

17. Classification System

In sports and activities conducted in multiple classes, IHSA member schools are divided into classes according to enrollment. The following policy describes the steps required to determine a school's classification enrollment and the enrollment cutoffs for each class.

A. Enrollments

1. Actual Enrollment

The classification of a high school is based on its total student enrollment figure (ninth through twelfth grade), as reported to the Illinois State Board of Education on September 30 of preceding school terms.

The IHSA gathers enrollment data from the Illinois State Board of Education's annual Fall Housing Report. When a school's enrollment is not readily determined from the Fall Housing Report, or when the report appears to be in error, the school may be asked to provide its enrollment data directly to the IHSA.

Exceptions

In certain cases, the IHSA may use an estimated enrollment figure provided by a school or school district until the school can provide the Sept. 30 enrollment of the current school term. These situations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a new school that does not appear in the Fall Housing Report.
- a school that undergoes a significant change in enrollment due to the opening or closing of a school in the same district, the deannexation of a portion of its district, or the deactivation of a neighboring school.

In unusual cases, the Board of Directors may make appropriate adjustments to a school's enrollment figure.

2. Official Enrollment

A high school's "actual enrollment" is subject to several adjustments. The final figure, after these adjustments have been made, is known as the "official enrollment," and is the figure shown on the IHSA Web site and in other IHSA publications.

Single-gender schools

The enrollment of a single-gender high school is multiplied by 2 to bring it into line with coed schools having the same number of boys or girls.

Example: 1,000 girls (actual enrollment) $\times 2 = 2,000$

Schools with fewer than four grades

The enrollment of a high school with only three grades is multiplied by 1.333 is applied to bring it into line with four-year schools.

Example: 1,000 (actual enrollment) $\times 1.333 = 1,333$

In unusual cases (such as when a school is ramping up to full enrollment or being phased out), the enrollment of a high school with only two grades may be multiplied by 2 and the enrollment of a high school with only one grade may be multiplied by 4.

Variances

A school may petition for a variance in its enrollment if:

- It enrolled out-of-district special education students, or
- It enrolled international students who were permanently ineligible for interscholastic competition, or
- It anticipates an enrollment decrease of more than 20 percent.

Any petition to change a school's enrollment must arrive at the IHSA Office no later than September 1.

3. Classification Enrollment

The figure used for classification is known as a school's "classification enrollment."

A school's classification enrollment is the average of its official enrollments of the two previous school years. A school's classification enrollment will remain the same for a two-year period, beginning in the 2019-20 school year. Every two years after that, all schools' classification enrollments will be recalculated.

For example, classifications for the 2019-20 school year are based on the average of the actual school enrollments reported to the Illinois State Board of Education on September 30, 2016 and September 30, 2017.

The enrollment figure used to classify a high school may vary based on the sport and activity, depending on whether the 1.65 multiplier is applied or a waiver has been granted.

Non-boundaried school multiplier

IHSA By-Law 3.170 directs that a 1.65 multiplier be applied to the enrollment of all non-boundaried schools. As defined by the by-law, a non-boundaried school is any private school, charter school, lab school, magnet school, residential school, any public school in a multi-high school district that does not accept students from a fixed portion of the district, or any public school that charges less than the full tuition rate authorized by the Illinois School Code.

Waivers of the multiplier are granted automatically, as described in the next section.

Waivers

By-Law 3.170 provides for waivers of the 1.65 multiplier on non-boundaried schools. Waivers are granted to individual sport and activity programs on a two-year basis. Waivers are granted only in sports and activities that are conducted in more than one class. All waivers and success advancements for non-boundaried schools will be determined on the individual sport and activity program's performance for the previous two (2) school terms. Programs at non-boundaried schools that qualify for a waiver prior to the beginning of a two-year classification period will maintain the waiver during the entire two-year classification period.

Non-boundaried school programs not eligible for a waiver

A sport or activity program at a particular non-boundaried school is not eligible for an automatic waiver during the two-year classification period if, over the course of the previous two (2) school terms, the program (as a team) has accomplished any of the following:

Wins a trophy at the state finals, or

In Football, accomplishes the following:

- Wins at least three playoff games

In Girls Volleyball, Boys Basketball, Girls Basketball, Boys Soccer, Girls Soccer, Baseball, Softball, Wrestling, or Scholastic Bowl accomplishes at least three (3) of the following:

- Wins an IHSA Regional Tournament
- Wins an IHSA Sectional Tournament

In Boys Track & Field, Girls Track & Field, Girls Tennis, Boys Tennis, Competitive Dance, or Competitive Cheerleading accomplishes at least three (3) of the following:

- Wins an IHSA Sectional Tournament
- Finishes in the Top 10 as team at the IHSA State Finals.

In Boys Cross Country, Girls Cross Country, Boys Golf, and Girls Golf, accomplishes at least four (4) of the following:

- Wins an IHSA Regional Tournament
- Wins an IHSA Sectional Tournament
- Finishes in the Top 10 as team at the IHSA State Finals.

For example, if a non-boundaried school's Girls Soccer team wins two Regional titles and a Sectional title in a two-year classification enrollment period, the team is not eligible for an automatic waiver during the next two-year classification enrollment period.

Another example: If a non-boundaried school's Boys Golf team wins a Regional title, two Sectional titles, and finishes in 5th place at the State Finals in a two-year classification enrollment period, the team is not eligible for an automatic waiver during the next two-year classification enrollment period.

Yet another example: If a non-boundaried school's Boys Basketball team wins a Regional title and a Sectional title in a two-year classification enrollment period yet doesn't qualify for the State Finals, the team is eligible for an automatic waiver during the next two-year classification enrollment period.

For the purposes of determining eligibility for a waiver, any trophy, title, place, win, or state final appearance that was earned and subsequently forfeited is counted.

Non-boundaried school programs eligible for a waiver

All sport and activity programs that are subject to the 1.65 multiplier and do not fall under the criteria listed above are eligible for a waiver and are granted a waiver automatically.

No waivers other than automatic waivers are granted.

Boundaried school programs

For boundaried school programs, the "classification enrollment" is always equal to the "official enrollment."

B. Success Adjustment

A sport or activity program at a non-boundaried school shall be subject to the success adjustment if, over the course of the last two-year classification enrollment period, the program has won at least two trophies at the State Finals. In such a case, the school will be moved up one class from the class in which it won the trophies. Teams will only be adjusted at the beginning of a two-year classification enrollment period and will remain adjusted in that sport or activity for the entire two-year classification enrollment period.

If a non-boundaried team's multiplied enrollment causes that team to move up more than one class after a two-year classification enrollment cycle in which it won two trophies at the State Finals, the multiplied enrollment will determine the team's classification enrollment.

C. Classification Cutoffs

At the end of each two-year classification enrollment period, classification cutoffs and ranges for the next two-year classification enrollment period in all sports and activities conducted in multiple classes are determined according to the following method:

The classification cutoffs in each sport or activity will be determined using the schools (and their enrollments) that entered the tournament during the first year of the previous two-year classification period.

In four-class sports and soccer, the cutoffs will be based on the sport in which the smallest number of schools entered. This group of schools will be divided into four classes, with the smallest 27.5% of the schools in Class 1A, the next smallest 27.5% in Class 2A, the next smallest 22.5% in Class 3A, and the remaining 22.5% in Class 4A.

The enrollment cutoffs that result from this process will be applied to all four-class sports and soccer so that at any particular school, the programs in all four-class sports and soccer will be in the same class.

Since soccer has only three classes, the schools in Class 4A in four-class sports will be in Class 3A in soccer. The schools in Class 3A in four-class sports will be in Class 2A in soccer. The schools in Class 1A and 2A in four-class sports will be in Class 1A in soccer.

At non-boundaried schools, programs that are affected by the multiplier or success factor may be in a different class from other programs at the school.

Schools will be divided into classes based on the following percentages:

- **Four-class team sports (Baseball, Boys Basketball, Girls Basketball, Softball, Girls Volleyball):** The smallest 27.5% of entries in Class 1A, the next smallest 27.5% in Class 2A, the next smallest 22.5% in Class 3A, and the remaining 22.5% in Class 4A.
- **Three-class team sports (Boys Soccer, Girls Soccer, Competitive Dance):** The smallest 1/3 (33.33%) of entries in Class 1A, the next smallest 1/3 (33.33%) in Class 2A, and the remaining 1/3 (33.33%) in Class 3A.
- **Three-class individual sports (Boys Cross Country, Girls Cross Country, Boys Golf, Boys Wrestling, Boys Track & Field, Girls Track & Field):** The smallest 4/10 (40%) of entries in Class 1A, the next smallest 3/10 (30%) in Class 2A, and the remaining 3/10 (30%) in Class 3A.
- **Two-class sports and activities (girls golf, Scholastic Bowl):** The smallest 1/2 (50%) of entries in Class A and the remaining 1/2 (50%) in Class AA.
- **Competitive Cheerleading:** Of schools that did not compete in the Coed Division, the smallest 1/3 (33.33%) in the Small Division, the next smallest 1/3 (33.33%) in the Medium Division, and the remaining 1/3 (33.33%) in the Large Division.
- **Music:** Of schools that entered either the Solo & Ensemble or Organization contest (or both), the smallest 1/5 (20%) of entries in Class D, the next smallest 1/5 (20%) in Class C, the next smallest 1/5 (20%) in Class B, the next smallest 1/5 (20%) in Class A, and the remaining 1/5 (20%) in Class AA.
- **Boys Football:** Classifications for boys football are determined at the end of the regular season using the "classification enrollment" in the manner prescribed by the Boys Football Terms & Conditions.

After the list is divided into groups, programs affected by the success adjustment are moved up into the proper class. For each program moved up, a corresponding school is moved down to the lower class to keep the percentages equal.

At the discretion of the Board of Directors, the classification cutoffs of similar boys and girls sports that compete in the same season may be combined and made identical. In such cases each cutoff will be the larger of the two figures that would have been used if the sports had been classified separately. Pairs of sports subject to this provision are:

- Boys Cross Country and Girls Cross Country
- Boys Track & Field and Girls Track & Field

The highest enrollment assigned to each class is considered the cutoff for that class. All entries with enrollments lower than the cutoff are assigned to that class.

The classification process does not guarantee that, by the time the tournaments are actually conducted, the classes will be exactly proportional. Between the time the cutoffs are determined and the beginning of the tournaments, some schools may add or drop the sport or activity, or form or dissolve coops.

Cooperative Teams

In determining the enrollment of a cooperative team, the classification enrollments of all involved schools are combined to determine the classification enrollment of the coop.

Playing Up

A school may petition to play in a higher classification in a particular sport or activity. The request must be for a minimum of two years and must arrive at the IHSA Office no later than September 1.