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ASHEBORO - With the NCHSAA's announcement that the state will move from four to eight classifications beginning with the 2025-26 school year, there are plenty of questions that need to be answered.

Will the NCHSAA allow split conferences? With none of the eight classifications having 64 members, how will the playoffs work? Will every team qualify for the playoffs? Will they take the top 32 from each classification for the playoffs?

During the NCHSAA Board of Directors meeting on Wednesday, the board voted unanimously to adopt a recommendation from the realignment ad hoc committee to move from four to eight classifications in the next realignment.

NCHSAA member schools passed a bylaw requiring classifications be limited to no more than 64 schools. That means the NCHSAA's next realignment period would need a minimum of seven classifications.

Part of the discussion was that if seven classifications were used, each class would consist of 62 or 63 schools and with the new bylaw preventing classifications from having more than 64 schools, there would not be a lot of room for new schools to join the NCHSAA.

Going to eight classifications means each class would have about 54 or 55 schools and leave plenty of room for growth..

The NCHSAA approved the addition of four more schools for the 2024-2025 school year on Wednesday, meaning the NCHSAA will consist of at least 440 schools next fall.

The new realignment will be created based solely on average daily membership numbers from the 2024-2025 school year.

According to figures released, Asheboro High School would be in the 6-A classification; Randleman, Uwharrie Charter Academy and Southwestern Randolph would be in the 4-A classification; and Trinity, Wheatmore, Eastern Randolph and Providence Grove would be in the 3-A classification.



This is the first time the NCHSAA has expanded classifications since the 1969-70 school year. "The biggest thing for us, I don't mind eight classifications because it means more money to the state and more state champions, but where will they draw the line for East and West?" AHS athletic director Wes Berrier asked. "That's where things will get dicey for us."

AHS is projected to be the only 6-A team in its current conference, with the other five members dropping down to 5-A or 4-A. Teams that are expected to be 6-A for the 2025-26 school year in AHS' general area include Dudley, Eastern Guilford, High Point Central, Atkins, Williams, Southern Alamance, Western Alamance, Cedar Ridge and Eastern Alamance. Western Guilford, Northern Guilford and Southeast Guilford are also expected to be 6-A teams in the new realignment.

"We're waiting to find things out," Berrier said.

If split conferences are allowed, the current Piedmont Athletic Conference, which features all high schools in Randolph County except AHS, could continue to thrive.

"I haven't given it a lot of thought yet," Providence Grove Athletic Director Cody Moran said. "I know we voted for the expansion. The high school athletic association does a really good job."