



What is a CIF Section?

The California Interscholastic Federation is the governing body for ALL High School Sports in the State of California. There are currently 10 separate CIF Sections that govern sports under the umbrella of the California State CIF. The Southern Section (SS) is the section that SMJUHSD schools currently belong to and the Central Section (CS) is where we are realigning.

The SS consists of schools ranging in geographical location from Paso Robles in the North, to San Clemente (223 miles – ONE WAY - from Santa Maria) in the South, to Temecula (245) in the Southeast, to Palm Desert (281) and Barstow (234) in the East, and ALL the schools in between those destinations.

The CS is located East to Northeast of Santa Maria and 95% of the schools we will be competing against are geographically located in Bakersfield (121 miles – ONE WAY – from Santa Maria), Fresno (162), or Clovis (179).

The SS has 585 schools and is by far the largest of ANY CIF Section with Sac-Joaquin Section (198 schools) the 2nd largest. The CS currently has 102 schools and is looking to expand to 121 in year 2018-19.

Each separate Section, under umbrella of State CIF, is charged with conducting play-offs, regulating schedules and eligibility, and general management of Interscholastic Sports Contests between member schools that belong to their respective Section.

When would this realignment take place?

The proposed realignment would take effect beginning with the 2018-19 school year.

Which Central Coast Schools are realigning?

RHS, SMHS, PVHS, Nipomo, Arroyo Grande, San Luis Obispo, Morro Bay, Templeton, Atascadero, Paso Robles, Mission Prep, St. Joseph, Orcutt Academy (13 total).

Santa Ynez, Cabrillo, Lompoc are remaining in the SS.

Is realignment move irreversible?

No. If there are unintended, negative consequences of realignment we would be able to return to the SS in 2022-23.

What are some of the key motivating factors behind seeking realignment?

League alignments/affiliations, travel, finances, competitive equity opportunities, acceptance/governance, play-off structure.

League alignments/affiliations – The majority of the 13 realigning schools' Athletic Directors have been pursuing, for several years, an Area (Central Coast Schools exclusively) Association by which Leagues can be formed and arranged based on the competitive equity of each separate sport. The process/rules of realignment in the SS have prohibited this from taking place while the process/rules of realignment in the CS would allow this to happen.

Travel – The enormous area of the SS requires us to travel great distances on very densely populated highways/roads. The traffic issues force us to release students/coaches from class as well as creating a dangerously long day. 7:00 PM start time for a play-off contest in Temecula, Palm Desert, etc., require us to depart approximately 9:00 AM and not return until approximately 2:00 AM. We believe that travelling many unnecessary miles as well as the drivers (usually coaches/teachers) being alert for 17 hour days puts our students at risk. CS, with much less traffic issues and shorter distances, we are confident for that same 7:00 PM start time we will be able to depart approximately 1:30 and return by midnight (longest estimate). This creates an approximately 6-7 hour shorter day than in SS.

Finances - The cost over time of the increased miles travelled as well as the necessity of staying in hotels because of the distances puts a strain on our budgets. When we compare hotel rates between SS areas and CS areas on typical, overnight stays (tournaments – play-off games), the cost difference is substantial.

Competitive Equity Opportunities - The SS has just begun to align their Team Sport Play-Off Divisions under the “competitive equity” model that the CS has been using for several years. This model was approved by 88% of the SS members and creates play-off divisions where the ONLY criteria used for placement is a specific team/sports performance (based on previous 2 years of competition) on the court/field. Factors such as enrollment and geographic location are no longer taken into consideration.

Consequences of this change, we are now subjected to MORE extensive travel in the play-offs because geographical (proximity) location is no longer a factor. Because the SS has so many schools, the “competitive equity” model does not apply to the individual sports (B/G XCountry, B/G Wrestling, B/G Golf, B/G Swim, B/G Track and Field) even though almost everybody agrees that this model is beneficial for ALL student-athletes. The consequence of this is dramatic. SMHS and PVHS, because of our large enrollments, are placed into Division ONE (highest) in individual sports, RHS is in Division 2. The standards for performance marks in sports like Track, Swim, XCountry in the SS D1 are the highest standards in the nation. This means that PV/SM student-athletes rarely, if ever, get the opportunity to participate in any post season competition regardless of how well they have performed in our area. RHS gets a few more, but not many. In the CS, individual sports are treated just like the team sports so our student-athletes will be placed into a play-off division where they will receive more opportunity.

Acceptance/Governance – We feel like anytime we propose legislation or seek any sort of compromise that makes sense for the diversity of the 16 Central Coast Schools, such as autonomy of area for re-leaguings purposes, we have no political clout. The power of governance in the SS lies in the South where the majority of the schools are located. The CS came to us with overtures of realigning, and we have asked for a few concessions (such as Area autonomy in aligning leagues) to be granted specific to our area. We look forward to being in a CIF Section where we are more accepted and appreciated so that we can participate in the governance process.

Play-Off Structure – Majority of SS play-off brackets have 32 teams (outside of football) or more. This requires a minimum of 5 rounds of play which increases cost and travel. The CS has 16 team brackets that require a maximum of 4 rounds of play. SS gives schools 20% of play-off gate revenue while CS gives back 30%. Host teams in SS play-offs are determined by a coin flip when both teams in previous round were either at home or travelling (which occurs often). The highest seeded team ALWAYS hosts in the CS which almost ALL Athletic Directors prefer. In CS, our schools could possibly host CIF Championship Games in Football, B/G Soccer, B/G Water Polo, B/G Tennis, and Softball. In SS all of those Championships are played at neutral site venues far away from our school communities.

Realignment seems to be VERY beneficial for SMHS and PVHS, but maybe not as much for RHS. Why can't RHS just stay in the SS and allow SM/PV to move?

Under that scenario there would only be four schools remaining which would not allow for a viable league under SS guidelines for RHS to participate in. This would require them to be placed into a league somewhere in Santa Barbara which would mean that they would have to travel to Santa Barbara for at least half of their league road competitions in ALL sports. The financial strain and travel risk this would create would not be practical. All CIF Sections differ slightly in the way that they govern schedules, eligibility, transfer rules, etc. Aligning same schools in a District in different sections would be a struggle at the administration level from eligibility, coaches' handbooks, student-athlete handbooks and processing students that desire to transfer to and from RHS, SM, and PV.

Are there ANY significant changes to any individual sport programs in realignment that would cause the coaches to be against moving?

There are 69 programs (23 at each HS) in the District. There are 65 programs whose coaches are either in favor or have no opinion of the move and 4 that are against. The ONLY significant change is that Girl's Water Polo Teams will move from the Winter Season (SS) to compete in the Fall Season in the CS. The powers to be believe that the Girl's Water Polo programs in the Southern Section will align with the rest of the State (this could happen as early as 2 years) by either changing their season to the Fall or the rest of the States' CIF Sections will move theirs to the Winter. Reason for this is that the State is very interested in creating Championships for ALL team sports and this can't be accomplished in Water Polo until everybody is realigned into the same season.

Is driving on the roads to the Central Section safe?

There always has been and always will exist a certain level of risk anytime we put our students on the roads. The 13 schools attempting to realign currently travel those roads to compete in the CS (non-league games and pre-season tournaments) approximately 95 times a year. The CS schools travel those roads here for same reasons approximately 85 times per year. In the last five years there have been no incidents/accidents.

By contrast in the past 4 years we have had two fatalities (PVHS boy and girls basketball player) on the 101 near Ventura and one fatality (RHS student) following a PVHS/RHS basketball game on Panther Drive.

Will our sport teams still be allowed to compete against Southern Section schools?

Yes. With the exception of Girls Water Polo (SS will not be in season), we expect that our schedules will remain relatively unchanged until each of the seasons end. We expect to play 80% of all of our contests on the Central Coast between our traditional schools and then when the play-offs begin we will drive East to compete instead of South when travelling for play-off competition.

Can you sum up and/or give the underlying reason that justifies changing CIF Sections?

This is a very complex issue with a very simple filter for making this decision. The Athletic Director's took ALL available information regarding competing in the Southern Section vs. competing in the Central Section as it applied to the basic question, **"WHAT IS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE MAJORITY OF THE STUDENT-ATHLETES IN THE SMJUHSD?"**

We came to the same conclusion that 10 other schools on the Central Coast came to, that it would be more beneficial for us to realign at this time with the CIF Central Section. It was not a very close decision.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this realignment or the process – please contact one of the District Athletic Directors.

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