



Conference Realignment Handbook



Conference Realignment Handbook

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CONFERENCE REALIGNMENT GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Fast Track Application

A fast track application for conference realignment is shorter than the traditional application. Fast tracks can only be completed only when a schools proposed plan for conference realignment has support from every school affected by the proposal. The vote(s) of support need to be clearly documented showing the vote from each individual school.

A fast track cannot be completed during a respective conference realignment cycle. (For example, a football fast track cannot be completed during a football only conference realignment cycle). The official cycle begins on October 1st and ends on the date of the April WIAA Board of Control meeting. When fast track applications are verified as complete, they are approved by the WIAA Board of Control at its next meeting and take effect the following season/school year, unless otherwise indicated on the application.

Conference Realignment Cycle

Conference Realignment Cycles start when the applications open on July 1st. The cycle officially ends when the WIAA Board of Control has approved or denied all plans. The latest the cycle ends is the April WIAA Board of Control meeting.

Application Declaration Deadline

Anyone who will be completing a conference realignment application in a given cycle must declare their intention to do so by October 1st using the provided form on the WIAA website. These schools names will be shared with the membership.

Application Deadline

Conference Realignment applications need to be COMPLETED by school representation by November 1st.

Application Review Period

All applications will be reviewed by WIAA staff and the co-chairs of the Conference Realignment Task Force from November 1-15th. Any applicants missing information will be contacted to send missing documentation. Completed applications will be published on November 15th; all affected schools will be notified and asked for feedback on the proposal(s).

Newly Affected Schools

Newly affected schools are those that, when the committee is working with plans, get added as part of a new solution connected to a proposal. They are typically the result of a modified plan by the Conference Realignment Task Force. These schools are notified once they are part of a solution and are allotted an appeal to the committee and WIAA Board of Control. (See Appeals.)

Denied Plan

Plans presented to the Conference Realignment Task Force committee or the WIAA Board of Control can be denied by either entity. If denied by the committee, schools will have the right to appeal. If denied by the WIAA Board of Control, consideration of the plan ceases and conferences involved stay status quo. (See Appeals.)

Modified Plan

These are plans presented by schools that are changed slightly by the Conference Realignment Task Force.

Remanded Plans

In the first meeting the WIAA Board of Control acts upon Conference Realignment Plans (March), the Board can ask the Conference Realignment Task Force to re-evaluate a plan to insure it is indeed the best solution. The Task Force re-evaluates remanded plans and can modify the solution or send the remanded plan back to the WIAA BOC as is. Remanded plans are voted on again by the WIAA BOC in the April meeting. At this meeting, they can either be accepted or denied. Accepted plans take effect two years later.

Unanimous Approval

This is needed for a fast track conference realignment application. Unanimous approval is 100% of the plan by all schools in all conferences involved. Unanimous approval must be documented and submitted with a fast track application; the documentation must show an individual vote of every school in the conference(s) and have a date in which the vote was taken.

Appeal to the Committee

If a proposal is denied or modified by the committee, the applicant can appeal to the Conference Realignment Committee. Schools that are affected and unhappy with a conference realignment solution can also appeal to the Conference Realignment Committee. (See Appeals)

Appeal to the WIAA Board of Control

Schools that are directly affected and unhappy with a conference realignment solution and have already appealed to the Conference Realignment Task Force can appeal directly to the Board of Control. (See Appeals)

WIAA Constitution, Article VI-Powers and Duties of the Board of Control, Section 10.A

The Board of Control has the authority to take action to bring about a reasonable conference affiliation and relationship for member high schools. Reasonable conference affiliation and relationship with member high schools may include total movement of member schools, sport specific relief, and/or scheduling assistance. Note: While it is not generally the intent to make wholesale changes in existing conference lines, it should be understood that there could be adjustments in areas where conference affiliation problems are particularly acute. It should be understood that it may not be realistic to find a solution for every member school.

WIAA CONFERENCE REALIGNMENT TIMELINE

October 1

Application Declaration Deadline

- 8-Player Football Application due
- Fall Sport Co-Op Application due
- Football Only Conference Realignment Application Initiation
- All Sport/Single Sport Conference Realignment Application Declaration Form

November 1

Application Deadline

- Football Only Conference Realignment Application Deadline
- All Sport Conference Realignment Application Deadline

November 1-15

WIAA Staff Review

- Applications reviewed for completeness
- Communication with schools needing to provide more information

November 16

Communication with Member Schools

- Publish Realignment Requests on the WIAA website; affected school auto-form generated and sent
- Send mass email to WIAA membership
- Task Force co-chairs review plans and send committee communication

First Week of December

Realignment Task Force Meets

- Review Applications
- Decide which requests move forward
- Begin problem solving preliminary realignment solutions

Communication with Member Schools

- Publish Preliminary Realignment plans on WIAA website
- Send denied request emails to respective member schools
- Send approved request emails to respective member schools
- Send emails to any newly affected schools
- Press Release

First Week of January

Realignment Task Force Meets Virtually

- Hear appeals from those denied by Task Force in December
- Hear from those newly affected by plans from December

Second Week of January

Realignment Task Force Meets

- Task Force modifies realignment solutions
- Task Force submits amended plans
- Discuss and votes on changes to process to be placed on the Sports Advisory Grid

Communication with Member Schools

- Publish amended plans on WIAA website
- Email to any newly affected schools
- Press Release

January WIAA Board of Control Meeting

WIAA BOC Regular Meeting

- Hears from member schools whose plans were denied by the Task Force in December/January

First Week of February

Realignment Task Force meets

- Hears from newly affected schools of the amended plans
- Hears appeals from January amended plans
- Amends plans, if necessary, for final resolutions
- If there are newly affected schools from modified plans, they will be provided a hearing with the committee for feedback

March WIAA Board of Control Meeting

WIAA BOC Regular Meeting

- Acts on Task Force Final Resolutions
- Approves, Denies, or Remands plans

Second Week of April

Realignment Task Force Meets (if necessary)

- Reviews remanded resolutions
- Amends resolution for final consideration

April WIAA Board of Control Meeting

WIAA BOC Regular Meeting

- Hears amendments to remanded plans from March
- Approves or Denies Plans

June WIAA Board of Control Meeting

WIAA BOC Regular Meeting

- Hears proposed changes to the Conference Realignment process

Approved Plans will be implemented in the second school year following approval (e.g. plans approved in April of 2024 will be implemented in the fall of 2025-26).

CONFERENCE REALIGNMENT APPLICATION STEP BY STEP GUIDE

There is a two-step process for applying for Conference Realignment. First, all schools applying need to declare their intention no later than October 1st at 11:59pm. Once the Conference Realignment Declaration forms are completed a list of schools, along with the respective sports they are looking to realign will be publicly shared as an effort to increase communication among member schools and overall transparency.

Conference Realignment Declaration

Complete this form prior to submitting a conference realignment application. This declaration needs to be submitted no later than 11:59 pm on October 1, 2024. By completing this form, member schools will be notified that you are seeking conference realignment in the sport(s) identified.

General Information

Name *

First Name

Last Name

Title *

Requesting School *

Please Select



Email *

example@example.com

This application is for: *

☐

Football

☐

Non-Football (All Sports)

☐

Single Sport(s)

Submit

When ready, schools need to complete the Conference Realignment application. This needs to be complete by November 1st at 11:59pm. On the first general information page, identify the type of application you are completing and who is completing the form. If the application qualifies as a fast track, the "next" button will take you to the pages pertinent to demonstrating 100% support from all affected schools. Fast Track applications will only be accepted opposite of a respective conference realignment cycle. For example, if the current cycle year is for football only, non-football sport fast tracks will be accepted. If the current cycle year is for non-football sports, football-only fast tracks would be accepted. Fast track applications, once WIAA Board of Control approved, go into effect the next season.

Conference Realignment Request

General Information

Name *

First Name

Last Name

Title *

Requesting School *

Email

example@example.com

Is this a "fast track" application? To qualify as a "fast track" application, 100% of schools affected by this realignment proposal must be in agreement *

☐ Yes

☐ No

This application is for: *

☐ Football Only

☐ Non-Football Sports

Next

Requested Conference Designation

Select the current and desired new conference for this request

Current Conference *

-Select One-

Requested Preferred Conference *

-Select One-

Requested Alternative Conference

-Select One-

Sports Impacted

Please select all sports impacted by this request

	Varsity	JV	JV2 / Freshman
Baseball	☒	☒	☒
Boys Basketball	☒	☒	☒
Boys Cross Country	☒	☒	☒
Football	☒	☒	☒
Football (8-Player)	☒	☒	☒
Boys Golf	☒	☒	☒
Boys Hockey	☒	☒	☒
Boys Lacrosse	☒	☒	☒

On this page, indicate the conference you are currently in and the one you are requesting to be in per the application. If there are two possibilities for your move, please indicate a second choice in the "requested alternative conference" drop down. If you do not have a secondary option, leave the alternative solution on the default "select one" option. Later in the application, you will be asked for more detail about your conference realignment plan.

If you currently do not have a conference for a sport, please select Unaffiliated in the current conference drop-down box. If you are forming a new conference as part of your plan(s), please indicate "New Conference TBD."

Once that is complete, check the box for all sports that will be affected by this request. Please indicate the levels you offer for each sport as well.

Section 2

Geography

Proposed Solution A - Document travel requirements / mileage. Provide mileage and travel time chart for the current conference and the proposed solution. Include mileage and travel for all affected schools. *


Browse Files
Drag and drop files here

Must upload a PDF

Proposed Solution B - Document travel requirements / mileage. Provide mileage and travel time chart for the current conference and the proposed solution. Include mileage and travel for all affected schools.


Browse Files
Drag and drop files here

Must upload a PDF

Back

Next

For each of your proposed solutions for conference realignment, please upload a document or chart indicating the mileage and travel time for all affected schools in your plan. Uploaded documents must be in .pdf format. If you do not have a second proposal, leave "Proposed Solution B" empty. You will be providing more detailed information about your realignment proposal in forthcoming sections of the application.

School Enrollment *

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26 (Projected)	2026-27 (Projected)
Enrollment	1	1	1	1	1
Free & Reduced Lunch Percentage (%)	1	1	1	1	1

Section 1

School Enrollment and Participation Information

Additional Information Relevant to School Enrollment

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Back

Next

In the School Enrollment section, please indicate the total school enrollment of your high school and any associated member school that is included in your count. This should match your reports to the WI Department of Public Instruction. Please include your projected enrollment for the next two school years as well. Remember, conference realignment plans take effect two years after a realignment cycle.

If you feel there is more information you would like to share about your school population or the enrollment numbers, please include it in the narrative box under "Additional Information."

Provide your overall conference realignment proposal(s). If you are providing two options, Proposal A should be your first choice. Upload any and all documents demonstrating your communication to and from every affected school in your proposal. Applications must have documented (itemized) votes of approval/disapproval from every affected school.

Preview

Proposed Conference Solutions

Schools can submit up to two (2) proposed solutions. Upload up to two solutions below. Fast track applications may only include one unanimously supported solution.

Proposal A. Provide your preferred conference realignment or fast track solution. *


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Proposal A - Conference Impact. List and include any conference voting or position statements from all affected conference schools. This should include an official document from conference meetings. *


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Proposal B. Provide an alternative conference realignment solution (if applicable).


Browse Files
Drag and drop files here

Must upload a PDF

Proposal B - Conference Impact. List and include any conference voting or position statements from all affected conference schools. This should include an official document from conference meetings.


Browse Files
Drag and drop files here

Must upload a PDF

Are you breaking or creating a new co-op with this realignment request? *

☒ Yes ☐ No

If breaking or creating a new co-op have you submitted the required paperwork for this cooperative team request? *

☒ Yes ☐ No

Are you switching from 11-player to 8-player football or vice versa with this realignment application? *

☒ Yes ☐ No

If you are switching from 11-player to 8-player or vice versa, have you submitted the required paperwork for this change? *

☒ Yes ☐ No

Back

Next

Provide the overall rationale for this conference realignment request. Why do you want this change to occur? Then, if this change occurs, provide the verbiage on the positive impact for your school. If you foresee any negative impact for other schools, please include it in the impact statement as well.

Section 3

Proposed Rationale and Impact

Proposal A - Provide a rationale for this realignment request - include rationale such as travel times, competitiveness, 'like' opponents, traditional rivalries, school enrollments, etc.

B / U          

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Proposal A - Provide an impact statement - how would this request / proposed solution affect your school?

B / U          

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Proposal B - Provide a rationale for this realignment request - include rationale such as travel times, competitiveness, 'like' opponents, traditional rivalries, school enrollments, etc.

B / U          

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Proposal B - Provide an impact statement - how would this request / proposed solution affect your school?

B / U          

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Back

Next

Section 4

Affected Conferences / Schools

List conference(s) affected by your proposed solution(s). An affected conference is a conference whose conference changes due to your proposed solution.

Conference(s) Affected *

Conference

-Select One-



+ Add another conference

List schools affected by your proposed solution(s). An affected school is a school whose conference changes due to your proposed solution.

Schools Affected *

Schools

- Select a School -



+ Add another school

Back

Next

Please provide a master list of all conferences that are affected by your plan. Even if one school is affected, the conference should be included. Then, list all individual schools affected by your plans. This is an important step as all affected schools will be sent a form to provide feedback to the Conference Realignment Task Force on your proposed plan(s).

Section 5

Acknowledgement and Authorization

☐ By checking this box and signing below, I acknowledge that all of the information provided in this application is accurate. I further acknowledge that the District Administrator / President, School Principal, and School's Athletic Administrator are all aware and supportive of the requests in this application. *

Name *

John

First Name

Smith

Last Name

Title *

textbox_sample16

Signature *

Sign Here

Clear

Date *

08-08-2024

Date

Back

Save

Submit

The last part of the application is the signature page. As stated in the check box, by signing the document you are acknowledging that all levels of administration of the school/district are aware of the application and in agreement with the proposal.

CONFERENCE REALIGNMENT TASK FORCE COMMITTEE

TASK FORCE COMMITTEE TERMS AND DUTIES

The WIAA Board of Control has established a procedure to accomplish realignment where necessary and to provide for due process and input from those directly involved. The Conference Realignment Task Force has been created to lead this process. The 17 members, consisting of school administrators, athletic directors, and liaisons, of the Task Force are recommended by WIAA staff and approved by the WIAA Board of Control. The Task Force will elect Co-Chairs to serve for 2 years, staggered terms, in that leadership role. This committee will meet 2-4 times each year to review conference realignment proposals, to make realignment recommendations to the WIAA Board of Control, and to review and revise the conference realignment process. Task Force committee members will serve a 3-year term with a two consecutive term limit. Should a vacancy occur prior to the completion of a term, the WIAA staff will make a recommendation for WIAA Board of Control approval. Should a member switch positions within their designated term on the committee, he/she will be allowed to maintain their position given they are still a qualified school administrator in a member school.

One member of the WIAA executive staff serves as the liaison to the Conference Realignment Task Force and assists the committee with all communications.

The members of the [Conference Realignment Task Force](#) are listed on the WIAA website. Click "About WIAA" and "Committees." Select Conference Realignment Task Force."

WIAA Executive Staff Liaison Duties

July 1

Work with IT staff to open the applications on the website.

July

Conference realignment overview at New AD Workshop and additional opportunities coordinated by WADA.

July/August/September/October

Respond to questions, comments, concerns from member schools.

September

1. Present Task Force Committee member names to WIAA Board of Control for approval.
2. When amended, present the Task Force Handbook to the WIAA Board of Control for approval.
3. Update website to reflect approved changes.
4. Send a "welcome" email to all Task Force members, outlining process and expectations; send calendar meeting invitations to all; share all relevant electronic materials.

Starting in September

Once each week, review realignment applications for clarity and completion. Contact member school when needed. Discuss Conference Realignment process at Area Meetings.

October 1

Application declaration deadline.

October

Once each week, review realignment applications for clarity and completion. Contact member school when needed. Schedule an introductory meeting with the Conference Realignment Committee facilitated by the co-chairs.

November 1

Application Completion Deadline.

November 1-15th

Review of applications. Contact member schools with incomplete applications or missing information.

November 15

Application deadline.

1. Publish each completed application. All affected schools will be sent an email/form for written responses to the proposals.
2. Send email to the entire membership with a link to published applications and proposals.
3. Send email to Task Force with link to published applications and proposals as well as a spreadsheet with summary of the applications and proposals.
4. Schedule a virtual meeting with Co-Chairs to discuss the small group assignments and assigned proposals.
5. Prepare materials for the upcoming Conference Realignment Task Force meeting.

December/January/February Meetings

1. Communicate and arrange meetings, distribute paperwork for reimbursement to the Task Force, plan lunch, collaborate with Co-Chairs to ensure that all meetings progress in a timely fashion.
2. Following each meeting – Update website with Task Force outcomes, send email to membership with Task Force outcomes, communicate with member school regarding appeals.
3. Work with Co-Chairs and WIAA staff to information from the Co-Chairs following each Task Force meeting and to ensure that all communications/press releases are presented in a manner that accurately reflects the intent of the Task Force.
4. Collect suggestions for improvements and recommendations throughout the realignment process. These will be presented to the Task Force during the afternoon session of the January meeting as discussion items and possible action items.
5. Work with WIAA staff to edit and finalize all meeting minutes and proposals for presentation to the WIAA Board of Control.

March

Present recommended realignment proposals to the WIAA Board of Control.

April

Possible Task Force meeting if Board of Control remands any proposals.

June

Add recommended changes to the grid for Sports Advisory and Advisory Council meetings (Informational only). Present recommended changes to the realignment process to the WIAA Board of Control for action. Compile recommendations/requests for Task Force Committee member replacements.

July/August

Discuss potential committee replacements with WIAA Executive Director. He/she will make contact with potential committee members to secure the commitment; Make updates/archives to realignment webpage.

Co-Chair Duties

- Prior to the December Meeting
 1. Meet with WIAA staff Liaison to assign realignment plans and identify and ambiguous items.
 2. Conduct a Task Force virtual introductory overview with members.
 3. Review all realignment applications and proposed solutions for thoroughness and viability.
 4. Establish small groups of Task Force members and assign each group to realignment proposals (primary and secondary).
- Facilitate all Task Force meetings using approved/published meeting guidelines and timelines; take copious notes/minutes of each meeting.
- Collaborate with WIAA Executive Staff to ensure that all meetings progress in a timely fashion.
- Work with WIAA Executive Staff to ensure that all communications are presented in a manner that accurately reflects the intent of the Task Force.
- Communicate with individual member schools who have questions about their approved or denied applications.
- Collect suggestions for improvements and recommendations throughout the realignment process. These will be presented to the Task Force during the afternoon session of the February meeting as discussion items and possible action items.
- Provide minutes from each Task Force meeting to WIAA staff.
- Share minutes with the Task Force and ask for edits.
- Review all finalized minutes and proposals so that they may be presented to the WIAA Board of Control.
- Serve in the role of liaison between the Task Force and WIAA staff, when necessary.
- Collaborate with WIAA Executive Staff with regard to requests from the media to discuss conference realignment.
- Other duties as deemed necessary.

Task Force Committee Member Duties

- Upon being assigned proposal plans, thoroughly review the application and all supporting materials prior to the meeting.
- Attend all Task Force meetings.
- Serve member schools by actively participating in all Task Force meetings maintaining professionalism at all times, recusing themselves from votes to which they could be biased.
- Refer all inquiries from members schools or media to Co-Chairs or WIAA Executive Staff Liaison.

CHANGING THE CONFERENCE REALIGNMENT PROCESS

- Co-Chairs and WIAA Executive Staff Liaison collect suggestions/recommendations for changes to the process throughout the school year.
- January Meeting – Co-Chairs and WIAA Executive Staff Liaison conduct a business meeting in which all recommended changes to the process are discussed with potential recommendations and a formal vote by the Task Force to make these changes.
- Meeting minutes and recommendations will be placed on the Winter Sports grid as an informational item for the Sports Advisory Committee and the Advisory Council.
- Meeting minutes will be presented to the WIAA Board of Control at the June meeting and all recommendations will be placed on the Board agenda as action items.
- Following the June Board of Control meeting, the WIAA Executive Staff Liaison will make all necessary changes to all Conference Realignment documentation.
- WIAA Executive Staff Liaison will communicate these changes through a press release, informational emails, etc.

APPEALS

Throughout the conference realignment process, schools have the right to appeal decisions of the Conference Realignment Task Force. Schools in the following situations are provided the option to appeal to the Conference Realignment Task Force:

1. Schools that submitted a conference realignment application and had their proposal denied by the Conference realignment Task Force.
2. Schools that are affected by and unhappy with a solution proposed by the Conference Realignment Task Force.
3. Schools that, after a meeting of the Conference Realignment Task Force, were newly affected by a modified conference realignment solution. Appeals to the Conference Realignment Task Force can be done in-person or virtually.

In-Person Appeals

A school that selects to appear in-person for an appeal, will have to request an appeal time from the WIAA Conference Realignment liaison after the school is invited to do so in an official written statement from the Conference Realignment Committee. Documentation is sent to the district administrator, school principal and athletic administrator of a school as listed in the WIAA School Directory. Times for appeals will be assigned to each school. All in-person appeals will be held in the Board Room in the WIAA office located at 5516 Vern Holmes Drive Stevens Point, WI 54482.

A school appealing on behalf of one school district will be given 5 minutes to state its case to the Conference Realignment Task Force. Written statements are recommended but not required. The Conference Realignment Task Force will have the ability to ask questions during or after the appeal that will not count in the 5-minute time limit.

Schools appearing together on behalf of a group of schools or an entire conference will be afforded an 8-minute time to appeal to the Conference Realignment Task Force. Written statements are recommended but not required. The Conference Realignment Task Force will have the ability to ask questions during or after the appeal that will not count in the 8-minute time limit.

Virtual Appeals

A school that selects to appear virtually for an appeal, will have to request an appeal time from the WIAA Conference Realignment liaison after the school is invited to do so in an official written statement from the Conference Realignment Committee. Documentation is sent to the district administrator, school principal and athletic administrator of a school as listed in the WIAA School Directory. Times for appeals will be assigned to each school. Virtual appellants will be sent a Zoom link and are expected to be in the virtual waiting room when it's time for the appeal. When a virtual appeal is over, the appellants will be asked to leave the Zoom meeting for the next appeal to enter.

Schools can, after appealing to the Conference Realignment Task Force, appeal to the WIAA Board of Control. To appeal to the Board, school representation should request an audience by communicating with the WIAA liaison for Conference Realignment. These appeals must be done in-person in the Board Room in the WIAA office located at 5516 Vern Holmes Drive, Stevens Point, WI 54482. All appeals to the WIAA Board of Control will be held to a 5-minute time limit.

CONFERENCE REALIGNMENT APPLICATION CHECKLIST

This document outlines the information/documentation that will be needed to complete the conference realignment application.

This checklist is for school-use only and should not be sent to the WIAA:

- School enrollment trends and projections
- Demographics of student population that your district feels is relevant to the conference realignment application
- Discuss emerging sports at your school, discuss potential co-op changes or changes in 8/11 player football status
- Documentation of conference meetings in which conference realignment proposal was discussed
- Conference voting or position statements on proposed realignment from conference schools (does not necessarily constitute agreement) Include conference commissioners in all communication with other schools.
- Rationale statement (200 words maximum) – Why is your school seeking realignment?
- List and rank the importance of the reasons why your school is requesting realignment
- Your schools' suggestion for a proposed realignment solution
- Mileage and travel time charts for current and proposed conference for your school and other schools affected by proposed change
- Impact statement (200 words maximum) – How would this request/proposal impact other schools?
- Complete list of all school affected by your proposed plan

SUGGESTED PLANNING TIMELINE FOR SCHOOLS

This document outlines the information/documentation that will be needed to complete the conference realignment application.

This checklist is for school-use only and should not be sent to the WIAA:

- **Prior school year** – communicate plan with district administration and local coaches; communicate with all affected schools/conference commissioners (document support votes, feedback, and all communication)
- **July/August/September** – Secure school district support and information for conference realignment application
- **October 1** – Deadline for conference realignment declaration
- **November 1** – Deadline for application to be submitted for review
- **Early November** – Possible communication from the WIAA liaison or Conference Realignment Co-Chairs on information needed to complete the application
- **November 15** – Application completion date
- **November 16** – Application posting date; feedback form sent to all affected schools
- **December-March** – Stay engaged in the process; Attend all conference realignment task force meetings when necessary.