

# Frontier League sends proposal to KSHSAA to separate private schools



A big change to the Kansas High School Activities Association (KSHSAA) postseason could be coming sooner rather than later if a proposal, submitted by the Frontier League, passes the KSHSAA Board of Directors and its member schools.

Last month the Frontier League, led by Paola High School principal Jeff Hines and Louisburg superintendent Dr. Brian Biermann, petitioned KSHSAA to separate public and private schools into their own postseason competitions.

In order for it pass, the petition must be signed by 20 percent of the 355 member schools according to KSHSAA bi-laws. The Frontier League got the 71 needed petitions and have now submitted this to appear in front of the KSHSAA Board of Directors for vote in their Sept. 18 meeting.

The board of directors would then have to pass it by simple majority of those in attendance to

bring the proposal  
to a vote from all the member schools.

“Kansas needs to catch up with  
the rest of the country and get this competitive imbalance  
under control in our  
state,” Hines said. “The longer we wait then more students  
will be negatively  
impacted. We have a responsibility as educators to create the  
best  
opportunities possible for our students. No one can honestly  
say we have  
the best system possible right now. It can definitely be  
improved.”

The proposal submitted by the Frontier League is the same one  
the state of Texas uses that keeps the schools in their same  
classification, but only separates the schools come  
postseason.

Other options were discussed  
before submitting the proposal, such as implementing a  
multiplier on all  
private schools like Missouri currently does. In fact, it is  
the most popular  
proposal among the schools that were surveyed by Hines last  
January.

They also talked about the “Oklahoma  
model” where schools are bumped up a classification based on  
success for  
competitive balance.

Seventy-four percent of the  
schools said they would support a population multiplier, 64  
percent would  
support competitive balance factors and 51 percent would  
support separate

divisions.

However, KSHSAA would not be able to make this change with a multiplier due to state statute K.S.A. 72-130 that states a high school association "must establish a system of classification of member high schools according to student attendance."

KSHSAA would not be able to pass a new bi-law that goes against state statute, and therefore, the Kansas State Legislature would have reword the statute to allow the association to make those changes.

The Frontier League believes the Texas model, or separate postseason divisions, does not deal with classifications. Also, this model had more support from 5A and 6A schools as neither classification would likely vote for a multiplier.

"We don't view that as a classification decision as we are not affecting classification, but KSHSAA and their lawyers view that it is," Biermann said. "5A and 6A schools that we talked to really wanted us to push for the Texas model because they don't want to play them (private schools) either. The biggest thing for me is if 5 and 6A schools don't want to play them, then why do we? As a superintendent, I am supposed to create opportunities for kids. We had four teams last year in both soccer teams, football and volleyball that all saw their season end to Bishop Miege. It is not right that we have kids and coaches that work their tails off and they don't have the opportunity to win.

"Am I all about state championships? Absolutely not. But we also know the reality of it in the current system. Winning state championships is important for

communities and is always a goal. I am not ever going to give up on this idea and neither will the Frontier League.”

The public versus private school debate has been going on for the last several years and Hines has been leading the charge since 2015 when he put together a study that displayed the disparity of state championships won by private schools.

In 2018-19, private schools won 32 percent of the state championships in Classes 5A through 1A. There are currently no private schools in 6A. Twenty-one of those 24 state titles were won by private schools in Class 4A and 5A.

That is a high number considering that out of the 355 member schools, only 27 of them are private.

The Frontier League wanted to see change, so Hines surveyed the 355 member schools late last year and presented his findings to KSHSAA in January. More than 88 percent of the schools responded, that included 22 private institutions, and 87 percent said they want the current system changed.

**Presentation of Public/Private School Survey Results  
to The KSHSAA Executive Board**

January 10, 2019

**Results from Survey**

313 of the 355 KSHSAA Member Schools Responded – 88.2%

291 Public Schools Responded

22 Private Schools Responded

273 Member Schools voted YES to support a change in the current structure

271 Public Schools Voted Yes for Change

2 Private Schools Voted for Change

40 Member Schools voted NO to support a change in the current structure

20 Public Schools Voted No for Change

20 Private Schools Voted No for Change

**87.2% voted that they want the current system changed.**

	<b>Survey Response Rate</b>	<b>Support Change</b>
<b>1A</b>	82.9%	92.8%
<b>2A</b>	89.0%	84.2%
<b>3A</b>	98.4%	85.6%
<b>4A</b>	100.0%	88.9%
<b>5A</b>	88.8%	81.3%
<b>6A</b>	77.7%	82.1%
<b>Total</b>	88.2%	87.2%

**School Superintendent Response Rate**

175 School Superintendents Responded

169 out of 175 Support Change

96.6% Support Change

**Principal Response Rate**

182 Principals Responded

84.6% Support Change

**Activities Director Response Rate**

200 Activities Directors Responded

85% Support Change

Although most schools said they would support the multiplier model more, Hines and the rest of the league schools, believe it is the best way to proceed at this time.

“Our survey indicated that separate divisions was the least popular option among member schools, however as a league we feel like it is the most appropriate option,” Hines said. “A multiplier will pass through and will be our next option if this does not go through. A multiplier will impact many private schools that are not quasi sports academies that are not very successful in athletics. The separate divisions avoids this situation.”

If the proposal does pass the board of directors, KSHSAA will then put it to a vote with all 355 member schools and it must pass by a simple majority and by four of the six classes.

From there, KSHSAA executive director Bill Faflick would take it to the Kansas Legislature before change could be implemented.

“We know it won’t happen overnight,” Biermann said. “Even if this passes, nothing will change this year and probably not the following year. It could be three years out with the way football schedules take shape. We are honestly ok with that if we knew that there was light at the end of the tunnel. If this would not pass, we would turn right around and do the multiplier one.”

Despite what happens at the

upcoming board of directors meeting, Hines believes changes to the system will happen sooner rather than later.

“I am now confident something will get done,” Hines said. “I think it will ultimately take a multiplier to get something done. If the separate divisions fails then we will propose a multiplier for the spring board of directors meeting.”

A lot of obstacles are still in the way for change to happen, whether it has to deal with state statues or member votes, but none of the schools in the nine-member Frontier League are going to stop until they see a more even playing field.

“I am very proud of the Frontier League, and even though we compete against each other, we are very unified on this,” Biermann said. “It is about fairness and equality and I am tired of having my kids at Louisburg High School not having the same opportunity as some others. The throttle is down and it is going to stay down.”