



WISCONSIN INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

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Dear WIAA Members,

On behalf of the entire WIAA Board of Control, I invite and encourage you to review the proposed Constitutional amendments that will be presented and voted on at the WIAA Annual Meeting on April 16, 2014, at the Holiday Inn in Stevens Point, Wis., beginning at 9 a.m. Most notably, I would ask that you become informed on the amendment that is asking the WIAA to add a 1.65 multiplier to nonpublic member schools in determining divisional placements.

This amendment was submitted to the WIAA at a time in which the Board of Control was not able to review it at its meeting in March. The amendment was brought forth to the WIAA by members of the association under WIAA Constitutional guidelines that can be found in the Senior High Handbook under Constitution, Article IX, Section 1. The members of the Board of Control believed that the timing, the importance and seriousness of the consequences of the amendment and the nature of the petition submitted by the membership warranted a special meeting of the Board to afford the opportunity for in-depth discussion and consideration. The Board took the opportunity to meet on Thursday, April 3, 2014, and agreed that a letter should be sent to all of you to let you know of the seriousness of this amendment in our minds.

The Board cannot impress upon school leaders enough to become engaged on this important issue. We have directed the executive staff to continue providing information that can assist your school in making the best and most informed decision, in light of the membership-wide impact this proposal will have.

The Board is committed to reviewing the complexity of this issue and addressing the concerns of the membership, while maintaining the true purpose of education-based athletics for student-athletes at all member schools. As leaders in education and advocates for all children, we hold with conviction to the belief that the growth and development of student-athletes, and the life-long lessons learned, are the primary purposes of interscholastic sports. That growth comes not only from winning, but also through hard work, dedication, perseverance, adversity and handling defeat with dignity.

A brief history: In 2000, the WIAA extended a membership option to nonpublic schools to join the WIAA after the former private-school organization ceased operations. Five years of research and planning by a committee of public and non-public school administrators developed the concept of a unified membership. Since then, many rules and regulations have been developed to preserve uniformity for all members such as and including adjustments to the transfer rule and creating a fifth division in basketball.

The meeting of the Board of Control on the 3rd produced a number of points worthy of your consideration before you cast your vote:

- Through our studies, it became very evident that Wisconsin is not alone in its review of a multiplier. Most state associations have had similar discussions, and those that have implemented measures to address concerns have not revealed a universally satisfactory success formula.

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- In virtually all states where a multiplier has been implemented, there has been litigation and/or legislative challenges and interventions to overturn the decision. In addition, several states that have implemented a multiplier have determined it hasn't effectively resolved the issue. These determinations have resulted in modifications like increasing the multiplier, adding a success-based obstruction or discontinuing the multiplier altogether.
- The 1.65 multiplier implemented in Illinois—the model identified as the source of the proposed petition—actually needed additional provisions with a success factor and a waiver process to address the multiplier's shortcomings, according to Illinois state office officials. The Illinois multiplier also applies to all non-boundary schools in the state, both public and nonpublic.
- The WIAA claims to be the oldest state high school association in the country and is proud of its status as a voluntary and private association. Since 1896, the membership has prided itself on the governance by its members. Might this amendment, in its current form, lead to legislative or judicial intervention that undermines the very existence of the association?
- The Constitution states that an amendment passed at the Annual Meeting becomes effective upon printing in the next issue of the *Bulletin*, which would make it extremely difficult to implement by the start of the spring Tournament Series in May. If successful, a request to amend the rule would be appropriate to begin implementation in the fall of 2014.
- If approved in its current state, this proposal does not identify impacts to the enrollments of single-gender nonpublic schools which are already doubled for tournament divisional placements; it does not identify the effect to tribal schools receiving federal funds; it does not describe what the effect would be on co-op teams and their divisional placement and it does not address open enrollment or transfer students which could be considered as the same family choices as are provided at non-public schools.
- How will the impact of a multiplier be measured? Will it be measured in regional, sectional and state championships won? And, what proportion of those championships won by both public and private schools under the multiplier will be the goal? Will a "Success Multiplier" need to be added in the future for public schools that experience "too much success"? Answers to these questions are necessary to effectively measure if the impact of a multiplier meets the desired result.
- All previous discussions concerning the joint membership of public and private schools resulted in the association's directive to treat every member equal and uniformly. As stated in the Association's Constitution, the purpose of this Association is... "to promote uniformity of standards in interscholastic athletic competition..." While discussions on all aspects of the membership are healthy, the Board believes any measure to treat one segment of the membership different than others would ultimately be divisive in nature and drive a wedge in a unified membership.
- The petition to create a multiplier was not a concept discussed by the membership as a whole. Since the addition of a fifth division in basketball, there has been relatively no membership-wide discussion on the concerns of the perceived competitive advantage for nonpublic members. Appropriate forums for those discussions have been provided via the Area Meetings each fall and Annual Meetings in the spring with little or no concerns brought forward in front of the membership body.

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I want to thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I would also state that any Board Member including myself would be willing to answer any question that you have concerning this meeting. The Board of Control will work with whatever decision is made on the 16th. The Board of Control also discussed the formation of an Ad Hoc Committee to review this issue, which would give the Association more time to review and discuss the concerns that brought this amendment to the meeting. In closing, please make an informed decision to a topic that may be a landmark decision made by the Association.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dean E. Sanders".

Dean E. Sanders - President
WIAA Board of Control