

2021 – 2025 NCHSAA Realignment Process and Procedure

1. Realignment of schools into conferences will be done every four years, according to NCHSAA bylaws. The next alignment is for the period 2021-2025.
2. The Realignment Committee was determined during the Fall 2019, which includes an overall chairperson, an Eastern co-chair, a Western co-chair, and eight superintendents representing each of the eight regions. The membership nominated additional members of the committee (one per region) at balloting during the appropriate NCHSAA Regional Meeting. Also represented on the committee is the State Department of Public Instruction, the North Carolina Coaches Association, the North Carolina Athletic Directors Association and the North Carolina School Boards Association. Each of those organizations selected their representatives to the committee.
3. Realignment will be based on four classifications. Classification will be for all sports. Schools will play in classification in playoffs, except where NCHSAA policy dictates otherwise.
4. Classification is to be guided, but not bound by the first month Average Daily Membership number as submitted to the State Department of Public Instruction (NCHSAA By-Law VI). Non-boarding parochial schools and other special schools (schools run by Bureau of Indian Affairs, DOD, etc.) will submit their ADM numbers directly to the NCHSAA since they do not submit figures to DPI.
5. Due to COVID-19, the 2019-2020 first month ADM numbers (50%) will be used for the 2021-2025 Realignment.
6. For the 2021-2025 Realignment, other factors will include an average of the previous three years of the Identified Student Percentage (ISP) numbers as submitted by the LEA to DPI (25%), and the average of the previous three years of NCHSAA State Cup points (25%). (2017-2018; 2018-2019; 2019-2020)
7. Schools will submit a Declaration of Intent form to the NCHSAA by the appropriate deadline, outlining their desire to participate in realignment.
8. Schools must note adjustments in their ADM numbers due to special circumstances on the Declaration of Intent form, which must be submitted through the designated process. For example:
 - a. If students attend an early college, middle college or other “specialty” school that does not field an athletic program, those students may be eligible to participate in athletics, per LEA policy. In these instances, the base school will identify the program on their Declaration of Intent Form. The base school or the LEA designee will submit directly to the NCHSAA the number of students in the early college, middle college or other “specialty” schools who are eligible at the base school. The NCHSAA will manually add these numbers to the DPI numbers for the base schools.
 - b. If special programs are housed at a school and those students are not eligible under any circumstance to participate in athletics, either physically or by LEA Policy, a school may identify these circumstances on the Declaration of Intent Form. Once confirmed, the school must submit to the NCHSAA the number of students in the special program that should be subtracted from the ADM numbers submitted by DPI.
9. Schools that have not yet opened, but desire to be included in the realignment process as member schools, must submit their projected ADM, as well as the impact it may have on existing schools. The superintendent or his/her designee in the LEA customarily submits the information.
10. After all data is collected, it will be posted for membership review; thereafter, the information will be set and final
11. Once the Realignment Score is determined, the process for dividing the schools in classifications for 2021-2025:

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- a. Using the East/West Map, all member schools are listed either in the east or the west based on the county where the school is located.
 - b. Schools are divided in the east or the west by the appropriate percentage--25% of the schools in 4-A, 25% in 3-A, 25% in 2-A and 25% in 1-A--to make the four classifications. If the divided number is a fraction, half or more is rounded up.
 - c. The lines are drawn from the top down for schools in the east and then for schools in the west, so the process starts with the largest school and works down to the dividing line, then the next class, etc. If the dividing line comes between two schools with the exact same Realignment Score, those schools will all be placed in the higher classification.
12. Conferences will be created either in the East or the West.
13. Split conferences will be created if necessary, and in an effort to avoid hardships such as geography, travel, etc.
14. The initial draft of conferences will be prepared for membership consideration, using a combination of google earth maps and staff involvement.
15. A draft of the initial plan will be distributed to member schools via email.
16. By the appropriate deadline, schools should submit to the NCHSAA, in writing, all concerns or desired adjustments to the initial plan. This includes suggestions for new conference affiliations or agreements among schools that have agreed to be in a conference together, etc. Such suggestions should be shared with the impacted schools.
17. Thereafter, by the appropriate deadlines and before all realignment committee meetings, all appeals must be submitted in writing--the concerns, suggestions for a new conference affiliation, impact on other schools, signed agreements for proposed changes, etc.—so information can be compiled prior to the Realignment Committee Meeting. Appealing schools should share such notices of appeals and the proposed solutions with the impacted schools.
18. The Realignment Committee meets according to all established deadlines and meeting dates, hears appeals and can make adjustments to conferences.
19. Once final appeals have been heard, and discussed, the Realignment Committee will send its final draft to the NCHSAA Board of Directors.
20. During a special called meeting, the NCHSAA Board of Directors may consider appeals based on procedural errors after it has received the plan from the Realignment Committee. The Board then finalizes realignment.
21. The NCHSAA Board of Directors reserves the right to place a school up or down in classification in cases where the Realignment Committee believes there is an extreme geographic hardship and there is no negative affect on other schools. If a request is approved, the Board of Directors has the right to recommend appropriate restrictions for the school(s) involved. Note: NCHSAA By-laws give the Board of Directors the authority to use other factors that may apply, to transfer schools to another classification.
22. In August of the appropriate academic year (2021-2022), the new alignment begins with schools in those classifications and conferences.