

House File 331 - Introduced

HOUSE FILE 331
BY BERGAN and GRASSLEY

A BILL FOR

1 An Act implementing requirements related to organizations
2 that sponsor or administer extracurricular interscholastic
3 athletics, including the creation of a conference realignment
4 committee.
5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

unofficial

1 Section 1. NEW SECTION. **280.13D Realignment of high school**
2 **athletics conferences — committee approval.**

3 1. For purposes of this section:

4 a. "*Extracurricular interscholastic athletics*" means a
5 contest or competition for sports between different school
6 districts or accredited nonpublic schools and outside the regular
7 scope of a school district's or accredited nonpublic school's
8 curriculum.

9 b. "*Organization*" means the Iowa high school athletic
10 association or its successor organization, and the Iowa girls
11 high school athletic union or its successor organization.

12 2. On or after July 1, 2025, a school district shall not
13 expend any moneys, and an accredited nonpublic school shall
14 not expend any moneys originating from the state, to pay dues
15 or membership fees to an organization, and the school district
16 or accredited nonpublic school shall not be a member of,
17 participate in activities associated with, or receive services
18 from an organization unless the organization, for each school
19 year beginning on or after July 1, 2025, develops and implements
20 a policy that does all of the following:

21 a. (1) Establishes, in combination with the other
22 organization, a committee known as the conference realignment
23 committee. The conference realignment committee shall do all of
24 the following:

25 (a) Take action to bring about a reasonable conference
26 affiliation and relationship for high schools that are
27 members of organizations. Reasonable conference affiliation
28 and relationship with member high schools may include total
29 movement of member schools, sport-specific relief, or scheduling
30 assistance. When taking action to bring about a reasonable
31 conference affiliation and relationship for member high schools,
32 the committee shall consider all of the following:

33 (i) The current total enrollment of the member high schools
34 and the projected total enrollment of the member high schools in
35 the future.

1 (ii) Travel distances between member high schools.

2 (iii) The comparability of instructional programs provided by
3 member high schools.

4 (iv) Traditional rivalries.

5 (v) The number of member high schools currently in the
6 conference and the number of high schools that may be added to
7 the conference.

8 (vi) The comparability of athletic programs and other
9 school-sponsored programs provided by the member high schools.

10 (b) Review all requests that are submitted to the committee
11 by school districts and accredited nonpublic schools that
12 are members of an organization related to changing the
13 extracurricular interscholastic athletics conferences the school
14 belongs to, including moving a member school to a different
15 conference. A request submitted under this subparagraph division
16 must contain an analysis of how the change will affect the
17 school district or accredited nonpublic school submitting the
18 request along with how the change may affect other school
19 districts and accredited nonpublic schools that are members of
20 the organization.

21 (c) When determining whether to approve or reject the
22 request, the committee shall consider the factors described in
23 subparagraph division (a) and how to best bring about reasonable
24 interscholastic athletics conferences that are beneficial to
25 students enrolled in school districts and accredited nonpublic
26 schools that are members of the organization. After making a
27 decision, the committee shall provide a copy of the request and
28 the committee's decision to the applicable organization and order
29 the organization to take all actions necessary to effectuate the
30 committee's decision. If the committee's decision rejects the
31 school district's or accredited nonpublic school's request, the
32 committee shall recommend an alternative conference alignment or
33 allow the school district or accredited nonpublic school to opt
34 for independent status.

35 (d) Develop an expedited review process for requests to

1 change an extracurricular interscholastic athletics conference
2 membership that are submitted to the committee by all school
3 districts and accredited nonpublic schools that may be affected
4 by the change. The expedited review process must require the
5 committee to provide a copy of the requests received under
6 this subparagraph division to the applicable organization and to
7 direct the applicable organization to take all actions necessary
8 to effectuate the committee's decision.

9 (e) Review extracurricular interscholastic athletics
10 conference changes at least once every two years.

11 (f) Allow a school district or an accredited nonpublic school
12 to appeal orders issued by the committee to the director of the
13 department of education.

14 (2) (a) The conference realignment committee shall consist
15 of eighteen members, subject to the following requirements:

16 (i) Nine members shall be superintendents employed by school
17 districts or accredited nonpublic schools located in different
18 geographical regions of the state.

19 (ii) Nine members shall be activities directors employed
20 by school districts or accredited nonpublic schools located in
21 different geographical regions of the state.

22 (b) A quorum of the committee shall consist of ten members.
23 The members of the committee shall elect a chairperson of the
24 committee.

25 (c) Each organization shall appoint nine members to the
26 committee pursuant to a process established by the state board
27 of education by rule.

28 b. Prohibits the organization from changing membership of
29 extracurricular interscholastic athletics conferences, including
30 moving a member school to a different conference, unless the
31 conference realignment committee ordered the organization to
32 make such change pursuant to paragraph "a", subparagraph (1),
33 subparagraph division (c) or (d).

34 c. Requires the organization to develop an expedited review
35 and implementation process for orders received pursuant to

1 paragraph "a", subparagraph (1), subparagraph division (d).

2 d. Requires that, in order for a school district or
3 accredited nonpublic school to be included in any extracurricular
4 interscholastic athletics conference, the school must offer at
5 least one extracurricular interscholastic athletics activity for
6 boys and at least one extracurricular interscholastic athletics
7 activity for girls in the fall, winter, spring, and summer.
8 Schools that are not coeducational must offer at least one
9 extracurricular interscholastic athletics activity for boys or
10 girls, as applicable, in the fall, winter, spring, and summer.

11 e. Prohibits a member school district or accredited nonpublic
12 school that withdraws from an extracurricular interscholastic
13 athletics conference, without approval, from doing any of the
14 following:

15 (1) Competing in the same extracurricular interscholastic
16 athletics activity in any conference for the two years
17 immediately subsequent to the date the member school district or
18 accredited nonpublic school withdrew.

19 (2) Competing in a tournament sponsored by an organization
20 in the same extracurricular interscholastic athletics activity
21 for the two years immediately subsequent to the date the member
22 school district or accredited nonpublic school withdrew.

23 3. The state board of education shall adopt rules pursuant to
24 chapter 17A to administer this section.

25 EXPLANATION

26 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with
27 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

28 This bill implements requirements related to organizations
29 that sponsor or administer extracurricular interscholastic
30 athletics, including the creation of a conference realignment
31 committee.

32 The bill defines "extracurricular interscholastic athletics"
33 as a contest or competition for sports between different school
34 districts or accredited nonpublic schools and outside the regular
35 scope of a school district's or accredited nonpublic school's

1 curriculum. Additionally, the bill defines "organization" as the
2 Iowa high school athletics association and the Iowa girls high
3 school athletic union, or their successor organizations.

4 The bill provides that on or after July 1, 2025, a school
5 district shall not expend any moneys, and an accredited nonpublic
6 school shall not expend any moneys originating from the state, to
7 pay dues or membership fees to an organization, and the school
8 district or accredited nonpublic school shall not be a member of,
9 participate in activities associated with, or receive services
10 from an organization unless the organization establishes, in
11 combination with each other organization, a committee known
12 as the conference realignment committee that is tasked with
13 taking action to bring about reasonable conference affiliation
14 and relationship for member high schools pursuant to requests
15 submitted by member high schools; develops and implements
16 a policy that prohibits the organization from changing the
17 extracurricular interscholastic athletics conferences unless the
18 conference realignment committee ordered the organization to make
19 such change; requires the organization to develop an expedited
20 review and implementation process for certain specified orders
21 received by the committee; requires member schools to offer at
22 least one extracurricular interscholastic athletics activity for
23 boys and at least one extracurricular interscholastic athletics
24 activity for girls in all seasons; prohibits member schools
25 that withdraw from an extracurricular interscholastic athletics
26 conference, without approval, from competing in any conference
27 for two years and from competing in a tournament sponsored by an
28 organization in the same activity for two years.

29 The bill requires the state board of education to adopt rules
30 to administer the bill's provisions.