

Why was the policy changed?

The policy did not change. A clarification defining the guidelines of how schools may combine was required in order to keep the competitive integrity of the scholastic classes.

Can schools still offer multiple groups from the same high school?

Yes. Scholastic groups whose total membership are students from the same school, schools that directly feed into that school, or home-schooled students that reside within the school district boundaries are still classified as single schools and can offer multiple groups in different classes.

Do middle schools that feed into one high school count as combined schools?

No. Middle school students that directly feed into a single high school have always been allowed as part of a single high school. Schools using high school and middle school students are classified as single schools.

My school district allows students from vocational or charter schools within the school district to participate in extracurricular activities at my school. Does this make my group a combined school?

If you choose to allow students to participate from vocational and charter schools within the district in your group, you must apply to be considered a combined schools group.

My group is from a parochial school that has no school district. Does this make my group a combined school?

Depends on the situation. If all students attend a parochial school, then the group shall be considered as a single school. If the parochial school wishes to combine students from other schools, either public or private, they must apply for approval under the policy for combined schools.

Why does multiple groups from one school district affect a group's ability to combine students?

The intent of the combined school policy is to encourage the creation of color guards, percussion ensembles, and wind groups in areas that have limited resources. If a group desires to combine students within their district and creates multiple groups in the same division, this is not an appropriate use of the policy. In this situation, each school can and therefore should produce their group with only their students participating.

What is the definition of a "marching band program"?

A high school that offers a competitive field marching band program. Pep bands or other music education offerings that do not compete as a field competitive marching band are not considered as such.

What about smaller marching band programs who want to combine in the spirit of the policy?

The intent behind the combined school policy has always been to encourage smaller schools/educational institutions and to stimulate growth by allowing the combining of resources. In recent years, we have seen increasing number of groups (in 2019 over 80 groups) that decide to combine for a variety of reasons, most in the spirit of the policy. However, there have been instances of groups deciding to combine based on skill level or other factors which create an unfair competitive advantage.

Should groups with multiple marching band programs within their district who choose not to offer an indoor program at each school be allowed to combine?

WGI is sensitive to the challenges school districts are facing to fund extracurricular activities, which is why the policy was put in place. The intent of the combined schools policy is to encourage students with limited outlets in their district to participate. If two schools have large field competitive marching band programs and choose to combine out of expediency when each school could have their own group, that is not encouraging more participation by only have one combined group. That said, every district and situation is unique. Groups will now have the opportunity to provide detailed information, answer additional questions, and receive a decision based on circumstances rather than a broad policy that may have the opposite effect.

Is financial ability of participants a consideration for combining schools?

No. WGI cannot allow the individual financial considerations of participants to be a factor of determining competitive eligibility questions.

If my former combined schools group chooses to go independent, can we use district insurance?

Yes. Similar to the policy on insurance for university affiliated groups, if an independent uses the name of the school or educational institution, they may use that insurance to fulfill the requirement. If the group desires not to use the name of the school or educational institution, they may purchase insurance similar to any other independent group and use whatever name they choose. If school/educational institution insurance is used, the name of the group must reflect that legal entity.

Why was the earlier clarification only announced now?

While we can appreciate directors being proactive in planning for their group, WGI requires time post-season to collect and evaluate information, have meetings, and disseminate information. Just as groups use the off-season to plan for the next year, so must WGI. Policies and rule changes are always announced prior to registrations in September each year.

Why did only certain groups get the original notification of the new guidelines?

Only groups that identified as combined schools in 2019 received the original notice from the WGI office. This was similar to the recent changes that only affected university affiliated groups. In the future, WGI will send policy announcements to all groups.

Why did some groups receive an immediate decision on the previous online application to combine?

The first two questions on the previous online application to combine schools asked if there were multiple groups and marching band programs. If either question were marked “yes”, then the user was not allowed to proceed with the application because those answers disqualified the group to be considered as combined. We realize that groups were not given an opportunity to be heard and have revised the application to allow the user to explain why their group should be allowed to combine.

How will the revised application to combine students be evaluated?

Each group desiring to combine students from multiple schools must apply for that designation. As each situation is different, a variety of factors will be considered by a committee comprised of the WGI Directors of Color Guard, Percussion, and Winds overseen by the Chief Executive Officer. This is done in order to have a consistent approach between divisions and is somewhat similar to classification reviews during the season. If the committee cannot reach a consensus or feels the application warrants further review, it will be referred to the Executive Board of WGI.

Are there additional new requirements to combine students from multiple schools?

In addition to a more detailed application process, each district wishing to combine students must provide a letter from the district superintendent stating their district policy and why schools should be allowed to combine students. During the review process additional information may be requested from the group in order to reach a final determination.

Should I wait to register my group until I receive an answer on our application to combine students?

No. While the approval process to combine students is more detailed and can take up to 30 days for a decision, you may proceed to register your group for WGI events beginning September 16 even if a final determination has not been reached. No payment is due for 60 days after registration so you should receive a response to your application within that time frame. Do not delay registration as some events close rapidly. If for some reason your application is denied and you wish to withdraw from an event due to WGI’s decision, we will void your registration and issue a full refund if you notify us within 30 days after our final decision.

My group submitted the previous online application to combine students. Do we have to complete this new version?

Yes. Since we have expanded the information needed from groups and now require a letter from the district allowing multiple schools to combine, all groups wishing this designation must submit a new application.

When will the revised application to combine students be available?

[The revised application is available here.](#)

Where do I go if I have additional questions about the combined schools policy?

Directors may always contact Judy Bollman, Participant Relations Manager at office@wgi.org or by calling the WGI office at 937 247-5919. Groups may also contact the Director of Color Guard, [Dale Powers](#), Director of Percussion [Mark Thurston](#), or Director of Winds, [Wayne Markworth](#).