

District Realignment Meeting, 2/4/21

Meeting Notes

Attendees: Barrett Mohrmann, Chris Sherman, Dale Simpson, Ryan Thompson, Lisa Murray, Ken Heintz, Roger Hottinger, Jeff Moe, Chris Miller, Deanna Biros, Ron Lime, Chip Herr, Jim Bratton, Scott Sampson, Carla Mings, Phillip Freeman, Jeff Gill, James Dockter

- Chris Sherman started the meeting at 6:06 p.m.
- Carla Mings led the Pledge of Allegiance, the Scout Oath, and the Scout Law.
- “We’ll start with the five-district scenario.”
- “So, we spent a lot of time. This is our original. We had heard this doesn’t quite work right. We came about with 5B, the original one. We moved to looking at some of the school districts. The one we liked the best at the time was 5C. As we spent more time talking about 5C, it had moved Groveport and Madison into the central region. We also realized there’s a portion of this that’s in the west. In the east, this one had Pickerington and Reynoldsburg all the way down to Athens. We were looking at this and one of the benefits we thought about is that the five district split minimizes the splitting of districts. We also really talked a lot about if it’s more important to have TAY versus the number of units and number of youth. You can see that the central and east where we had recommended one DE is about 800-900 youth. The south has two DEs as well with about 1000 youth but it’s spread out much more geographically... That gives them the opportunity to work on their TAY. We had heard before that the basic question is how many DEs should we have. That’s about 50-60 units per DE. We really focused on the cub scout portion of TAY because that’s where the growth is going to come from. Our pros in this one is that it minimalizes the splitting of districts and in the short term we need to make sure the existing units are strong and that we can count on them to grow Scouting programs in the council. We also talked about supporting professional development. We were thinking about how does a DE progress within the Scouting ranks and they might report to a more experienced DE initially and then maybe they get a district of their own. It doesn’t mean that they’re isolated, but it supports a professional career. It also supports volunteers because we believe that the drive time is manageable. It’s still f to 60 miles from Delaware down to Gahanna, but we think it’s doable. The east also has geography. The north and the west are large but they’re good with the density of the programs. It’s not far between units. We still like this one but we heard how can you make the north a little bit smaller. Where we ended up is this. If we move the southern part of licking county into the east, it drops the number of units down to 106. One of these school districts doesn’t have any units attributed to it. This is an option we thought of. We looked at splitting some other things out. We looked at what school districts had more TAY opportunity. We’re not so hung up on the concept that this school district should be in or out. It’s primarily about the youth, but it’s also about how the

professionals are developing. We also wanted to think about the volunteers and their drive to the Scout store. We realized that the fundamental question is four or five districts. The boundaries can shift once we settle on that. We noticed that there's roughly 388 units, though some data Dale had was closer to 410-450. The other thing we thought about is that the OA alignment has to mirror this. It's probably easy to do. So, I think we're somewhat indifferent between 5C and 5F."

- "I think that's a really good summary of all the discussions. I think one of the key things we've heard is the preference to not split the districts up as much as we can. I think it brings together districts that can help support future growth."
- "It looks like the group was settling between those two versions. What would you summarize as the key difference?"
- "It's a real finite adjustment of numbers. As an overall approach of what we've laid out, any of those can be tweaked up or down."
- "Any questions, comments, or pushback from anyone about the five district scenario? Okay, let's get into the four district scenario."
- "Lois put a lot of time into this this week. She's on her way back from West Virginia. You're looking at our best solution. We talked about this quite a bit. We think a four district solution like what's on the screen is best. So, in our decision making here, there's no getting around the idea that we need to combine our southern territory... We think the Fayette and Pickaway solution is good, and we went through some scenarios, and Pickaway County might be a pivot point. As far as the rest of the map goes, the west and north, our pivot point is Dublin and Worthington. So, right now the map is drawn and how the numbers are calculated, we have Dublin going west and Worthington north. We thought about keeping them in Buckeye district, but it geographically didn't make a lot of sense. You can see that all of Arrowhead District went in the north. As you work your way into town, we have Gahanna going east. Bexley goes north. Reynoldsburg and Pickerington go east.
- "Whitehall went north."
- "We sent Canal Winchester west, so we're splitting Tri-Creek District there. Our goal was to balance TAY as much as possible and to minimize drive time. We think that given two DEs serving the area we can cut down on drive time. That's essentially what we're looking at. There are strategies where you can shift these inner communities to balance the TAY's. We think these pivoting communities are there in a way we can no effect the numbers to much. The TAY floats around 40,000-50,000. For the most part, everything stays similar to the numbers on the page. This is FOS money based on zipcode of the donor. That might not be perfectly correlated with what we have here. Lots of opportunity in the south and east to raise some more money."
- "Was there any other scenario that you looked at or just refining the 4D scenario?"
- "I think this probably makes the most sense of the scenarios we looked at. In the end, we're happy with this layout."
- "Any way we look at a four-district scenario, it's going to be difficult not to break up existing districts. I know one of the points that a number of us have heard is trying to minimize the number of districts that are broken up."

- “The ones that have to be broken up are the ones that are geographically inconvenient. We couldn’t think of a good scenario to keep Darby Creek together. There are probably scenarios where you take Ohio Valley and not split it up. Tri-Creek is in the middle of a populated area. We also talked about how to share the wealth a little bit.”
- “Chris said that people are asking us not to split up districts. Is there rationale for that or is it just familiarity?”
- “Most of the comments have been coupled with seeing the need to reduce the number of districts. The other positive feedback that I’ve received is understanding and appreciating the transparency level in the communications that we’ve done.”
- “We did specifically look at a scenario of combined districts and there’s a few things about this that we like. But this was probably our third favorite solution that we looked at.”
- “The two commissioners that I heard from that voice that they’d like to see districts not split up was based around roundtable staff.”
- “You look at that compared to the five district team’s model, they’re virtually identical. By doing that, you’re keeping the districts together. It’s the least disruptive. I’m concerned in the four model with how Licking is cut. By keeping Delaware and Licking combined, you’re bringing some strength to the Licking area. I think you have a lot of potential for growth in that area.”
- “RT said we did Bexley to the east and Whitehall to the North.”
- “Yeah, our north star for that conversation was just providing every district equitable footing to grow. They have the same opportunity on a five to ten year time frame. The volunteers were fairly divided. No one was assuming an FOS target that was out of reach.”
- “If there are things that you all think are better from another side of the council, there are things to move around and make refinements. It might be possible to keep more districts together.”
- “I look at the balance on the 4D, the TAY is as balanced as any option we’ve seen. That’s a real plus for growth. Can you toggle between that and the one Chip said would be less disruptive? That might have been B. How balanced is that one.”
- “Here’s the 4B. The TAY is a little bit different.”
- “Chip, you had brought up moving the strength of volunteers around a little bit. I know RT and I had a conversation about that. That the strength of district committees and commissioners teams should not be something we overlook. If we have an opportunity to improve district strength, we should be doing that. That’s one of the purposes of this to reallocate district resources.”
- “One of the topics we talked about was the TAY number and what it means. In the Perry County portion, that accounts for 5,000 of the 55,000 of the TAY. But, it’s being served by another council. And, how much do we want to bank on TAY if there are other programs out there that we’re competing against? Focusing solely on TAY misses what we have today and building stronger units.”

- “This 4B model is so similar to our five model, the only difference is that south central in 4B is split in half. You’re basically doing the same thing in this.”
- “I recall a lot of our conversation about Fayette and Pickaway. It goes back to relationships. Some of those people are going up to Columbus for events and work.”
- “Fayette wanted to go toward the south which was a surprise to me. When they were talking back and forth, I think was do they identify more with Columbus or with the south. Pickaway would go either way. Nobody is upset with what we’re doing.”
- “One of the things we need to worry about is where is the center of the most activity. It’s not directly related to those FOS dollars. Putting all of that in district doesn’t make a lot of sense. We have good volunteers from all over the council.”
- “I think there’s a lot of opportunity to strengthen that northeastern portion if we pull Licking into the north. There’s strength there to pull upon. I think in the 4B model makes for a stronger area. We’re picking up a lot of strength in Tri-Creek and pulling it down to the eastern district.”
- “Tri-Creek is growing into a stronger district. They’ve recruited a lot of new people. Taking from the experience of Licking and being able to translate that down into other areas. Each area provided a unique strength. Hocking Valley has a lot of value in program. Tri-Creek is strong in membership.”
- “Is there an understanding that a great deal has changed in the last ten years? Anything that stands out from the last study that is still applicable that we may have overlooked?”
- “The discussions are very similar to last time. Could someone talk us through the travel patterns in these different models? It’s all accessible right? I just want to be sure we consider that.”
- “My concern is just sheer distance in the south. You know most people won’t be driving from one end to the other. But put the professional in the middle, that’s a huge amount of windshield time in a south that big.”
- “The south seems so big, and the traffic in the north, I think that’s an important factor. Eagle boards of review, that has to be considered.”
- “Trying to figure out where the center of these districts is something important to think about. I think on the eastside it would be Pickerington. Maybe Waverly in the south. I agree traffic is a concern in the north.”
- “One thing to consider is that the advancement team in Hocking Valley. They have an eagle team in Athens, Fairfield, geography is going to shift and get large. We’re going to have to shift the way we’ve traditionally done things. In the east, in terms of travel, we assumed 70 as a dividing line. Communities will be organized to support scouting in those areas.”
- “I think this geography will force our hand on this. We need to get more people.”
- “We’ve had that concern in Darby Creek since the beginning and Darby Creek isn’t that big. We have a set of advancement advisors. I think it’s perhaps for the next meeting but one of the points we need to keep in mind as we prepare our recommendation is not just the district alignment but we’re also going to need to formulate the best practices for implementing this realignment for committees and commissioner teams. Not necessarily

the staffing, that will have to happen a bit later. We'll need to recommend some operating practices to the board to go with the roll out for whatever alignment model we recommend. I'm equally concerned about the drive time, but I think it's not often that anyone will drive from one extreme to the other. In a couple of these areas, that's still a bit of a drive. Maybe we rotate locations or have virtual access. The other point we should make sure is not lost is the advantage of having two DEs per district. That's a given with the four-district model. The load per DE is about the same, but there's still some advantage to professional development and covering those districts when one DE is not available. You also get some cross expertise between DEs. Any other comments or questions for the four-district scenario?"

- “My thought on this is we don't have to like it. We have to figure something out. I don't know if there's a perfect solution. We just need to package this in the way that makes the most sense. The reality is there's going to be constraints to this and I don't think anyone will be particularly thrilled. I do want to point out that in conjunction with this we need to start looking at technology adaption. How do we provide additional competency with regards to gathering and communicating? We need to start looking at pieces of technology to use in these districts to make roundtable available to as many people. We're never going to get back to what we think of as normal. We're tired of this and may want to show up in person, but there are outlets we can use in involving folks.”
- “Any other comments or questions? I think we need to leave this evening with a decision between the four or the five. I don't think we need a decision on an exact alignment. That's in part because going forward in the next couple weeks, there's enough work we need to do that's centered around if we have a four or five district model. We need to start looking at those best practices and the fact that we may have three districts...”
- “I know this isn't the key factor, but do we have the end of 2020 fiscal report?”
- “It's right around a \$200,000 deficit. Many if not all non-profits had a deficit.”
- “That's got to be in the mix. How we manage costs.”
- “We've scaled our current staff accordingly. Right now, we're committed to the number of DEs that we have.”
- “We've talked about the professional development. I'd like your thoughts on that. Is it important to have professional development opportunities?”
- “I think a consistent model with two district executives with growth opportunities in moving back and forth is what our staff would prefer.”
- “That's key. We have to look at it from the professional staff.”
- “I'd defer to RT on that, but that's my own opinion.”
- “I don't want an implication that I'm going one way or the other, but I'd agree with Jeff's assessment. We're going to support the direction that this committee goes.”
- “From a generational point of view, millennials like the team approach versus working independently.”
- “I can say from being a DE in a very large district, it would be great to have someone with experience. If we can package the right combination of folks in a district, that would be great. There's a lot of advantages. I don't know if we've done any studies nationally.”

- “Any background what similar councils are doing right now with single or double DEs?”
- “James Dockter and I came from a council with two DEs per district. Dara who just transferred out to St. Lois is in a three person district. Councils can stretch resources a little more effectively when they have two representatives in an area. Generationally, those applications that come in are in the 23-28 age range. That’s who’s applying for the job.”
- “I’d be concerned that we’re providing the door on someone who might excel in the single DE system.”
- “I don’t know that’s a very big exposure. On a journey to excellence, the guidance was one executive for every 15,000 total available youth.”
- “Should we do a poll?”

Four-district model votes: 10

Five-district model votes: 5

9: Said multiple staffing was the key factor in their vote

2: Said unit density was the key factor in their vote

2: Said unit keeping units together was the key factor in their vote

1: Said TAY was the key factor in their vote

1: Said drive time was the key factor in their vote

- “I think we need to take into account what we discussed this evening and refine that down, overlaying the metric data on top of the four-district model. When we make our recommendation, we need to include that metric data and how it plays out. Then we need to begin working on what we consider to be the best practices for implementing the four-district model.”
- “My thought is Ken and Chip were drivers of the five district. David and Lois were drivers of the four district. Let’s put the four together. I know there were a lot of questions about the 4b and 4d.”
- “Before we really start doing our slice and dice, we should find a common data set that all agree on.”
- “One of the files in the membership folder has mapping of public schools.”
- “Are there any updates from any of the metric groups?”
- “Nothing to report yet.”
- “I think it probably makes sense to have a group look at district committee best practices and another look at commissioner best practices. The other thing we have going out any day now is the survey on unit needs and expectations of districts. That should give us a set of data on what the units expect and need that we can plug in. RT, any thoughts?”

There were a couple of changes we wanted to make, but otherwise, those two surveys are ready to go?”

- “The plan is to pull the trigger on surveys tomorrow. We’re on track to have results to review on the 18th.”
- “Dale, maybe we can spend some time starting to look at commissioner practices. Chip, in whatever time you have left, start working with district chairs from this group and other.”
- “Those districts are going to Key 3s or all registered members?”
- “We have that slotted to go to one leader in every unit. The needs and expectation survey is going to the unit Key 3s. Deanna any thought there?”
- “You might have a unit where the scoutmaster is more willing to fill it out or the committee chair might be. It may be the committee chair is best because they’re more the administrative person.”
- “We have a firm deadline on the survey results. All we could do was give people the opportunity.”
- “We have the key 8 meeting coming up. We should make sure what we’re ready to share.”
- “Would it be a good idea to put a communication around what we talked about this evening?”
- “I’d rather talk to people first rather than put it in an email.”
- “I know that generated a lot comments that I received, thanking us for the transparency. Deanna, I think there was part of a powerpoint that you put together for the last scouting family forum that I would like to use in the Key 8 when we talk about the district alignment.”
- “I think we should be prepared to show some of the four or five model work. There’s no reason we can’t show them.”
- “I think we made that commitment early and we’ve received a lot of positive feedback about that transparency.”
- “Any other discussion this evening?”
- “Now that we’ve made a decision, have we pulled the trigger too early without feedback from the surveys?”
- “I don’t think the surveys were asking 4 or 5, but best practices for operations.”
- “I think that the unit needs and expectations survey will provide with a lot of data that helps us understand how to implement whatever alignment we come up with. I think that set of data will help us create the best practices for this new district alignment. I suppose if we pulled the trigger too quickly it’s that we didn’t have the opportunity to have the Key 8 earlier where we could present what we’re looking at. My preference might have been to take what we considered and throw it to the Key 8. I think I agree with Deanna in presenting what we were looking at and get some feedback.”
- “We don’t have to keep four as the recommendation if there’s an overwhelming feedback that that’s the wrong decision.”
- “You need to be very clear up front.”

- “One thing to continue to highlight is that we’re doing a study. We’ll put what we did in front of the board but ultimately they’re going to pick and make a decision.”
- “I’ve underscored that every district has a vote on this. Their district chairs are on that board. Any other comments this evening?”
- “I would just echo thanks and we appreciate everyone’s time.”
- Chris Sherman ended the meeting at 8:00 p.m.