

Montgomery Advertiser

HIGH SCHOOL

AHSAA private schools to discuss leaving organization, legal action



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Key Points

- The Alabama High School Athletic Association will separate public and private schools for postseason play starting in the 2026-27 season.
 - In response, some private schools are considering legal action or leaving the AHSAA to form or join a different association.
 - A meeting is scheduled for private school leaders to discuss their options following the AHSAA's ruling.
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The [Alabama High School Athletic Association](#) announced that it will be splitting member private and public schools for postseason and championship play for the [2026-27 and 2027-28 fall sports season](#).

The decision by the AHSAA Board of Control also removed competitive-balance factors and multipliers applied to private schools, and any CHOOSE Act funds will not impact athletic eligibility, all concerns raised by member private schools.

But the decision to split championship classifications also triggered a discussion that could lead to member private school leaving the organization or taking legal action. They have scheduled a Zoom meeting for Tuesday, Jan. 27, to consider options, Montgomery Catholic President Justin Castanza told the Montgomery Advertiser.

"Do we like the split? Do we take action now? Do we prep for total split in our own in two years?" Castanza said.

This past [December, three private school representatives](#) were given 15 minutes to present solutions to issues facing private schools, and although the multiplier and competitive balance issues have been done away with, many [now express concerns](#) over the decision to split private and public schools in championship play.

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The actions private schools could take include applying legal pressure, leaving the AHSAA for the Alabama Independent School Association (a Montgomery-based collection of private schools) or creating a new organization and inviting the AISA to join, according to Castanza.

"The private schools will continue to advocate for our students and what is best for each individual school," Castanza said. "Now that we know where the AHSAA has decided to move, we can do the same for our students and families."

AHSAA schools are not allowed to compete against AISA members in athletics. The AISA has been advocating for cross-play with AHSAA schools for more than a decade, and AISA executive director Michael McLendon believes if cross-play existed most of the issues that face the AHSAA today with private schools would cease to exist.

With AHSAA private schools still worried about the future within that organization, [McLendon told the Montgomery Advertiser on Jan. 15](#) that the AISA is always open to receiving schools to its membership.

"We remain open and welcoming to any non-public schools seeking membership and are committed to fostering a strong, collaborative association that represents the diverse needs of Alabama's private school community," McLendon said.