to these areas, which allows for efficient and evenly adjudicated eligibility and rules violation cases.

4. **Redistricting will increase the chance that all classifications will be represented in each WIAA district:** WIAA districts that have some size and have multiple classifications are beneficial in helping leagues and schools see the big picture more easily. If 4A schools and 1B schools are in the same district and work together, everyone, including WIAA executive board members, can see and understand their own respective issues which then can make it easier to solve problems as they come forward. Essentially, their world view is enlarged.
 - a. Having all classifications represented in each WIAA district will likely make it easier to find facilities for smaller schools to use since they do not have the facilities of larger schools. This type of enhanced cooperation would seem to be a natural outgrowth of having multi classifications in the same district.
 - b. A related area of concern has been the frequent movement of leagues and schools from one district to another. This has occurred in both eastern and western Washington and has been a major cause for bad feelings between schools and districts. If districts were larger, that could reduce the movement of leagues from one district to another because their needs would be met more easily in larger districts.
5. **Strengthening the relationship between WIAA District Directors and the WIAA Office will benefit the entire Association:** District Directors serve a vitally important role and the committee believes it will be beneficial to the entire association if each district director works more closely with the WIAA office. Ensuring the “delegated authority” from the WIAA to the WIAA districts is more uniform will lead to a strengthened relationship. This uniform approach could include the area of tournaments they supervise, and other responsibilities determined by the WIAA in consultation with the district boards.
6. **Allocations to WIAA state tournaments have created difficulty for WIAA Districts:** A WIAA district’s need to utilize WIAA rule 22.2.8 (the “Glue”) would be eliminated with larger districts and a reimaging of the WIAA state tournaments through a 32-team bracket.
 - a. A 32-team bracket will increase the number of allocations for each league and WIAA district. This will eliminate the need for requests for “glue” and will mean that WIAA District Directors will not be called on to negotiate these requests, which often are brought to the Executive Board for a decision.
 - b. Eliminating the need for “glue” will eliminate the cause of unnecessary conflicts which has damaged relationships between districts and member schools in recent years.
7. **Equitable representation is a rationale redistricting as part of updated governance structures:** WIAA districts of between 40 and 90 schools will allow for more equitable representation on the WIAA Executive Board, WSSAAA Executive Board, District Director Committee, and Representative Assembly.

Even though the current governance structure has served the WIAA well for many years, the committee believes that it is necessary to establish a new organizational plan aligned with current needs.

What is the “magic number” of districts that will accomplish the goals stated above:

As the committee considered redistricting, it was essential to find a balance so that WIAA districts are not too large. It is necessary to not lose our representational feel, however the WIAA districts must operate efficiently. Over the past year, the Association witnessed major functional changes in how organizations including member schools, changed their operating model out of necessity. It is readily apparent that COVID-19 led to the utilization of virtual meeting technology such as Zoom. This technology has and will continue to change the way organizations will conduct their business, including an update to meeting formats. The committee believes this also directly relates to what local representation will look and feel like in future years. As a result, the absolute necessity for geographical representation is probably not as critical as it appeared to be just one year ago.

The current districts are organized as follows:

- District 1 – 55 schools in all six classifications (1B,2B, 1A, 2A, 3A, 4A)

- District 2 – 71 schools in all six classifications
- District 3 – 70 schools in five classifications (1B, 1A, 2A, 3A, 4A)
- District 4 – 61 schools in all six classifications
- District 5 – 31 schools in three classifications (2B, 1A, 2A)
- District 6 – 30 schools in four classifications (1B, 2B, 1A, 4A)
- District 7 – 35 schools in three classifications (1B, 2B, 1A)
- District 8 – 23 schools in three classifications (2A, 3A, 4A)
- District 9 – 12 schools in one classification (1B)

Washington State High School Population Distribution Data (2/22/2021): The school and population data comes from the latest WIAA classification list which only includes three grades, so 20% was added to each total assuming on an average that the senior class would probably be approximately 20% of the high school student body population.

- Western Washington – 257 schools with 199, 567 students
- Eastern Washington – 131 schools with 50,175 students

After an intensive review, it was clear to the committee that the number of WIAA districts needed to be realigned in order for representation to better reflect the large disparity between the number of schools per district in eastern Washington compared to western Washington. Clearly, we want to continue to affirm the critical role that our districts and district directions play in conducting the business of the WIAA. We also recognize the constitutional authority of the WIAA districts, through the representative assembly process, to submit and vote on amendments. However, the structure that was set up many years ago should be realigned, as every other organization has done, to better reflect the realities of today.

An updated number of WIAA Districts:

The committee recommends that the current number of 9 WIAA districts be restructured to 6 WIAA districts.

Current	Proposed	Note
WIAA District 1	WIAA District 1	No Change
WIAA District 2	WIAA District 2	No Change
WIAA District 3	WIAA District 3	No Change
WIAA District 4	WIAA District 4	No Change
WIAA District 5	WIAA District 5	Former WIAA Districts 5 and 6 will combine
WIAA District 6		
WIAA District 7	WIAA District 6	Former WIAA Districts 7, 8, and 9 will combine
WIAA District 8		
WIAA District 9		

WIAA Executive Board Representation:

At the April 15, 2021 meeting, the Governance Committee discussed, as one aspect of potential redistricting, how to adjust WIAA Executive Board positions. After a review of multiple ideas, the committee recommends adjusting WIAA Executive Board representation to fit the proposed redistricting of the WIAA Districts from 9 (current) to 6 by reallocating the positions formerly assigned to Districts 7, 8, and 9 to the WIAA regions.

The proposed shift in representation as voted by the committee is outlined in the chart that follows.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Current Exec Board	Dist. 1	Dist. 2	Dist. 3	Dist. 4	Dist. 5	Dist. 6	Dist. 7	Dist. 8	Dist. 9	Region A	Region B	Region C	Combined
Proposal for Adjusted Exec Board	Dist. 1	Dist. 2	Dist. 3	Dist. 4	Dist. 5/6	Dist. 7/8/9	Region A	Region B	Region C	Region A	Region B	Region C	Eastern Washington

Additionally, the committee felt that there were clear pros that outweighed potential cons related to this proposed adjustment to WIAA Executive Board structure.

Pros of the proposed adjustment include, but are not limited to:

- The proposed adjustment maintains an appropriately sized board at 13 total representatives
- The proposed adjustment maintains an equal number of reps from each WIAA District (1 rep each) for a total of 6 representatives
- The three representative seats vacated due to redistricting would be filled by an additional representative from the WIAA Regions (A = District 1 and 2, B = District 3 and 4, and C = Districts 5 through 9) for a total of 6 representatives having a regional focus
 - The structure to fill open Region Representative seats is currently in place (WIAA 8.2.2), as these representatives are chosen by the Executive Board through nominations from the WIAA Districts
 - This gives the WIAA Executive Board flexibility through the six representative seats they choose, flexibility that is vital when considering the need to remain balanced in representation
 - Representation the WIAA Executive Board may consider, to capture the voice of those the association serves, when filling these seats include:
 - Gender
 - Ethnic Background
 - Racial Background
 - Geographic Representation
 - Positional Representation (not in current handbook language, but included in the **WIAA EXECUTIVE BOARD POLICY BOOK**)
- The WIAA Executive Board Representatives would be chosen primarily by the WIAA Districts (7 positions) rather than the WIAA Executive Board (6 positions)
- Each WIAA District Representative position would be representing a similar number of schools
- Each Regional Representative position would be representing a similar number of schools
- The ‘Combined’ Representative position is truly unchanged
- The proposed adjustment provides additional opportunities for collaboration between WIAA Districts through selection of representatives and their reporting responsibilities to Leagues/Conferences
 - WIAA District Directors will need to collaborate to name candidates for Regional Representatives

The con of the proposed adjustment:

- The proposal will cause a shift in the current geographic representation on the Executive Board from 7 to 8 representatives from western Washington and from 6 to 5 representatives from eastern Washington.

At the April 28, 2021 Governance Committee Meeting, discussion continued to focus on how to realign WIAA Executive Board representation as one aspect of redistricting.

The committee engaged in respectful dialogue about the need to maintain equitable balance in geographical representation, as the committee continues to further define our collective belief about the importance of balance in governing. A summary of our discussion and points of emphasis follows:

- As a member driven organization, more WIAA Executive Board positions must be selected by the WIAA Districts than by the WIAA Executive Board.
- A 13 representative board is an appropriate size for this governing body, based on the organization’s size, the duties assigned, and the need to remain responsive to the needs of member schools.
- To provide diverse perspectives on the WIAA Executive Board, it is imperative that the Board maintains authority to select some representatives to equitably capture the voice of those the association serves, when filling these seats.
- The focus of the committee’s conversation about geographical representation turned to the current ‘Combined’ position and how the position could be reallocated.
 - The committee decided that the current ‘Combined’ position should be reallocated to the East side of the state.
 - The reallocated position **would not** be defined as a third Region C seat, subject to the requirements included in WIAA 8.2.2. Rather, the repurposed position would be **a new position, representing all of Eastern Washington.**
- The committee recommends updated selection procedures as part of the repurposing of current positions.
 - Eastern Washington Position – proposed selection procedures
 - The position would be subject to **new** selection criteria developed after a review of current WIAA District selection criteria. In WIAA 8.4.0 – Procedure for Election, it states that “The nine Executive Board members representing their respective WIAA Districts are elected by the Representative Assembly.”
 - The new Eastern Washington position should also be elected by the Representative Assembly; *however, the committee recommends that the votes for this position are limited to Representative Assembly members from Eastern Washington, like a MS or HS only amendment.*
 - Our committee believes that an important element of the proposed governance change is ensuring all voices are heard. Therefore, the focus of this repurposed position *must allow Eastern Washington member schools to select who they believe is **the best** representative for the WIAA Executive Board in this position, independent of any qualification other than understanding the unique needs of Eastern Washington member schools.*
 - The position should be subject to current procedures for vacancies included in WIAA 8.5.0, with a necessary edit to make it clear that the Eastern Washington WIAA Districts would collaboratively select a replacement to immediately take office.
 - The position should take the place of the current ‘Combined’ position in the selection rotation described in WIAA 8.2.2.
 - The committee including this as part of our recommendations for two important reasons.
 - The repurposing of the current ‘Combined’ position brings geographical representation closer to alignment (8 West side positions, 5 East side positions) while maintaining consideration for the disparity in student population across the state.
 - Current numbers shared with the committee show that in Western Washington there are 265 schools with 199,567 students and in Eastern Washington there are 131 schools with 50,175 students.

- The repurposing provides WIAA Districts in Eastern Washington complete control over one WIAA Executive Board position, an essential consideration based on the unique geographic constraints of the Eastern side of the state and a provision not provided to West side WIAA Districts.

For a board membership composed of 13 members, 6 positions will be chosen by the various districts plus a 7th position chosen by schools from the east side for a total of 7. The WIAA board will select the remaining 6 position.

Summary of Governance Committee Proposal

1. **‘Redistrict’ the WIAA**, by combining current WIAA Districts. Current WIAA Districts 5 and 6 would combine to form a ‘new’ WIAA District 5. Current WIAA Districts 7, 8, and 9 would combine to form a ‘new’ WIAA District 6. It is recommended that the WIAA assist in the transition by connecting the current District Directors to a Certified Public Accountant who could provide guidance about the dissolution process and whether it is advisable to merge districts or create a totally new 501c(3).
 - a. Through this process, each district will be afforded an opportunity to create multi-classification leagues, offsetting transportation concerns
 - b. Multi-classification leagues can include enough schools to allow flexibility in scheduling, offsetting concerns about matching and equating schools
 - c. Coupled with proposal #4, allocations remain at the league level, alleviating any confusion with schools playing a multi-classification schedule
2. **Adjust the make-up of the WIAA Executive Board** to align with the redistricting of the WIAA.
3. **Finalize a set of common expectations/delegated authority for each district.** The common expectations and delegated authority should be contained within each WIAA District’s constitution and by-laws. As new and updated expectations/delegated authority are provided to WIAA Districts, their constitution and by-laws would follow suit. Updates must include common practices to mirror the work done to bring consistency to WIAA eligibility rules including but not limited to these areas:
 - a. Adjudication of WIAA Rules violations
 - b. Site selection procedures
 - c. Accounting procedures
4. **Alter state tournament formats through an expansion to a 32-team bracket in team sports.** Individual sports would receive similar adjustments based on the unique aspects of each sport. The change would all but eliminate the need for the ‘glue’ rule, as allocations for post season berths would no longer be provided to WIAA Districts, but to leagues.
 - a. The first round of a 32-team bracket would continue to be run by WIAA Districts.
 - b. A strong, written financial agreement between the WIAA and the WIAA Districts related to this first round of playoffs will bring consistency to another area of the Association and improve athlete experience in all sports.
 - c. A potential revenue source for the WIAA if there is a move to a 32-team tournament would be to have the first and second round football and soccer revenues stay with the Association. Each 32-team tournament would be a state event hosted by member schools. In the current model, host schools in these rounds keep 100% of the proceeds from these games. District directors have stated that this revenue is an important element of a district’s budget, but this type of a restructure could be an option in the future.