

Committee on Competitive Equity

Meeting Summary

August 3-4, 2014

Co-chairs Sandy Freres and Patrick Mans welcomed the committee and made opening remarks. Meeting facilitator Drew Howick preview to the meeting agenda and invited the committee to review the group's ground rules and assess their progress. All agreed that the ground rules were being followed, noting the committee's openness to exploring a wide range of options. After a brief round of check-ins, the committee commenced with presenting preliminary findings.

REVIEW OF PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OF POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

At the last meeting, nine potential solutions were identified to address the perception of competitive inequity. Committee members volunteered to explore each of these options and then brief the full committee on what they learned. Each sub-committee was given ten minutes to summarize what they learned followed by ten minutes of discussion. During the discussion, committee members were encouraged to present their remarks by what they find ATTRACTIVE about this solution, what CONCERNS them about the solution, or QUESTIONS they have about the solution. Comments were recorded on paper for all to see. Below is a summary of the discussion about each.

REDUCER

Follow the Minnesota plan using free and reduced lunch numbers where 40% of the current enrollment count be reduced. For example, if there are 100 students on free and reduced lunches, 40 are subtracted and 60 students count.

What is attractive:

- All the data exists and is audited.
- Meets one of the issues of the rural public school regarding private schools having a significantly higher participation rate for their enrollment and part of the dynamics of their student body is not many are on free and reduced lunch or in special education programs. This puts everyone on an even playing field.
- It has been around for seven years in Minnesota and they are relatively happy with it as compared to other states with success factors.
- Same for everyone—both public and private schools.

What is of concern:

- Success factors and would you punish schools for success by putting them in a higher division.
- Current Division 1 schools that have a high rate of free and reduced could potentially end up in one of the lower divisions.
- Real positive for some and real negative for other schools.
- Highly restrictive who has free and reduced lunch information and that it is highly confidential. Information could be secured from the DPI, but it would be hard to determine who plays a sport.
- There is an assumption being made of 100% participation on the part of non-free and reduced lunch kids.
- Does not address the schools that initiated this discussion. This really doesn't help small schools with less than 100 students.
- Taking something that no one has a choice in and reducing it. Counting some kids more than other kids and saying someone is less than another, didn't feel right and leaves a negative perception to a committee member.

Questions

- How well is this received in Minnesota? It is well accepted and received and was noted a majority of private schools don't turn in free and reduced lunch data. The only dissention has to do with the thought of a competitive disadvantage for 9-man football. It has been reexamined in the last two years and there have been no legal challenges. The private schools are involved in the process.
- If a school was in the lowest division, could it bump the school up? Also the movement toward direct certification was mentioned with respect to free and reduced lunches.
- Does Minnesota know how many schools fall into a division? That information is unknown at this time. Of the schools that were 50% and above and had not moved down a division, one time a school won a championship in the year following that. When an appeal is made to move down a division, it may or may not be granted. When a school moves down, another will move up so there is movement in both directions.
- Could we get from Minnesota what the divisional breakdown was before they did this and after it was applied?
- How did Minnesota come up with the 40%? It was based on data and reviewed two years ago. It could be added to the third Friday count in Wisconsin.

- How many private schools use free and reduced lunches and the response was 38% participate.

ADDING A DIVISION

After exploring adding a division, it was said that adding a division might be considered financially irresponsible.

What is attractive:

- Adding a division and it addresses the smallest rural public schools concerns.

What is of concern:

- This doesn't address the Division 2 and 3 concerns.
- The cost of adding a division.

Questions:

- What if you move Divisions 2 and 3 to equalize numbers?
- It was noted that Division 1 has 71 schools with the least number of schools and the cut off number is 1,200.
- Are we going to add a division in all sports or only in some?
- Would it be a waiver (to go down a division) or a success factor (to go up a division)?

1.65 MULTIPLIER

Information was shared illustrating the enrollment of schools and the 1.65 multiplier applied to their enrollments. A compilation by sport with the multiplier added and then the lines drawn for divisions.

What is attractive:

- Good for small schools.
- This would be attractive to many public schools that want to move private schools up a division.

What is of concern:

- The committee does not think it is a goal to make private schools less successful.
- It is an arbitrary number of 1.65.
- This would really hurt those private schools that are not competing at high levels. It was noted that over time that is all relative and in two years, there could be the same problem with other schools. Others agreed it is cyclical.
- This doesn't apply to open enrollment.
- Punishing a segment of the membership to address the concerns of a few schools.
- This just moves the problem and it doesn't solve the problem. Different schools will have concerns while others will be pleased.
- The multiplier is not universally applied to all members.
- Not all private schools are the same and this treats them all the same.

Questions

- Could a waiver be provided to private schools not experiencing success?
- How would this impact football and would we realign the conferences? A suggestion was made to look at football differently because a team has to qualify for it.
- Is this a sport-by-sport concept? Can this be applied to some sports and not others?
- What is the goal and what is success? There was sentiment expressed that there has to be some measure of success so there has to be something measurable in order for the committee to make a selection. One of the membership concerns expressed was that private schools are experiencing success and the committee member continued to state in order for that to stop happening, the right private schools would have to be moved or if not, this will continue to be unsettling.
- According to the general public, does it move the correct private schools up? Or are we leaving some of the winners in the divisions where they are successful?
- Do all of these plans apply to all sports? There seems to be only an issue if someone is harmed and the multiplier harms some. A comparison was made to the idea that multipliers don't work and how Minnesota is feeling.
- Is it legal in Wisconsin? Illinois identifies non-boundary schools while in Wisconsin, all schools are non-boundary. So will it stand a legal challenge?

LONG-TERM SUCCESS FACTOR

A success factor with a focus on basketball and soccer for the last 14 years was studied. Four points were awarded for schools who won the state championship, 3 points to those who lost, 2 points to those who made it to state and 1 point to schools who won the sectional game. It was applied to boys and girls basketball on a 5-year rolling scale and added up in 5-year increments to see how many points they accumulated. If in 5 years, a school had 10 points or more, it would move up a division. There is a waiver provision where a school could move down to the previous division, but if the school continues to earn points, it would stay at the moved up division.

What is attractive?

- Measurable and able to be tracked.
- It impacts the least number of schools compared to some other solutions.
- It evaluates all schools but impacts few.
- Could be applied to all sports.
- If a school wins four titles in a row in Division 5, it could then go up to Division 4 and then 3.
- Good for schools that feel they have a zero chance of success in the tournament trail.
- It is being applied to everyone and impacts everyone equally.
- Even though the plan needs some adjusting, it has lots of potential.

What is of concern?

- Hearing the word waiver and who's going to hear these waivers.
- There was concern about punishing for success.
- Not being mutually exclusive and it may not help urban schools or Division 1 schools.
- Lower enrollment school having to move up.
- Who on the staff would gather the waivers and act on them?
- How is it going to be applied or started?
- How many years—five or three?
- How many points—ten?
- This is not mutually exclusive. If you have a success factor and combine it with a reducer, it may balance. This is not stand-alone.
- This will be viewed as the WIAA is punishing winners.
- School could move up a division without winning a state title.

Questions

- Do enough schools move to make this helpful to what we think is our stated problem? The schools identified seem to be the ones of concern/powerhouses. This could replace one private school with another.
- Is it possible for a school to be moved from Division 4 to 3 and then to 2? Yes, with the long-term success factor applied.
- Would this be perceived by the general public as moving the right schools?
- Is there a need for a waiver with this option.
- What does this do to competitive balance? Some schools move all the time. A threshold that a school cannot move down was suggested.
- A question was asked if public schools are concerned about their team and applying this across public and private schools?
- Would this move fast enough? Compressing it into three years may be considered. There was some sentiment that this would be favored by rural public schools that brought concerns forward in the first place and this will deal with it very quickly. If private schools were the issue and they are not moving with this, then that was not the issue in the first place.

FOOTBALL PLAYOFF MODEL FOR ALL TEAM SPORTS

The subcommittee felt this recommendation should be removed from consideration. It would eliminate more than half of the schools for the playoffs. The financial ramifications are more than what the Board would want.

What is attractive:

- Would be attractive to a team that would have the potential of being beaten as some schools refrain from playing if they believe that they will suffer defeat.
- May have merit in basketball, but the Basketball Coaches Advisory Committee would not support this. It would result in the best teams at state but lack geographical representation and consist of large area regionals.

What is of concern:

- A concern about removing this as there are cases when a 16th seed has to travel across the state on a school night, how the school loses money and how this would save schools a lot of money.

EQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS THROUGHOUT THE DIVISIONS

It would be established with equal distribution of private schools throughout the state. Possible breakdowns for 3 divisions (26, 25 and 25 schools in each division), 4 divisions (4 groups of 19 in each division) and 5 divisions (15, 15, 16, 15, 15 in each division) were explained. There would be multiplier and private schools would be placed together.

What is attractive:

- Competitive balance but would require further data to be gathered to offer a model.
- Divides things equally and simply. Someone can rank public and private schools and put them in divisions and then combine them.

What is of concern:

- There was a concern that in every group, they may not all be competitive. It could be evenly distributed and add a 6th division with no private schools whatsoever.
- Imbalance in enrollments.
- This creates an issue for public/private schools and co-ops between public and private schools. Further data is required by sport and how it would change the way private schools are aligned by division.
- Liability concerns in sports such as football and wrestling.
- It is not applied equally to the membership, as it doesn't address the larger, urban schools.
- Impact on football and rural public schools.
- This is just arbitrary and doesn't solve anything and how does it address what we are set out to address?

Questions:

- How does this look in football?
- It has merit but would the general public feel it is moving the right schools?

SPORT SPECIFIC PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SEPARATE TOURNAMENTS

The subcommittee looked at tennis, volleyball, soccer and golf with a focus on rural/urban concerns.

Girls' golf would consist of 93 public schools in Division 1 (the five private schools would be removed). The success factor was shared. Division 2 would have 14 private schools in one sectional with the top eight teams qualifying for state. Division 3 would be the remaining 44 public schools.

What is attractive:

- This would be attractive to smaller rural public schools to have an opportunity for success. It also would allow smaller privates to have a better chance to get to state. It may prevent country club athletes from dominating.

What is of concern:

- Watering down the private school championship. It opens up a can of worms to separate all championships.

Girl's tennis would remove a current private school from Division 1 and Division 2, Sectionals 1 and 2 would be 44 public schools in two sectionals of 22; sectional 3 and 4 would have 28 private schools. There would be two sectionals of 14 and the sectional would be set up geographically as best it can be.

What is attractive:

- It guarantees two public and two private schools advance to state. This format keeps the previous format in tact so there is no added cost and Division 1 is relatively the same.

What is of concern

- The concerns are for moving current Division 1 schools. As with something new, there are no guarantees that it will be good or bad. It takes away from there being four private schools at state.

Girl's volleyball would be formatted into five divisions. Division 1 would remain at 118 schools and Division 2 would be the same as Division 1 with 117 schools. Division 3 would include the largest 50 public schools in that division along with all the private schools from Divisions 3 and 4 which is 42 schools. Division 4 would be 74, which includes the 46 smallest from Division 3 plus the 28 largest schools from Division 4. Division 5 would have the 74 smallest public schools remaining in division 4.

What is attractive:

- Attractive to the 120 smallest public schools. It addresses the urban/rural imbalance.

What is of concern:

- Involves the additional expense to add a division; it hurts small private schools in unequal enrollment divisions and hurts public schools with the enrollment range of 200-399.

Boys' soccer would keep Divisions 1 and 2 the same. Division 3 would include the top 22 public schools by enrollment and 48 private schools from Divisions 3 and 4. Division 4 would be 64 public schools, which are the smallest 35 from Division 3 plus the remaining 29 in Division 4.

What is attractive:

- Small public schools should advance more. It creates good competitive balance and does not change Divisions 1 and 2.

What is of concern:

- Results are the smaller private schools could face competitive inequity and smaller public schools could face opponents three times their size.
- An evaluation of sports revealed that football, cross country and swimming & diving would not be a factor along with hockey and wrestling. Basketball could be tweaked. One division would be added in volleyball and girls golf. It might be difficult for softball, track and baseball.

Overall what is attractive:

- Looks at each sport separately and deals with specific issues within a sport.
- It gets at the access issue for the rural/urban divide.

Overall what is of concern:

- Adding a 5th division in volleyball and how to structure it at the Resch Center. A suggestion was made to follow the basketball model.
- This is arbitrary with pulling this and that number.
- Disparity of sizes in each division.

Overall Questions

- Does this address the basketball issue? Do the same for volleyball? A fifth division with just public schools? Not a separate tournament for private schools?
- Could be combined with two or three proposals.

GEOGRAPHICAL MULTIPLIER – Two Options

1. Radius of 10 miles then take 2% of population and that would be added to your student population. For example, school located outside of large school district would use 2% of that assessable population and add that to their enrollment. Ten mile radius and 2% are numbers that could be adjusted.

2. Take every school in Wisconsin and assign them a home school attendance boundary. Add a multiplier to every student. In-attendance area student add 1%; out-of-attendance area student add 2%. This is about defining a home attendance area for all students. This has nothing do with what school a student attends prior to 9th grade.

What is attractive:

- This would be applied to all schools.
- This does address open enrollment.
- Specifically addresses urban/rural.

- Using a mile radius may be a better way to go. Kind of combine the two plans. Add a mile radius to number 2.

What is of concern:

- This ends up punishing certain schools more than others.
- Most private schools are not neighborhood schools. Students come from feeder schools that are many miles away.
- Does address free and reduced lunch. When we talk about participation we need to look at this.
- Private schools would not have access to their current feeder schools.
- Having a multiplier placed on all kids that come from out of the district when only 30-40% participate in athletics.
- Perception of access to numbers of kids is the main reason that brought us to this room and this plan does address that.
- Does not take into account those that could not afford tuition and would never be able to attend a private school.
- Those kids that can afford to go to a private school have more opportunities i.e. camps, clubs, etc.
- Have it a district-wide instead of just choosing one school as a home school i.e. entire Green Bay district instead of only one of the Green Bay schools listed as a home school.
- Not all private school feeder schools are in the district.

Questions

- How many schools would this impact? Every school would be reassessed. Enrollments would change in all schools, some greater than others.
- Could adjustments be made for students that come from your feeder system outside of the radius?

OUT-OF-FEEDER SCHOOL/OPEN ENROLLED STUDENT MULTIPLIER

Most of this information comes from the Ohio plan where they assign kids a location and if they came up through that system they were considered your kids, if not then an additional multiplier was added. The factors for public schools are dependent upon where the students' parents reside or if the student was continuously enrolled in the district since the 7th grade.

What is attractive:

- Does address the rural public school issue.
- It is sport-by-sport.
- If you can win a State title with your own kids, this would allow that.
- Treats public and private the same.
- Some real positives in this plan but would be extremely hard to administer.
- It recognizes that a school may do well in some sports and not in the others. Therefore, the sports they do not do well in are not affected.

What is of concern:

- May lead to unnecessary cuts of students just to keep your numbers down and coaches could manipulate rosters.
- These formulas require honesty and are not auditable. Current 3rd Friday count is reportable and accessible through the DPI.
- Volume of work this could put on the athletic director.
- Is about how your enrollment comes to be at your school.

Questions:

- What would be the impact on divisions?
- Is a feeder-school for a private school just religious schools?
- Should private school kids who decide to go public be counted/multiplied?
- This may shut down some of our private elementary schools.

OTHER OPTIONS THAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED

Following the presentations and discussions about the nine potential solutions, the group was asked if they would like to identify other options that should be considered. Three additional options were discussed:

MODIFIED REDUCER

Shifting from the free and reduced to using the percentage of your students that go out for sports should be a part of the discussion. Just use the number of students that go out for sports.

What is attractive:

- This can be applied to all very easily.

What is of concern:

- This doesn't help the small rural schools.
- If you are kid focused this may be detrimental and discourage participation.
- This plan would potentially drop some private schools in classification level.
- Not sport specific.

SOME COMBINATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION COMBINED WITH OPEN ENROLLMENT AND BEING SPORT SPECIFIC (geographically limited, open enrollment, sports specific multiplier)

This may cause a decline in participation because it could discourage participation.

What is attractive:

- Every school would have a boundary, then use some type of multiplier.
- Provide universal application.

What is of concern:

- You may have a feeder school outside of the boundary. The biggest thing we hear from the public is the access to kids.
- A lot of the private schools will be punished that are not having any success. We need to address this on a broad level, not school specific at this point.
- Data could be corrupted easily, vary labor intensive, opens up to abuse of system (manipulation of rosters).

SUCCESS FACTOR REDUCER

Combination of using a reducer along with a success factor.

The reducer has potential and is successful in Minnesota. Will some type of combination be passable by the membership? It has to be simple no matter what it is. Need to look at Minnesota plan closely. Indiana also has a reducer that has been used for two years. This is one that we can access the data we need. It is open, it can be universally applied, every school can be part of the free and reduced program. You don't have to be part of the free and reduced program to do this, you could just figure out who would be eligible in your school.

What is attractive:

- This combination could be less of a legal problem.
- You can be part of the reducer if you provide this information.

What is of concern:

- Could lower the division of larger schools.
- Gathering this type of data from each school would be very labor intensive. Not a simple task gathering this type of data. We have to have data to support this.
- Whether or not coaches like the success factor? Not sure we can convince coaches regarding the success factor. We are punishing success.
- Using the reducer some very good programs could very well be placed in a lower division.

Questions:

- How would that be audited?
- How are private schools going to get this information if not part of the program?
- How many private schools are doing free and reduced?
- What is the impact on movement?
- How far could a school drop in levels?
- Minnesota did this to help the larger schools get tournament appearances.
- What happens if, as an experiment, we go back to a division with no private schools in?

SELECTION OF SOLUTIONS THAT MERIT ADDITIONAL STUDY AND CONSIDERATION

After a discussion on the additional three options, the committee agreed to identify which of the twelve options they felt merit additional study and consideration. The group identified the following criteria and agreed to explore those options that meet most of the criteria:

- A. The solution can be applied to specific sports
- B. Addresses schools in both rural and urban areas
- C. There is universal application to all WIAA member schools
- D. The solutions can be made clear and concise and supported by data
- E. The solution can be evaluated and modified as needed

Using this criteria, the group identified the following options for continued study:

- 1. Reducer**
- 2. Long-Term Success Factor**
- 3. Boundary (*geographically limited, open enrollment, sports specific multiplier*)**

Committee members volunteered to lead the next round of study for these three areas and will present their more in-depth findings at the next meeting. The committee acknowledge that what they might recommend to the Board of Control may be a combination of elements associated with each of these three options. There was also discussion about recommending changes to some sports (not all) and potentially pilot a solutions to see if it would be successful in other sports.

PLANNING FOR SEPTEMBER AREA MEETINGS

The committee shifted its attention to the areas meeting that will be taking place in September. As the committee wishes to continue its deliberations in the months ahead, they need to provide a summary of what has been accomplished to date. As such, at least one committee member has agreed to attend each of the seven area meetings and present a progress report. In preparation for these reports, the committee discussed and agreed on what would be presented.

SUMMARIZE – NEXT STEPS

The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for Wednesday, October 1, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in Stevens Point.