

SOUTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE
P.O. BOX 211575
COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA 29221-6575
January 29, 2020

The AA Classification Executive Committee of the South Carolina High School League met on January 29, 2020, at 10:30 a.m. at the SCHSL Office, 121 Westpark Blvd, Columbia, South Carolina. The following members were present: Michael Stone, Paul Calvert, Kyle Stewart, Mike Gentry, Jason Bryant (Eric Funderburk – Alternate), Bryan Hearn, Tidles Sibert, and Scott Durham

Michael Stone called the meeting to order.

Appeals:

Battery Creek High School (Chad Cox, Principal)

Battery Creek High School withdrew its request for a change in classification and region placement (football only).

West Oak High School (Brandon Blackwell, Principal; Tim Sherrif, Athletics Director)

West Oak High School requested an open session for the change in classification and region placement appeal.

Dr. Blackwell presented the case for a change from Class AAA – Region 1 to Class AA – Region 1 for football only. He stated that they have not had a JV football program for two years and that this year, the varsity football team had 25 players with 11 seniors. They expect 20 players to play next year. Since 2012, the football team has won 1 of 43 competitions with a 1600 point differential.

He expressed concerns about trying to save the football program which, with the current placement, may be lost due to lack of participation. The loss of football would also affect the non-revenue sports. While the current enrollment is 789 and the 45-ADM submitted was 611, they consider the school to be more like a Class AA school athletically. West Oak High School has a special needs program and Camp Wilderness program in which many students enrolled at West Oak for these programs do not compete in athletics.

When asked about feedback from the regions, Mr. Blackwell stated he believed that he had full approval. Class AA - Region 1 stated support was split with 2 schools in support, 3 in opposition, and 1 that abstained. Class AAA – Region 1 was split 4-4 in support and opposition.

The Committee expressed concerns about the enrollment numbers and that West Oak High School would still be larger than the largest Class AA school.

A motion made by Mr. Hearn, seconded by Mr. Sibert, to deny the appeal passed 8-0 (8 members present).

Cheraw High School (Jason Bryant, Principal; David Byrd, Athletics Director)

Cheraw High School requested an open session for the appeal to move Legion Collegiate Academy from Class AA – Region 3 to Class AA – Region 2.

Mr. Bryant presented the case for appeal. He stated that York Preparatory High School is 81 miles one way and Legion Collegiate Academy is 76 miles one way from Cheraw High School. The only route to these schools is Highway 9 where traffic can be bad. Due to the travel distance, cost, and loss of instructional time, the school is requesting that Legion Collegiate be moved from Class AA – Region 3 to Class AA - Region 2.

He stated that Cheraw High School took the burden of travel in the last realignment period and that they are fighting for their students and the school which will have had four years of travel after this realignment period.

When asked why they selected Legion Collegiate Academy to move and not York Preparatory, Mr. Bryant stated that since Legion Collegiate was already in Region 2 for football, it appeared to be the easiest change. The appeal is not about gaining a competitive advantage or about Legion Collegiate Academy.

When asked about support from Region 3, he believed he had full support, including Legion Collegiate Academy. Members of the Classification Committee stated that Region 2 would actually bear just as much travel burden as Region 3.

A motion made by Scott Durham, seconded by Eric Funderburk, to approve the appeal failed 4-4 (8 members present).

Christ Church Episcopal High School (Wes Clarke, Principal; Molly Miller, Athletics Director; Tommy Bobo, Assistant Athletics Director)

Christ Church requested an open session for the change in classification and region placement.

Ms. Miller presented the case for a change in classification and region placement from Class AA – Region 1 to Class A – Region 1. She stated that Christ Church has been a member in good standing of the SC High School League since the mid-1970s. To her knowledge, the school has never received any type of violation or penalty.

Ms. Miller gave the following reasons for the appeal:

The guidelines that were given to the High School League by the guidelines committee state that Class A shall have a base of 50 schools with flexibility to move plus or minus four (4) schools, thus a range of 46–54 schools. All schools ranging from 47-54 shall be considered for Classification A. Christ Church is ranked the 47th smallest school having five schools with larger enrollments/ranking placed in Class A.

She expressed safety concerns for students participating in contact sports. Of the 51 schools in Class A, 40 are listed as fielding football teams. All five of the schools with larger enrollment/ranking and placed in Class A have football teams.

Christ Church has a strong international population with 40 students included in their enrollment count of 306. Ten students are confirmed to return to Germany at the end of the 2019-20 school year. Of the current eligibility, five students participated in a varsity sport.

Finally, Ms. Miller stated that there was no unity in the collection of the 45-Day ADM; that there was discrepancy from member schools on how they calculated this information; that not all schools use Power School; and that clear guidelines were not shared for how to determine this number.

When asked about support from other schools in the region, Ms. Miller stated that she had verbal support from Ware Shoals High School, Calhoun Falls High School, Dixie High School and SC School for the Deaf & Blind. She believed Whitmire High School was the only school in opposition. She was also asked about how Christ Church collected its 45-Day ADM. It was her understanding that the number sent to the High School League was the school enrollment count on the 45th day of the school year.

A motion made by Mr. Bryant, seconded by Mr. Hearn, to deny the appeal passed 8-0 (8 members present.)

Burke High School (Corey McDonald, Assistant Principal; Deon Richardson, Athletics Director)
Burke High School requested an open session for the classification and region placement appeal.

Deon Richardson presented the case for a change from Class AA – Region 6 to Class A – Region 7. Mr. Richardson gave the following reasons as the request for the change:

The majority of the schools in the region they wish to be placed in, Class A – Region 7, are in Charleston County, the same area as Burke High School. This would decrease the amount of travel time when competing against other schools out of the area. They would also lose instructional time having to leave school early for away competition.

Mr. Richardson stated that his school is facing some of the struggles of many inner-city schools and they are hoping that the change in region and classification would spark interest in some of their previous rivalry games. Due to scheduling issues, many of these games cannot be played as non-region games. He also expressed safety concerns over the gap in the distribution of competition from Class AA to Class A.

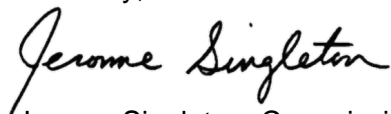
When asked about support from the current and prospective regions, Mr. Richardson stated he has support from East Clarendon and Whale Branch.

Members of the Classification Committee stated that the League followed the guidelines given to them for Reclassification/Realignment and that they didn't believe any mistakes were made with the geography or 45-ADM numbers.

A motion made by Mr. Stewart, seconded by Mr. Tidles, to approve the appeal failed 3-5 (8 members present.)

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerome Singleton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jerome Singleton, Commissioner

Note: In all votes, the President only votes in the event of a deciding vote.