



SOUTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

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TO: Superintendents, Principals and Athletics Directors

FROM: Dr. Jerome Singleton, Commissioner *J.S.*
SC High School League

DATE: January 24, 2024

RE: Region Placement for 2024-2026

The High School League staff has finalized the region placement for all schools beginning with the 2024-2025 school year. This classification/region placement will be in effect for two years.

The guidelines established by the Guidelines Committee served as the blueprint for schools' placements. To address travel and scheduling in some regions, some schools were moved to different regions for the sport of "football" only. Other modifications included different number of regions in different classifications and different number of schools in different regions.

The South Carolina High School League's Classification Executive Committee will meet to hear appeals regarding region placement between the dates of February 6 – 8, 2024. Exact dates and times will be determined by each Classification Executive Committee.

As we prepare for the appeals process, regions in each classification are asked to elect region coordinators that will serve on the Classifications Executive Committee. If your school intends to appeal its region placement, you are not a candidate for a region coordinator's position. Region coordinators are to be elected by **January 30, 2024**. It is the responsibility of each region to organize this election process.

The President of each current classification is responsible for organizing the process to elect new officers (i.e. President, Vice President, etc.) for the new classifications.

After the completion of all elections (Region coordinators and officers), the President of each new classification shall forward contact information of these individuals to the League Office no later than **1:00 pm, February 1, 2024**. These individuals will serve as the Classification Executive Committee of the new classifications.

Any school wishing to appeal its region placement to the Classification Executive Committee, please notify the League Office in writing no later than **1:00 pm, January 30, 2024**.

Please note:

The following rules and procedures shall apply to all appeals by member schools of their region placement after realignment has been completed, provided the Constitution and Bylaws allow such an appeal. A school seeking to change its region at any time between realignment periods shall be considered an appeal and follow these rules and procedures:

- a. When the League Commissioner publishes the completed realignment to the member schools, the Commissioner shall inform the member schools of any right to appeal and of the body or bodies designated to preside over each level of appeal, as may be provided and applicable under the current Constitution and Bylaws. The Commissioner shall also determine and inform the member schools of the deadline to commence a realignment appeal.
- b. To commence a realignment appeal, the superintendent or principal of the appealing school must deliver to the League Commissioner and the presiding officer [Classification(s) President(s)] of the body designated to hear the appeal a written appeal of its realignment placement on or before the deadline set by the Commissioner.

An appealing school seeking to change regions shall state the region the school seeks to leave, the region(s) in which the school wishes to be placed, and the grounds, therefore.

An appealing school may propose more than one alternate placement as part of its appeal. Proposed placements not included in the written appeal will not be considered at any appeal level. Schools may not present joint appeals.

There is no required format for written appeals, provided the appeal contains the information required under this section. An appealing school may submit additional documentation and information prior to a hearing to support the grounds for its appeal.

- c. At the same time the appealing school commences its written appeal in accordance with Section b., it shall also give notice of its appeal to other member schools by delivering copies of its written appeal as follows:
 - An appealing school, only seeking to change regions within the same classification, shall deliver a complete copy of its written appeal to the principals of all schools within its current region placement, and to the principals of all schools in the proposed region placement(s).
- d. If the appealing school fails to timely deliver its written appeal to a school entitled to notice under Section c, then, promptly upon discovery of the lack of notice, the school entitled to such notice, may notify in writing the Commissioner or the presiding officer of the body hearing the appeal of the lack of notice and its intent to respond to the appeal as allowed under these rules. The school alleging lack of notice must demonstrate that it did not receive timely notice and was denied the opportunity to respond in accordance with these rules and procedures.

When the lack of notice is raised prior to the realignment appeal hearing, then prior to hearing the appeal, the presiding body shall determine whether (i) the school received timely notice in accordance with Section c and (ii) the school has been

denied a full and fair opportunity to respond to the appeal in accordance with these rules. If the school demonstrates lack of notice and the opportunity to respond, the appeal hearing shall be delayed until the school entitled to such notice has had a full and fair opportunity to respond in accordance with these rules. The rescheduled appeal hearing shall proceed in accordance with all notice requirements and other rules and procedures contained herein.

When the lack of notice is not raised until after the realignment appeal is decided, the body who decided the appeal shall reconvene to determine whether (i) the school received timely notice in accordance with Section c; (ii) the school was unable to notify the Commissioner or the presiding body prior to the appeal hearing that it had not received the required notice; and (iii) the school entitled to notice was otherwise denied a full and fair opportunity to respond to the appeal in accordance with these rules. If the school demonstrates these three criteria, then the prior decision shall be vacated and the body who decided the appeal shall schedule a rehearing for the appeal, which shall proceed in accordance with all notice requirements and other rules and procedures contained herein.

- e. Member schools entitled to notice of the realignment appeal under Section c. may provide written letters of support or opposition to any appealing school. Letters supporting or opposing a realignment appeal must be signed by the superintendent or principal of the member school and placed on official letterhead and must set forth the grounds for support or opposition. Letters must be delivered to the appealing school, with copies to the presiding officer of the body designated to hear the appeal and the League Commissioner, as soon as practicable after delivery of the written appeal. A school may submit additional documentation and information in support of or in opposition to the appeal prior to the hearing.
- f. The body designated to hear the appeal shall prepare a written notice and an agenda for any meeting at which realignment appeals will be heard. The notice and agenda shall include the date, time, and location of the meeting, each appealing school to be heard at the meeting, and the placement(s) proposed by each appealing school. The notice and agenda for realignment appeal hearings shall be delivered to the principals of the appealing schools and the principals of all other member schools entitled to notice of the appeal under Section c. as soon as practicable but no later than two (2) business days prior to the date of the appeal hearing. A realignment appeal not included on the meeting notice and agenda shall not be heard or discussed until after a written notice and agenda has been provided to the schools as required herein.
- g. Any member school that has submitted a written letter of support for or in opposition to a realignment appeal in accordance with Section e., or any member school claiming it did not receive timely and/or sufficient written notice of the appeal in accordance with Section c., shall be heard at the appeal hearing provided the following conditions are met:
 - i. The principal of the member school notifies the presiding officer in writing at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the hearing that it wishes to speak at the appeal hearing, along with a brief explanation of the basis for the request and the speaker's name; and
 - ii. The comments by the member school at the appeal hearing are not duplicative of comments previously made by other member schools in

attendance. Two or more member schools may designate one person to speak on behalf of all the schools.

The provisions of this section do not prevent the presiding officer of the appeal hearing from reasonably restricting a member school's ability to speak in the interest of time, efficiency, or to otherwise maintain orderly proceedings.

- h. An appealing school must show "extraordinary circumstances," as defined in the League's By-laws, for an appeal seeking to set aside any written realignment guidelines or written criteria used to formulate the final realignment plan.
- i. The realignment appeal hearing shall be scheduled to allow sufficient time for compliance with all notice requirements and response deadlines set forth in these rules and procedures. The hearing shall be recorded, and the recording and all written appeals, letters, notices, and any other documents received by the presiding body shall be made part of the record of the proceeding. After the realignment appeal hearing, the presiding body shall inform the parties of its decision. Following any meeting at which any realignment appeals were heard, the presiding officer shall as soon as practicable but no later than three (3) business days after the meeting provide written notice of each appeal decision to all member schools entitled to notice under Section c. and to the League Commissioner.
- j. If there are subsequent levels of appeal provided by the Constitution and Bylaws, a member school may appeal an adverse decision by delivering a written notice of appeal to the League Commissioner and the presiding officer (SCHSL Executive Committee president or Appellate Panel chairperson) of the body designated to hear the next level of appeal within twenty-four (24) hours of the adverse decision that it intends to appeal. The written notice of appeal must also be delivered to all schools that previously provided letters of support or opposition in accordance with Section e. and all schools that were heard at the appeal hearing in accordance with Section g.
- k. Upon receiving a written notice of appeal, the League Commissioner (or designee) shall forward the record of the prior proceeding(s) to the body designated to hear the next level of appeal. At each subsequent level of appeal, the presiding body shall prepare and deliver a written notice of and an agenda for any meeting at which realignment appeals will be heard in accordance with Section f, and the hearings shall proceed in accordance with Section i.
- l. At each subsequent level of appeal, review shall be limited to only proposed placements that were voted upon at the first level of appeal. The appealing school may supplement its prior submissions with additional documentation and information to support its grounds for appeal. However, the appealing school cannot change or amend its appeal to include proposed placements that were not voted upon at the first level of appeal. Schools that provided letters of support or opposition in accordance with Section e., or that were heard at the appeal hearing in accordance with Section g., may supplement their prior submissions. However, no school may participate in the proceedings at a subsequent level of appeal if it did not provide a letter pursuant to Section e. or was not heard at the first level of appeal pursuant to Section g.
- m. Whenever possible, all written appeals, letters, notices, and other documents required under these rules and procedures should be delivered by email.

- n. Nothing in these rules and procedures should be interpreted to prevent a member school from having its appeal heard due to a technical violation of these rules that does not prejudice any other member school's rights to notice and to be heard as provided herein. However, at any level of appeal, the provisions of Section d. apply in situations where a member school alleges it has not received notice to which it is entitled under the rules.

If you have any questions about the appeals process, please do not hesitate to contact me.