

Committee on Competitive Equity

Meeting Summary

July 7-8, 2014

Meeting facilitated by Drew Howick. Notes taken by Joan Gralla.

Committee members were welcomed by Dean Sanders, current Board of Control president, Mike Beighley, Board of Control president-elect, Dave Anderson, WIAA Executive Director. These three individuals were not part of the meeting. They left after the welcome.

SUMMARY OF OPENING COMMENTS BY DEAN, MIKE AND DAVE

Many states are dealing with this issue. There are no simple and easy solutions.

This is an advisory committee to give advice and recommendations. Recommendations will go through committee process. Consensus is needed from this group.

There is an expected timeline. Someone from each WIAA district, serving on this committee, will make a report at the Area Meeting in their District. The first Area Meeting is on September 8, 2014. In December, a recommendation to advance through committee process, is expected. January 2015 to the Board of Control for review, then to membership at the April 2015 Annual Meeting for a vote.

Any requests for data from the WIAA executive staff should come through Dave Anderson. Legal counsel is available if needed.

Summary of meeting will be sent to committee first. After review by committee, it will be sent to the entire membership. The Board will not see the summary until it is sent to the membership. Summary will speak for itself. Whereas the summary will attempt to capture the specifics of the meeting, no comments will be attributed to specific committee members.

No media will be present at these meetings.

INTRODUCTIONS

Committee members were asked to introduce themselves and indicate why they wanted to be on this committee as well as their objectives, hopes and fears. Below is a sampling of the comments made during introductions:

- Passionate about athletics.
- Large school perspective.
- We need to get answers based on facts, not assumptions.
- Represent the interest of a small rural school district. Hope the committee can come up with a recommendation that can meet the needs of all kids (public, private, rural, urban).
- Need data to support any decisions this committee makes.
- Be objective and set all biases aside.
- Continue to improve athletics in the state of Wisconsin. Need to find a successful solution.
- All kids in Wisconsin need to have the same opportunities.
- Read everything that was sent out regarding this issue and became very passionate about it.
- We cannot let emotions rule decisions.
- Being part of the WIAA is something that all schools should be offered.
- Need to be open-minded and think outside of the box.
- It is known that we will not satisfy everybody.
- Fear that we will be tied down by some legal ramifications.
- A lot of misconception as to what happens at the WIAA.
- Many misinformed people.
- What we have is not broken.

- Solution needs to be fair to all.
- Need a better answer than what we have.
- Offer unique perspective from a conference made up of only non-public schools.
- Public/private strife not evident in all parts of the state.
- Honored to be on this committee.
- Important part of the process is education.
- Need to clear up all the misconceptions.
- Offer longevity of thinking.
- Need to compromise.
- Have a good sense as to what the role of high school athletics plays in a school and community.
- Ability to be fair-minded, open-minded and see the big picture.
- Want to be part of the solution. We need to come up with a solution that we can sell to the membership. We will have criticism.
- Understand rural situation better. Private school financial difficulties, will share those challenges. Our decision will not please everyone.
- From a conference that has both public and private. Optimistic that we will come up with a solution that will benefit students in Wisconsin.
- Focus on schools that have never been at a tournament. Do not focus on the successful ones.

COMMITTEE ADMINISTRATION

Ground rules for this committee were identified.

Following a discussion on the criteria used to select a committee chair, co-chairs were identified: Patrick Mans, superintendent at Crivitz School District and Sandy Freres, Athletic Director at The Prairie School. Their primary responsibilities include being liaison between the facilitator and the committee as well as the committee and the WIAA Board of Control.

The group discussed the importance of having an open and honest discussion and will work towards reaching a consensus on a recommendation.

OPENING DISCUSSION

Rural schools do not have a large population to pull from like the urban schools do.

Private schools charge tuition and can choose the students they would like to attend their school. Public schools cannot choose, they have to take everyone.

Open enrollment does not level the playing field for a rural school. Does not benefit an athletic program. The travel is too far.

Private schools have less special needs students compared to public schools, as well as free and reduced lunch students.

Private schools are most often in urban areas because that is where their feeder-source is.

There is no way to describe what going to a State Tournament does to a small community. It's a wonderful experience.

Is it a private/public divide or is it rural/urban divide?

There is no rural/urban issue with public schools because they are in different divisions. The problem is when you have urban private schools mixed with rural public schools.

There used to be a lot more rural private schools – over the past 10 years many have closed because of economics.

What is the problem? Is it sport specific or is it all sports?

It has nothing to do with enrollment; it has to do with performance of teams.

Many private schools struggle to stay open. They have to make a decision whether to close or combine. Maybe that is what rural schools need to look at. Should small rural schools be in a special category when it comes to tournament placement? We don't want to see any schools close. It's a rural issue.

What marks success for this venture: Having more rural small schools getting to tournaments or having less private schools win tournaments? Maybe we need another division for small rural public schools. Maybe that is something that needs to be discussed. The WIAA tournaments are geographically represented – they are not always sending the best teams to the tournament. What is it we want?

Public perception sees that 20 schools go to State and 6 are private, how can this happen when only 18% of the membership is private? How do we educate the general public?

It should be all about the value of participation, not whether or not you make it to a State Tournament. We can't lose sight of the value of participation.

Some merit into looking at free and reduced lunch and special needs when looking at divisional placement.

As we look to try to resolve this issue – we can't look at punishing the private schools.

Success does breed success whether it is public or private.

You don't see a lot of rural powerhouses in basketball.

Like it or not – we do have an issue. This issue is not going away. Highest attendance at Annual Meeting ever because this is an issue.

We need to talk about open enrollment and how it does affect the public school and their success at tournaments.

This does not affect most Division 1 schools. Even if we came up with a success factor, and made successful private schools move up a level, nothing can be done to those private schools that are Division 1 already. Almost anything we do will only target a certain group of schools. How is it going to be equitable?

We do need to educate all schools even if they would not be affected, because all schools have a vote.

Is the multiplier the only answer? Are there any other avenues to get more schools at State Tournaments?

If what we really want are the best teams in the state playing each other. Come up with a rating, if you are really good, you should be playing each other.

There shouldn't be domination in sports. Separate category for rural teams.

Private schools are not doing anything wrong. What is heard is that in urban areas you have so many more students to choose from. Private schools have feeder/member schools. The location for some private schools is not a factor that affects their school enrollment.

If we do something with a multiplier we need to look at everyone.

Enrollment is one way of sifting and sorting as well as success.

Almost every example used today related to basketball. Basketball should be dealt with on its own if that's what we are going to focus on.

Football is not a factor in this. A fifth division was added in basketball to help this issue.

The issue is in golf, tennis, volleyball and soccer. If we are going to focus on sports, start with those.

Develop some type of rating system of sport programs for tournament placement.

Do we want to stick with geographical representation or are we moving in the direction of only the best get the chance?

Need to hear more from the public schools as to what they perceive the advantage that the private schools have. Clarify the problem.

PLANNING FOR TOMORROW

The committee has requested that Dave Anderson be available July 8 to answer some questions and provide data regarding the following:

- Clarification of the timeline and expectations for this committee.
- Information on what other states are doing about this issue.
- Background on the 1.65 multiplier. Where did this come from?
- What information is known about open enrollment? The group is trying to understand the impact of open enrollment and whether that is part of the issue that needs to be addressed.

Meeting ended at 5:20 p.m.

TUESDAY, JULY 8 A.M.

Committee members were asked by Drew how they felt about yesterday's discussions. A representative sampling of the comments are as follows:

- Very encouraged – strong feelings – very respectful group
- Very difficult topic – great discussion
- Rural vs. urban instead of public vs. private
- Impressed by the passion everyone has
- The number and the depth of the issues
- Appreciate that we not losing site that we are doing this for the kids
- Need data – spinning wheels a bit at the end of the day with too much speculating
- Bring equalizer to programs that just win, win, win
- Small rural schools – survival issue – if they can't compete they will not participate
- Inner city issues very similar to rural schools – can't loose sight of this
- A little slow – but necessary
- Not everyone knows what the problem is – this does not just affect basketball
- Timeline concerns
- Socio-economic issue
- This is a sport specific issue

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WITH DAVE ANDERSON AND WADE LABECKI

Timeline of committee's work: Dave reviewed the discussion that took place at the Annual Meeting. If this committee cannot meet the timeline as directed there will need to be a very detailed explanation as to why. Providing an honest and candid update at the September Area Meetings would likely be acceptable. The goal is to have a recommendation ready for review to go through appropriate committee process beginning in December.

What are other states doing about this issue? About 15-17 states use a handicapping technique. Multipliers – some tried and have now dropped; reducers; some are looking at or implementing a "success factor".

In other states, who made the decision about using the multipliers, reducers, etc.? Some have been challenged legally/politically. Most have used a committee similar to what the WIAA is doing.

Does the WIAA receive the most criticism regarding this issue during the basketball season? The peak is after the basketball tournaments. Since the five divisions have been put in place in basketball, it has become considerably quieter. Most criticism has come from non-members.

Just a few years ago a rural/urban model was brought forward to the membership at area meetings, and there was no interest. People didn't want one segment of the membership treated differently than another. Five divisions were adopted in basketball instead.

The 1.65 multiplier came from Illinois.

Any statistical analysis as to what factors show whether a team is successful or not? A lot comes down to traditions and longevity of program coaches.

Not aware of any studies that show the effect of free and reduced lunch students having an affect on the success of athletic programs.

You can have a great program and great coaches but where do the small rural schools draw athletes from? The population is not there like it is for the small private schools within larger communities (sentiment of committee member).

Dave and Wade left the meeting.

GENERAL DISCUSSION BASED ON INFORMATION PRESENTED BY DAVE AND WADE:

Need a glossary of terms we use, so everyone knows exactly what is being said.

Is our first priority to reply to the multiplier? The multiplier is an option. This committee needs to come back with a recommendation.

Need criteria as to what the issues are before we start solving the problem.

How are you defining the issues we are trying to resolve?

What is competitive equity? More schools have an opportunity to compete on a more level playing field.

The issue is access to potential student athletes. If you are in an urban area you have much more access than the rural schools.

The issue is the same schools are having success too often - how do we regulate that and do we want to regulate that?

Is there any way that no change could ever be perceived as a successful outcome of this committee? No matter what we do we will not be perceived as being successful.

Schools need to have the opportunity to compete on a more level playing field.

People are defining success as winning a state championship.

Need to examine the competitive equity issue on a sport-by-sport basis.

Let's start talking about potential solutions.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The following is the start of what the committee believes may be potential solutions. Committee members volunteered to begin their research and study on these possible solutions and will provide their information at the next meeting.

- 1.65 multiplier - need data for every sport, not just basketball
- Status Quo
- Addition of the division in basketball seems to have helped – add a division in all other sports (except football and basketball). The lowest division could contain no private schools. You could have a waiver request for private schools that don't win at all.
- Long-term success factor. Points for regionals, sectionals and state. Establish a threshold of points over a number of years for moving a school to a higher division.
- Reducer – subtracting for free and reduced lunch population for all schools.
- Look at football playoff model for all team sports when it comes to qualifying for tournaments.
- Equal distribution of private schools throughout the divisions.
- Sport specific private and public separate state tournament or path to the state tournament (tennis, volleyball, soccer, golf).
- Geographical population multiplier (public and private).
- Out-of-feeder school/open enrolled student multiplier.

Meeting ended at 12:30 p.m.

Next meeting date: August 3, 2014 (starting at 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.) & August 4, 2014 (starting at 8 a.m.)

The date of Tuesday, September 3, 2014 was also identified as an “if needed” time for the committee to continue it's work prior to the Area Meetings that begin on September 8.