Sioux City Community School District
Board of Education
ATHLETIC CLASSIFICATION EQUITY RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors for the Sioux City Community School District in the Counties of Woodbury and Plymouth, State of Iowa, feels the need for the Iowa High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) and the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union (IGHSAU) to begin the process for addressing how schools are classified for district and state athletic competitions, and,

WHEREAS, Iowa has changed, with the growth in poverty among students in urban communities and throughout the state significantly increasing, from 27% of enrolled students eligible for the free and reduced price lunch program in 2011 to 43% statewide in the 2018-19 school year. In the largest school districts in the state (with enrollments greater than 7,500), now 52.4% of enrolled students come from families eligible for free and reduced price lunch, and,

WHEREAS, the growth in students from other countries and continents has grown over this same time period, once 2.3% of total student enrollment in Iowa schools in 2000-01 and most recently reported in the Iowa Department of Education’s Annual Condition of Education Report, as 6.1% of enrolled students in the 2017-18 school year. Iowa’s largest school districts now have 7.9% of total enrolled students served in an English-language learner program, and,

WHEREAS, unlike the experiences of similarly sized private schools and some suburban districts, urban poverty and cultural barriers in serving ELL students create additional challenges. Those challenges are seen every day in the instructional environment, but also spill over into extracurricular participation. Urban schools and students experience barriers such as lack of transportation, waiver of student fees, stretched school district resources, lack of community capacity, and limitations affecting parental opportunities to invest earlier in skill development for students, to contribute resources, and to get students to practices, camps and competitions, and,

WHEREAS, extracurricular activities make a difference for community and student quality of life, provide opportunities for families, neighbors, and communities to celebrate their students, provide additional motivation for student academic success, teach students about goal setting, hard work, communicating with others, teamwork and tenacity. These are critical skills for successful citizens, and all students deserve to experience success in these endeavors, and,

WHEREAS, all students deserve a level playing field and fair opportunity to strive for success at a competitive level, and,

WHEREAS, significant differences in skill and ability create unsafe playing conditions for students, who, through no fault of their own, are not developed to a competitive level, and,
WHEREAS, recruitment of students and engagement in activities is further hampered by continued lack of success due to an unlevel playing field, and,

WHEREAS, there is a state and community public purpose in ensuring that students from low-income families and communities have every opportunity to engage in activities at school that build confidence, competence, teamwork skills, goal setting, and leadership abilities, as well as caring adult relationships and peer supports that inspire motivation to succeed academically, and,

WHEREAS, the IHSAA and IGSAU must recognize that enrollment size alone is not a sufficient predictor of creating a competitive experience, that low poverty levels impact the ability of affected school districts to be competitive with other similarly sized schools on a regular basis to deliver those ends to all students, and,

WHEREAS, poverty alone does not prohibit success or create an inability for students to be successful given adequate supports, such that past experience of success should also be considered as a relevant factor in determining competitive classifications, and,

WHEREAS, Iowa public school leaders request leadership and action from the IHSAA and the IGSAU to begin to address these inequities in school classification in a way that is transparent and fair for Iowa public school districts,

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that:

The Board of Directors of The Sioux City Community School District in the Counties of Woodbury and Plymouth, State of Iowa calls for a commitment from the Iowa High School Athletic Association Board of Control and the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union Board of Directors and Executive Directors to convene a committee charged with: evaluating the competitive needs of students and schools to foster success in athletic endeavors; addressing the inequities inherent in a classification system based solely on enrollment size without consideration of family and community capacity for support; and making a recommendation to a joint board of both associations to resolve this issue in the 2019-2020 school year.
Director McJaggart introduced and caused to be read the Resolution hereinafter set out and moved its adoption, seconded by Director Alarcon-Flory, after due consideration thereof by the Board, the President put the question upon the adoption of said Resolution and, the roll having been called, the following Directors voted:

Aye: Alarcon-Flory, Gleiser, Saint, McJaggart, Warnstadt, Nelson
Nay: NA

Passed and approved this 14th day of October, 2019.

Board President

Attest:

Board Secretary

Cynthia A. Lloyd