

**WGI Color Guard Advisory Board
June 5-6, 2026
Las Vegas, Nevada
PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION**



WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Proposal #1

Eliminate seeding for performance times and instead, switch to a computer generated random draw.

Submitted by Melissa Nielsen, Farmington Lakeville Area Guard A (IA)

Rationale: Seeding is an out dated practice with numerical analysis prior to the use of Competition Suite. Further analysis of the data shows that judges are likely to be heavily influenced by seeding numbers and the way groups are distributed across the rounds. The average difference is seeding vs final placement in Scholastic A finalists is 11.84. This is a significant difference that potentially eliminates groups that should earn a spot in the next round. Further, no groups that received their seeding score in the first three weeks have continued to finals in the last two years. The data shows that groups that receive their seeding score in the last week are more likely to go to finals than those in the first three weeks. This creates inequity for those groups that are only able to attend a regional early in the season, and puts them at a competitive disadvantage.

By switching to a random draw, units will have a more equitable opportunity for their program to be evaluated because of an unfair bias due to seeding scores will be removed. This promotes the WGI mission statement aspect of providing inclusion and helping groups develop. This makes the competitive experience higher quality and helps to bridge the gap between competition and education.

Financial Impact: None, in fact, it will save time to simply run a list through a generator than it does to calculate seeding and placement in rounds.

Administrative Review: None indicated

Proposal #2

Eliminate the rankings as a form of seeding for world championships and implement a process that would seed groups based on the results from the previous season. A group's postmark date will be used to seed them into the rounds.

- **Previous years' finalists would be seeded in the bottom of a round**
- **Semi-finalists in the middle of the round**
- **All other entries at the beginning of the round**
- **Groups who are reclassified or promoted into a round will be placed in the semi-finals grouping**

This will allow groups to know their championship prelims schedule by February 15th and prelims rehearsal schedules by March 1, allowing for better planning for travel during championship week.

Submitted by Dale Powers, Director of Color Guard

Rationale: Currently groups are seeded based on the rankings, which are in many cases exaggerated since not all guards compete the same weeks. Some guards' scores are from week 1 or 2 and then 1.5 points is added per week while others compete in the last week or two and that actual score is what is used. The proof that this system does not work fairly is that many guards that are ranked much lower make it to finals while other ranked in single digits fail to make semifinals or finals.

Administrative Review: None indicated.

Proposal #3

Scholastic A Class – World Championships Seeding Policy

Preliminary Round Assignment:

Seeding from Scholastic A Class Prelims will be used solely to assign groups into performance rounds. Once groups are placed into rounds, performance order within each round will be determined by a single random draw.

Semi-Final round assignments and performance order will follow the same seeding procedures established for the 2026 season.

Submitted by Randy Nelson, Orlando Visual (IA)

Rationale: Scholastic A Class remains one of the most impacted divisions by “luck of the draw” at the WGI World Championships. Seeding differentials are often extremely narrow—frequently separated by as little as one hundredth of a point.

This proposal is designed to reduce the influence of chance in the competitive process and place greater emphasis on performance quality. By distributing groups into rounds based on seeding, and then randomizing performance order within those rounds, the system balances structural fairness with competitive integrity.

It is also important to recognize that the adjudication community at this level represents the highest standard in the marching arts. These judges possess the expertise and discernment necessary to evaluate performances accurately without reliance on a top-half/bottom-half performance split.

Financial Impact: None

Administrative Review: *None indicated.*

Proposal #4

Eliminate the second step in the process of World Championship prelims scheduling that seeds individual prelim rounds by ranking scores into first and second half draws.

Submitted by Chris Wing, Greenfield-Central HS (SO)

Rationale: Currently, based on the Policy Manual and as explained by Dale Powers in the video shared before Championships, guards are placed in rounds by ranking scores to balance the rounds. After those rounds are built, groups are then put into first half/second half random draw based on their ranking score inside the round. This second step is where I have concerns. Balancing the rounds is a good thing. It allows every round to feel competitively balanced, as well as providing a functional way to assign performance slots that feels as equitable as can be.

It's the second step that is concerning, and the data from the 2026 Championships helps show this. We are putting these groups in a first half/second half slot based on scores, sometimes from 2 months earlier. This allows for a natural bias to exist, that the earlier groups in the rounds aren't as competitively viable as the groups in the second half. If we can trust our judges to see what is presented to them in April, this should be an unnecessary step that sets a bias between groups competing in this event.

In 2026, groups performing in the first half of the rounds scored, on average, 9.3 points lower than the second half. The individual class disparities were:

IW - 12.85
SW - 10.2
IO - 8.7
SO - 6.75
IA - 8.6
SA - 8.7

There is no need to send groups into blocking based on scores that could be from February. Even with the 1.5 point bump per week in advance, groups are still very different in April than they were in February. The idea of balancing

rounds is fine, and I don't wish to address that. It's the second step that this proposal looks to eliminate from the process.

Financial Impact: None

Administrative Review: *None indicated*

Proposal #5

Teams without a seeding score—due to the 400-mile rule or international status—will be placed within an appropriate competitive range as determined by the administrative team. These placements will not displace any team that has earned a seed through regional scoring. Instead, an additional team will be added to the respective round in which they are placed.

Submitted by Randy Nelson, Orlando Visual (IA)

Rationale: This approach creates a more equitable competitive seeding structure. Teams that earn a seed through regional scoring should not be displaced by teams without a qualifying score. While special circumstance teams—such as those impacted by the 400-mile rule or international participation—should be accommodated, those accommodations should not come at the expense of teams that have earned their placement through competition.

Financial Impact: None

Administrative Review: *None indicated*

Proposal #6

Require one designated prelims competition site for each class, with the exception of SA, which will remain split due to the number of participating groups.

Submitted by Eric Babula, Norwin HS (SW)

Rationale: Currently, IO prelims are split across multiple sites and performance times, which can create varying competitive environments throughout the day. Utilizing a single designated prelims site for each class may help create a more consistent Championship experience, support adjudication continuity, and provide more comparable performance conditions.

This approach could also offer scheduling efficiencies and potentially allow prelims events to conclude earlier.

Financial Impact: Significant - Costs for an additional venue rental

Administrative Review: *An additional venue could cost upwards of \$60,000 per day, excluding any additional personnel expenses such as judges or contest staff required to support the extra site. The total estimated cost would be at least \$70,000–\$80,000 per day.*

Proposal #7

Any competitive class within Winter Guard International that contains more than sixty (60) participating units during a competitive season shall be required to utilize a fourth competitive round at World Championships. The additional round shall be implemented in a manner determined appropriate by WGI administration and may include, but is not limited to:

- **An additional preliminary round**
- **Expanded semifinal procedures**
- **Split preliminary competitions**
- **Qualification rounds designed to reduce the number of units advancing between stages**

The structure of the fourth round must prioritize:

- **Performer safety**

- **Adjudicator consistence and effectiveness**
- **Adequate venue flow and scheduling**
- **Competitive consistency and accuracy**
- **Appropriate adjudication conditions**
- **Reasonable warm-up, transit, and performance timeline for participating units**

Submitted by Melissa Nielsen, Farmington Lakeville Area Guard A (IA)

Rationale: As participation numbers continue to grow in certain classifications, extremely large competitive fields create significant challenges related to scheduling, adjudication consistency, performer fatigue, and event logistics.

Classes exceeding sixty units often experience:

- Excessively long competition days
- Increased performer exhaustion and safety concerns
- Reduced consistency in adjudication across large time spans
- Venue congestion and logistical strain
- Less equitable performance conditions between early and late performing groups
- Increased adjudicator fatigue caused by extended periods of continuous evaluation

Adjudicator fatigue can directly affect competitive accuracy and consistency. Long evaluation days require judges to maintain sustained concentration while assessing dozens of performances with precision and consistency. An additional round would reduce the number of units evaluated during any single session, helping minimize fatigue-related inconsistencies and improving the overall quality and reliability of adjudication.

Adding a fourth round would improve the championship experience for performers, staff, adjudicators, and event personnel while supporting both participant well-being and competitive integrity.

Intended Effect: If adopted, this rule would:

- Improve safety and scheduling conditions for performers and staff
- Reduce adjudicator fatigue and support more consistent evaluation
- Enhance adjudication consistency and competitive accuracy
- Reduce logistical strain on large championships events
- Create more equitable competitive conditions across large classes
- Allow WGI championships to better accommodate continued participation growth

Financial Impact: Potentially somewhat considerable.

Administrative Review: *The proposal lacks sufficient specificity to accurately assess the overall economic impact, particularly regarding whether implementation would require an additional site or a restructuring of existing schedules. If a new site is required, estimated costs could range from \$70,000–\$80,000 per day, which may be offset through increased registration fees.*

Proposal #8

Increase the number of judges for World Championships, allowing for another full panel to maximize the performance opportunities and potentially alleviate judges’ decision fatigue throughout the world championship week.

Submitted by Melissa Nielsen, Farmington Lakeville Area Guard A (IA)

Rationale: Many of the scheduling complications are a result of limited judges for World Championships. If we increase the number of judges, it will allow more units to perform, again supporting WGI’s mission of to inspire and educate young performers around the world through unparalleled competitions and events, emphasizing inclusion, personal development and community.

Financial Impact: \$5k-10k that covers cost of lodging, travel and stipend. Some of this can be offset by the increase of units that are able to compete, paying fees and supporting ticket sales for subsequent events.

Financial Impact Review: *The proposal does not specify the number of additional judges being requested, limiting the ability to fully assess the financial impact. For each additional championship judge, estimated costs include approximately \$2,000 per individual for travel, lodging, meal expenses, and judge fees depending on the number of groups adjudicated, for a total of \$10,000 per additional panel, which could be offset somewhat by additional registration fees. Furthermore, the proposal does not address how the requested additions would align with or impact the current championship adjudication progression structure, which utilizes separate preliminary, semifinal, and combined finals panels.*

REGIONALS

Proposal #9

When multiple Winter Guard International regional events are scheduled within close geographic proximity during a competitive season, those events shall be reasonably distributed throughout the season in order to promote equitable adjudication exposure and competitive visibility for all participating units.

WGI shall make reasonable efforts to:

- **Avoid concentrating multiple nearby regional events within a narrow late-season timeframe immediately preceding Championships**
- **Distribute proximate regional events across early-, mid-, and late-season scheduling windows when practical**
- **Consider geographic access disparities between regions with numerous nearby events and regions with limited regional availability**
- **Promote balanced opportunities for adjudicator exposure, performance evaluation, and competitive development across all participating units**

In developing regional schedules, WGI may consider:

- **Venue availability**
- **Travel demands**
- **Regional participation density**
- **Competitive balance**
- **Staffing and adjudicator availability**
- **Operational and financial feasibility**
- **Nothing in this rule shall require equal numbers of regional events in all geographic areas, but scheduling practices should seek to minimize competitive advantages or disadvantages created by concentrated event timing and proximity.**

Submitted by Melissa Nielsen, Farmington Lakeville Area Guard A (IA)

Rationale: Units located in areas with multiple nearby regional events often receive substantially greater performance visibility and adjudicator exposure, particularly when several events occur close to Championships. Conversely, units located in areas with limited regional access may have fewer opportunities for evaluation, feedback, and competitive development throughout the season.

Concentrating multiple nearby regionals late in the season can unintentionally create:

- **Increased competitive visibility immediately prior to Championships**
- **Greater familiarity between adjudicators and frequently competing units**
- **Uneven opportunities for score progression and competitive refinement**
- **Disparities between regions with dense event access and those with limited access**

- Distributing regional events more evenly throughout the season helps create a more balanced competitive environment while still supporting regional participation and event growth.

Intended Effect: If adopted, this rule would:

- Promote more equitable competitive visibility across geographic regions
- Reduce advantages created by concentrated late-season regional access
- Encourage balanced seasonal development opportunities
- Improve fairness in adjudication exposure leading into Championships
- Support a more consistent and equitable competitive structure throughout the activity

Financial Impact: None other than what exists today.

***Administrative Review:** The proposal lacks sufficient specificity regarding its stated goals and objectives. Several concerns identified in the proposal are already addressed through the existing event calendar planning and evaluation process, making it unclear what additional administrative changes are being requested. If approved, the proposal would be referred to the Governance Committee for review across all events and divisions before consideration by the Board of Directors.*

Proposal #10

Regional A (RA) class units participating in a two-day WGI Regional event shall be scheduled across both days of the event, with preliminary competition on Day 1 and finals competition on Day 2, consistent with the scheduling structure afforded to all other classes of competition. In the event that logistical or scheduling constraints require RA preliminary and finals competition to be conducted on a single day of a two-day Regional event, those units shall be charged the single-day Regional entry fee rather than the two-day Regional entry fee. Additionally, RA class finalists shall be included in the awards ceremony alongside all other competing classes, regardless of the day on which their competition concludes.

Submitted by Lawrence Ball, Providence Catholic HS (SRA)

Rationale: During the 2025 competitive season, Regional A finalists were scheduled to compete in finals alongside higher classification units and were included in the awards ceremony with their peers. In the 2026 season, RA units had their preliminary and finals competition consolidated onto a single day of a two-day Regional event, while being assessed the full two-day Regional entry fee. Furthermore, RA finalists were excluded from the unified awards ceremony, resulting in a largely empty venue during their recognition.

This scheduling and fee structure created two significant concerns for RA member units. First, it established an inequitable financial burden, as smaller programs in the Regional A class were charged a two-day event fee despite competing for only one day. Second, the exclusion of RA finalists from the shared awards ceremony diminished the sense of community and recognition that is central to the WGI experience, leaving members of these units feeling undervalued within the activity.

The intent of this proposal is to ensure that all participating units, regardless of classification, are treated equitably in both scheduling and financial assessment, and that the communal awards experience is preserved across all classes.

Financial Impact: If RA class units are scheduled across both days of two-day Regional events as originally intended, there is no financial impact to WGI or Event Partners, as registration fees would remain consistent with current two-day pricing. If scheduling constraints require RA units to compete on a single day, those units shall be charged the single-day Regional entry fee (\$345) rather than the two-day Regional entry fee (\$445), resulting in a reduction of \$100.00 per affected unit per event. As a goodwill gesture to units affected during the 2026 season who were charged the two-day fee while competing in a single-day format, it is further proposed that those units receive a \$100.00 credit applicable toward registration for any WGI Regional event in the 2027 competitive season.

***Administrative Review:** With Sunday Finals at Regionals already overscheduled, implementation could reduce opportunities for finalists in other classes competing for World Championships. Additionally, the automated online*

registration system would require programming updates to support a revised pricing structure, resulting in additional costs.

Proposal #11

This proposal recommends that WGI implements a system for regional events in which official WGI-trained staff or volunteers are responsible for monitoring timing in body and equipment warmups.

Submitted by Destiny Mardis, Maryville HS (SO)

Rationale: While host schools play a vital role in running regional events, assigning warmup to the hosting school's volunteer students and parents can result in reduced or uneven warmup times, timing inconsistencies, and disruptions in the warmup flow.

Financial Impact: The financial impact of this proposal is expected to be minimal. Potential cost could include: training for staff or volunteers, small stipends or incentives for staff or volunteers. Cost mitigation options could include: utilizing staff or volunteers that plan to help at WGI World Championships, ask the hosting schools to have their student or parent volunteers complete an online training for volunteering at regionals.

***Administrative Review:** The proposal does not define what would constitute "small stipends or incentives," making it impossible to determine the potential financial impact or implementation costs associated with the recommendation. However, the cost to develop and distribute a training video outlining warm-up procedures for Event Partners would be minimal.*

CLASSIFICATIONS

Proposal #12

Increase Championship Promotions for Scholastic Classes only to:

SA = top 10 to SO

SO = top 5 to SW

Submitted by Eric Babula, Norwin HS (SW)

Rationale: This adjustment would help encourage continued competitive progression within the Scholastic classes. Finalist groups within these placements frequently demonstrate scoring achievement that suggests readiness for the next classification, and expanded promotion opportunities could help support long-term class movement and development.

Financial Impact: None

***Administrative Review:** None indicated.*

Proposal #13

Change Bullet Point 1 of Section 9.1.3, World Championship Promotions, to read as follows:

The top five (5) finalists from A Class, the top three (3) finalists from Scholastic Open Class, and the top one (1) finalist from Independent Open Class at the World Championships will be promoted to the next higher class of competition. The next two (2) highest-placing units in Independent Open Class will be referred for review for possible promotion to the next higher class. In addition, Scholastic A Class and Independent A Class color guards that qualify as finalists for three (3) consecutive years will also be automatically promoted.

Submitted by Geoffrey Sperling, ORIGINS (IW)

Rationale: The current post-season promotion policy is based primarily on a single season's competitive result. While placement can reflect progress and potential within a given year, it is not always a reliable indicator of

readiness for sustained performance at the next competitive level. Advancement between classes often requires longer-term organizational development that may not be fully captured by a single competitive outcome.

The leap from Independent A Class to Independent Open Class is not equivalent to the leap from Independent Open Class to Independent World Class. Likewise, the criteria required to be competitive in World Class are significantly more complex, nuanced, and difficult to master than those in Open Class. World Class demands a higher level of consistency, design sophistication, performance demand, and organizational infrastructure, all of which typically develop over an extended period of competitive experience rather than a single season of success.

A review of Independent Open post-season promotions into Independent World Class from 2019–2024 includes 12 units that placed in the top three at Independent Open and were subsequently promoted into Independent World Class. The competitive outcomes for these units in the immediate following season include 3 World Class Finals appearances, 3 Semifinal placements, and 6 units that did not advance beyond Prelims or became inactive.

When evaluating Semifinal advancement as a consistent benchmark of competitive integration within Independent World Class, 6 of the 12 units did not reach Semifinals in their first season following promotion.

This distribution suggests that, while there are clear examples of successful transitions into Independent World Class, a substantial portion of automatically promoted units do not reach the midpoint competitive threshold in the following season. This raises a broader structural question regarding whether post-season promotion from Independent Open is consistent with competitive readiness for Independent World Class, and whether the current policy continues to serve its intended purpose within the evolving competitive landscape of the activity.

This proposal is not intended to restrict growth or limit opportunity, but rather to acknowledge that the transition into Independent World Class is fundamentally different from movement within or into other classifications. It recognizes that some organizations require additional time in Open Class to develop the consistency and infrastructure necessary to be sustainably competitive at the World Class level.

Historically, WGI has adjusted classification and promotion policies as the activity has evolved. I would argue the transition from Independent Open to Independent World in 2027 is fundamentally different from what that same transition represented in the mid-2000s. Over time, the leap to be competitive in the Independent World Class has grown substantially. As such, I feel it is appropriate to revisit whether post-season automatic promotion from Independent Open continues to serve the long-term competitive health of both the units and the class structure as a whole.

Finally, because Independent World Class has been operating near full capacity during the championship season, refining post-season promotion criteria could create additional flexibility for the classification review committee to reclassify units during the competitive season without creating scheduling constraints within Championship preliminaries.

Financial Impact: TBD

Administrative Review: *None indicated.*

Proposal #14

Revise mid-season reclassification as follows:

The Head Judge may recommend any group for reclassification review at a WGI Regional based on current adjudication criteria. All reclassification recommendations will be evaluated following the current reclassification procedures. If approved, the group is reclassified. If denied, the group is not eligible for further review for the remainder of the season.

Submitted by Eric Babula, Norwin HS (SW)

Rationale: The current process can feel like a penalty for top-performing groups at Regionals. Allowing the designated Head Judge to initiate recommendations based on real-time adjudication criteria would create a more focused and consistent review process. This approach could also help reduce the overall number of reviews conducted throughout the season.

Financial Impact: None

Administrative Review: None indicated

Proposal #15

If a color guard is reclassified within seven (7) days of their respective state circuit championship, that ensemble may elect to remain in their original circuit classification for the state event, rather than being required to immediately perform in the newly assigned class. The following WGI contest, they will be required to perform in their newly assigned class.

Submitted by Ryan Long, Carroll HS (IN) (SA)

Rationale: In the current structure, reclassification timing can create significant challenges for scholastic programs, particularly when it occurs immediately before a state championship event.

For example, Carroll High School's color guard competed in prelims as a Scholastic A ensemble and was scheduled to attend a Winter Guard International (WGI) regional the following week in the same class. However, based on performance at that regional, the group would have been subject to potential promotion, with notification occurring as late as Thursday, just two days prior to their state circuit finals on Saturday.

Financial Impact: None

Administrative Review: None indicated

ADJUDICATION

Proposal #16

Utilize a 130/70 scoring system in the Independent World Class.

Submitted by Tim Mikan, Fantasia (IW)

Rationale: In the independent world class (IW), there is an implicit assumption training. The rulebook states, "...we assume that choices are drawn from all possibilities, as this class strives to set new standards," which seemingly allows for greater emphasis on imagination and innovation.

In reference to the premise of training in the A classes, it is also pertinent to consider the inverse and emphasize the expanded choreographic and design choices for IW. Given that we are utilizing performers with exceptional skills, it is uncertain whether there has been a time when recognition of derived achievement has been more crucial. This cannot be accomplished without a certain level of excellence, and that should continue to be rewarded. However, we should promote these teams to lead the way for creation and possibility and encourage them to explore the unknown.

Striking a balance between the what and how on the open sheets, and the emphasis on excellence in the A sheets, is a relatively obvious reaction to the focus of those classes. With IW tasked, or at very least expected to explore the new and examine the unknown, prioritizing the 'what' over the 'how' is then axiomatic – this would help remove limits from the explorative process as things that are 'new' often require time to master. In its current form, It seems there is a lack of encouragement to explore at the risk of being overvalued in excellence and undervalued in vocabulary.

Financial Impact: Limited. Possibly any costs associated with trialing.

Administrative Review: Financial impact is expected to be limited, with potential costs primarily associated with piloting or trial implementation of the proposal prior to broader adoption.

Proposal #17

Limit rounds to 8-10 groups.

Submitted by Melissa Nielsen, Farmington Lakeville Area Guard A (IA)

Rationale: Limiting the rounds to 8-10 groups adds a deeper level of integrity to the judging process. It is taxing for anyone to watch 12 groups in a row without a break, and particularly taxing for judges who are tasked with assigning scores. By allowing for smaller rounds, judges are more likely to avoid scorecapping, and fatigue in the judging process thereby allowing for a more accurate read on the shows. This provides more fidelity in the scoring process and will benefit units who may have been at a disadvantage because of their performance slot in a large round. It benefits the judges by giving them an opportunity to refresh more often. Any judge will tell you that there is a noticeable difference between a round of 8 and a round of 12 in any large contest.

We understand that this rule (8.2.3) was passed last year, however, it was not followed for all the rounds. We are proposing that we follow the rule in the future. If there is a situation where there are only 2-3 teams that are outside of the 10 group rule, defer to greater quantity of smaller rounds instead of larger rounds.

If there is a need for an exception, then the teams potentially affected by the change must be notified in an agreement with the exception.

Financial Impact: This should have minimal financial impact. Round breaks could be shortened slightly, but because WGI rents the facility for the day, it shouldn't have much impact.

Administrative Review: Administrative impact is expected to be minimal if judge breaks between rounds can be shortened within the existing schedule structure. However, if judge break durations cannot be reduced, implementation could extend overall event timing and potentially reduce the number of groups that can be accommodated within the schedule. Additional input and evaluation from Judge Administration would be necessary to determine operational feasibility.

Proposal #18

All official adjudication meetings, training sessions, educational seminars, critique instruction, and judge development programs conducted by Winter Guard International shall be made accessible to judges affiliated with recognized WGI circuit partners, either:

- In person,
- Through live virtual access, or
- Through recorded distribution, as determined appropriate by WGI administration based on logistical, financial, legal, or operational considerations.

WGI may establish reasonable procedures for:

- Registration and attendance
- Confidentiality requirements
- Distribution limitations
- Educational use restrictions
- Access eligibility standards for partner circuits and adjudicators
- Nothing in this rule shall require WGI to disclose confidential personnel matters, private evaluations, disciplinary discussions, or proprietary materials unrelated to adjudicator education and training.

Submitted by Melissa Nielsen, Farmington Lakeville Area Guard A (IA)

Rationale: Consistent adjudication standards across the activity benefit performers, instructors, circuits, and judges alike. Many local and regional circuit judges seek greater access to the educational resources and philosophy used within WGI adjudication systems, but opportunities for participation are often limited by geography, scheduling, or availability.

Providing broader access to official adjudication training:

- Promotes consistency in scoring philosophy and terminology
- Improves judge education and professional development throughout the activity
- Strengthens relationships between WGI and partner circuits
- Encourages transparency and shared educational standards

- Helps develop future adjudicators at both regional and national levels
- Allowing recorded or remote participation also increases accessibility for judges who may not have the financial means or scheduling flexibility to attend in person.

Intended Effect. If adopted, this rule would:

- Expand educational access for circuit partner judges
- Improve adjudication consistency across affiliated circuits
- Support development of future WGI adjudicators
- Increase transparency in adjudication philosophy and training
- Strengthen collaboration between WGI and its partner circuits

Financial Impact: Some minor impact due to time to record the session and make live.

***Administrative Review:** Depending on the scope of the recordings, costs could range from minimal to substantial. WGI would also need to determine appropriate broadcast standards when sensitive discussions occur. If approved, the proposal would be referred to the Governance Committee to determine applicability across all divisions, which may require additional approval by other divisions.*

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Proposal #19

Any proposal submitted for a vote before the membership, board, or authorized voting body shall require an affirmative vote of no less than two-thirds (2/3) of votes cast to be adopted.

Submitted by Ron Nankervis, Chief Executive Officer

Rationale: A 2/3 majority vote requirement has worked well in the Percussion and Winds divisions by helping ensure that important decisions reflect long-term support, not just reactions to the issues or emotions of a single year. Using the same standard in the Color Guard division would help keep all divisions aligned and reduce the chances of conflicting proposals being passed from year to year.

***Administrative Review:** None indicated.*

Proposal #20

Modify the process for instructors to join the Steering Committee from an election to an appointment. The verbiage would read as follows:

1.23 Membership

Ten (10) individuals:

Five (5) instructor representatives appointed by the Color Guard Education Coordinator.

Two (2) adjudicator representatives appointed by the Chief Judge.

Each instructor and adjudicator position will be for a two-year term. Terms will be staggered for continuity. Education Coordinator (1) who will serve as chairperson.

Chief Judge (1)

Director of Color Guard (1)

Appointed instructor representatives will be voting members and will vote on all issues before the Steering Committee. Appointed adjudicator representatives will be limited to philosophical discussions regarding the adjudication system and discussions relating to general adjudication and will be non-voting. Chief Judge and Director of Color Guard will serve in advisory roles for all aspects of the committee and will also be non-voting.

Instructor and adjudicator representatives must meet the eligibility requirements set forth by the WGI Board of Directors.

The Steering Committee functions as a resource jointly in common responsibilities during the off-season. All communication between instructors and administrators other than philosophical issues should cease once the season is underway to avoid any appearance of undue influence unless approved by the Chief Judge or Director of Color Guard. If a Steering Committee instructor has a judging concern, they should use the established procedures as any other active instructor.

Submitted by Tim Mikan, Fantasia (IW)

Rationale: This proposal would align the process for joining the Steering Committee with the appointment of judge representatives. It is challenging, if not impossible, to fully assess a candidate's potential in an advisory board setting. The Education Coordinator would possess greater insight into individuals interested in serving our community both in the requisite capacity and ability compared to a group of people who may not be familiar with the candidates or the comprehensive requirements of the position. Although the steering committee's primary responsibility is to govern the division between meetings of the Advisory Board and serve as a focal point for guidance and direction, it is not merely a representative position. To contribute effectively to the discussions necessary for active leadership in the direction of the color guard activity and the development of its philosophy and scoring, the steering committee members must possess a certain level of skill and an acquired knowledge of the relevant philosophy.

It would be logical to assume that this position would be filled through the a standard application process. Interested candidates would submit their applications (possibly to the Education Coordinator, Color Guard Division Head, and/or Chief Judge?) and if selected, they would be scheduled for a follow-up interview with the relevant individual(s), such as the Education Coordinator (and others?)

Financial Impact: None.

Administrative Review: *If approved, the proposal must then be reviewed by the Governance Committee and subsequently ratified by the Board of Directors, pursuant to the Board's authority over all changes to WGI governance. If ratified, the change would take effect in 2027.*

Proposal #21

Increase diversity of thought, experience, viewpoint, and opinion by opening membership to BoD and Steering Committees to anyone who is interested

Submitted by Melissa Nielsen, Farmington Lakeville Area Guard A (IA)

Rationale: "The best ideas often come from the most unexpected places"

Current policy restricts participation on the BoD and Steering Committees to individuals affiliated with a unit who participate in WGI events. But there are many talented, creative people who may be education coordinators in local circuits, judges, former instructors or designers, etc. Removing this current limiting membership eligibility requirement allows for more people to be involved. WGI should not restrict opportunities for participation, at any level, whenever possible.

Financial Impact: None

Administrative Review: *If approved, the proposal must be reviewed by the Governance Committee and subsequently ratified by the Board of Directors, pursuant to the Board's authority over all changes to WGI governance. If ratified, the change would take effect in 2027.*

Proposal #22

If a unit is reclassified for reason besides an official WGI promotion, that unit is moved to the bottom of any existing waitlist, regardless of priority placement due to previous classification.

Submitted by Melissa Nielsen, Farmington Lakeville Area Guard A (IA)

Rationale: We have learned from the past that the current rule is ambiguous and there is room for a variety of interpretations. Additionally, if a unit is reclassified because of a rule violation, they move to the bottom of any waitlist. Technically, you are entering that class as of the reclassification date.

Financial Impact: None

Administrative Review: *None indicated*

Proposal #23

Whenever a waitlist is utilized for participation in any class, division, regional event, or championship event conducted by Winter Guard International, the waitlist shall be publicly posted and maintained in a manner accessible to participating units.

The published waitlist must include:

- **The order of units on the waitlist**
- **The date and time each unit was added to the waitlist**
- **Computer-generated timestamps for all entries and modifications**
- **Notification of any movement, advancement, withdrawal, or removal from the waitlist**

All timestamps shall be generated through WGI's official registration or event management system and may not be manually altered except to correct verified administrative errors.

Updates to the waitlist shall be made publicly available within a reasonable timeframe following any change in status.

WGI may withhold sensitive contact information or other nonessential private data while still maintaining transparent waitlist order and timestamp records.

Submitted by Melissa Nielsen, Farmington Lakeville Area Guard A (IA)

Rationale: Waitlists play an important role in managing event capacity, but limited visibility into the process can create confusion and concerns regarding fairness, prioritization, and administrative consistency.

A publicly posted waitlist with automated timestamping:

Increases transparency and accountability

- Ensures confidence in the integrity of the registration process
- Provides participating units with clear and accurate status information
- Reduces misunderstandings and disputes regarding placement order
- Establishes a verifiable record of registration timing and waitlist movement

Because participation opportunities are often limited and highly competitive, units should have access to a transparent and consistently managed process whenever waitlists are implemented.

Intended Effect: If adopted, this rule would:

- Create a transparent and publicly verifiable waitlist system
- Improve confidence in registration and placement procedures
- Reduce disputes regarding waitlist order and advancement
- Standardize waitlist management practices across WGI events
- Provide participating units with timely and reliable registration status information

Financial Impact: 0

Administrative Review: *The proposal incorrectly states that the financial impact is zero. There are significant database and website programming costs that have not been considered. WGI would need to investigate the feasibility of the proposal as it relates to required programming changes and obtain a formal quote for the necessary*

work before the full financial impact can be determined, which could be significant especially across all divisions of WGI, if approved by the Governance Committee, and ratified by the Board of Directors

Proposal #24

Implement an all-black dress code for Timing & Penalty judges.

Submitted by Eric Babula, Norwin HS (SW)

Rationale: At regionals, specifically, T&P judges frequently move around the perimeter of the performance floor to assess boundary violations. More streamlined and neutral attire could help minimize unintended visual distractions and better maintain focus on the performers and program presentation. Can provide examples where bright attire was utilized as needed.

Financial Impact: None

Administrative Review: *The proposal does not specify whether judges would be expected to use personal clothing or whether WGI would provide branded shirts or apparel. If WGI were to provide branded attire, the financial impact could be relatively minimal, estimated in the range of approximately \$1,000–\$1,500, depending on if the Board of Directors felt it appropriate to implement across all divisions.*

Proposal #25

Standardization of Timing & Penalty Judge Placement and Pre-Show and/or Post-Show Accessibility Procedures:

Amend the WGI Color Guard Rules & Policies Manual to explicitly define and standardize the physical positioning and operational responsibilities of the Timing & Penalty (T&P) judge at all WGI-sanctioned and circuit partner events.

The manual should specify that the T&P judge is to be positioned at the front sideline performance timeline, preferably at or near the center point of the floor, ensuring consistent and equitable visibility of the performance area. This designated position shall serve as the official location for:

- ~Determination of participant visibility at the start of performance
- ~Oversight of interval timing and setup procedures
- ~Communication regarding sound system usage during setup
- ~Administration of timing and penalty responsibilities

This language should further establish this placement as the operational standard for all affiliated circuits, regional events, and championship events to ensure procedural consistency across all levels of participation.

Submitted by Joey Kidd, Mill Creek HS (SA)

Rationale: While many/most WGI-sanctioned events and partner circuits currently practice this procedure, the existing manual language does not explicitly define this as a universal operational standard. As a result, implementation may vary between regional circuits, local partners, and event hosts, leading to inconsistencies in judge accessibility, visibility determinations, and communication procedures.

This proposal is not intended to create a new practice, but rather to formally codify and standardize an already widely accepted best practice to ensure all circuit partners operate under the same clear expectations.

Formal clarification would:

- ~Create consistent operational procedures across all WGI and partner circuits
- ~Eliminate ambiguity in T&P judge placement and participant communication
- ~Ensure equitable visibility adjudication for all competing ensembles regardless of location
- ~Strengthen consistency between WGI Championships, Regionals, and local circuit implementation

- ~Improve professionalism, transparency, and participant confidence
- ~Provide clearer guidance for training judges, event staff, and circuit administrators

By explicitly defining this standard within the manual, WGI reinforces national consistency and ensures that all affiliated organizations uphold the same procedural expectations, regardless of competitive level or geographic region.

(Related sections)

3.2 All judges except for the Timing and Penalty judge will be positioned in the audience viewing area.

5.7.2 A participant is considered visible as determined by the Timing and Penalty judge viewing from the front sideline

6.6 Competing groups are allowed to use music and/or recorded narration as part of their setup process through the house sound system after one (1) minute of interval time. If a group chooses to use music or recorded narration, they must communicate this to the Timing and Penalty judge. The group is responsible for any music direction required at the sound table, which must be given in person.

Financial Impact: None

Administrative Review: *None indicated.*

Proposal #26

WGI to create a dedicated section on its official website titled “Show Insights.” This platform would allow participating ensembles to submit an optional narrative explaining the artistic intent behind their production.

These insight submissions would be publicly accessible to audiences, educators, and performers.

Key Features of Unit’s Insights:

- **Optional Submission by Ensembles**
- **Units may submit a short written explanation**

Optional Creative Elements that Could Included:

- **Show concept and inspiration**
- **Symbolism, themes, and emotional intent**
- **Music selection and meaning**
- **Costume and prop design choices**
- **Hidden details or “easter eggs” within the production**

Submitted by Susan Hanggi, Marcus HS (SO)

Rationale: This is designed to bridge the gap between designer intent and audience understanding, particularly as productions become more abstract, layered, and concept-driven.

As WGI productions become more complex, audiences often lack access to the designers’ intent unless they have personal connections or follow designers’ social media.

A centralized “Show Insights” platform would:

- Enhance audience engagement by deepening understanding of performances
- Increase accessibility by making artistic intent available to all
- Support education by providing real examples of design and storytelling
- Preserve artistic intent as part of WGI’s historical archive

This addition would strengthen WGI’s role as both a competitive organization and a leader in the performing arts.

Financial Impact: 0

Administrative Review: *The proposal is incorrect in stating no financial impact as there would be a significant cost to provide this service, depending on the scope of services offered across all three divisions (1,700+ groups) and the IT infrastructure required to support and maintain the pages referenced above.*

Proposal #27

WGI shall recognize and preserve the autonomy of local and regional circuits in the administration and enforcement of their own competitive rules, policies, classifications, adjudication systems, and event structures for circuit-operated events.

Participation in a local circuit shall not require full alignment with WGI classifications, adjudication procedures, or competitive formats, provided that:

- **Circuit policies do not compromise participant safety or violate WGI eligibility requirements for national competition participation.**
- **Units entering WGI-sanctioned regional or championship events comply with all current WGI competitive rules and classification procedures at the time of entry.**
- **WGI shall not mandate that local circuits mirror WGI classification structures, promotion policies, or adjudication systems for local competition.**

Submitted by Melissa Nielsen, Farmington Lakeville Area Guard A (IA)

Rationale: WGI serves as the governing body for national-level competition. Local and regional circuits, however, operate within vastly different competitive environments, membership sizes, educational goals, and demographic realities. In order for circuits to grow and effectively serve their communities, they must retain the flexibility to govern their own local competitive ecosystems.

Allowing circuits autonomy in their execution of rules and policies encourages innovation in:

Competitive formats
Adjudication systems
Classification structures
Educational models
Membership development strategies

This flexibility enables circuits to better support the health, growth, and long-term sustainability of their local activity.

Competitive classifications are not always directly transferable between local and national levels. For example, a unit may appropriately compete in Open Class within a local circuit due to the competitive depth and design standards of that region, while still being more appropriately classified as A Class at the national WGI level. Local circuits are often best positioned to evaluate their membership within the context of their own competitive landscape.

It is reasonable to assume that units choosing to participate in national WGI competition understand the expectations and standards associated with that level of participation. Responsibility for preparing and educating units on competitive readiness should primarily rest with the unit itself and its local circuit—not WGI.

By allowing circuits to independently manage local competitive nuances, WGI can remain focused on its core responsibility: administering a fair and effective national championship environment rather than attempting to standardize widely differing local competitive realities.

Financial Impact: None

Administrative Review: *WGI has never required Circuit Partners to follow WGI policies or procedures and in fact, encourages them to make decisions that best serve their members. However, color guards participating in WGI must comply with Rule 1.5, which requires competing groups to compete in the same or higher classification at WGI events as they do in their local circuit.*

RULES

Proposal #28

Allow schools that qualify for Combined Schools to have an additional team in RA.

Submitted by Melissa Nielsen, Farmington Lakeville Area Guard A (IA)

Rationale: Currently, scholastic units that qualify for a combined schools exception are not able to have any additional teams. They are limited to one team, and must include all students in the program on that team. The rationale for this policy is to prevent schools from gaining a competitive advantage, however the reality is that schools that need to combine in order to provide opportunities for students are already at a significant disadvantage. The other obstacles that combined schools encounter far outweigh the slight competitive advantage that could come from allowing one additional team in RA.

Schools that are approved for a combined accommodation are doing so in order to provide opportunities for students who do not have access to a winter guard experience. These programs are often in small circuits that lack support and access to resources that would allow them to be competitive at a high level.

When limiting these programs to one team, it becomes a safety and equity issue. Units are forced to either turn students away who are not ready to compete in A class, and thereby, remove access to the activity, or they accept students onto a team that is not developmentally appropriate for the student, and the student becomes a safety liability on the field.

A solution to this is to allow combined programs to have a team that competes in the RA class, in addition to one team in a WGI Finals-level division (A, Open, World). This allows the program to still provide opportunities for students to perform at an appropriate level for their skill, as well as helping students develop skills that will allow them to grow and develop in order to perform at higher levels.

WGI's mission statement includes a declaration of a commitment to inclusion. By putting fledgling scholastic units in a situation where they are forced to either compete independently against groups that are college-aged, or limiting who is able to join their scholastic team, WGI is creating a culture of exclusion at the unit level. The people impacted by this the most are the students who are turned away from a program and not given the opportunity to develop and participate in the activity. It puts directors and coaches in an impossible position, where they have to choose between doing what is best for students and doing what is best for the team- a conundrum that is painful for educators to try to resolve.

Financial Impact: Minimal financial impact to WGI. This may actually bring more revenue to WGI because it would allow for the creation of additional groups that would quite possibly attend regionals. It would bring more spectators to regionals, and would spread the opportunity to more students, thereby increasing tickets sold and an increase in revenue to WGI.

Administrative Review: *Any scholastic eligibility proposals passed by any Advisory Board is referred to Governance Committee and then the Board of Directors to maintain equity across all three divisions within WGI.*

Proposal #29

Amend Rule 2.1 to include minimum vertical clearance requirements for the designated competition area at color guard regionals.

Proposed Language Added to 2.1:

“The competition area must provide a minimum unobstructed vertical clearance of 20 feet throughout the entirety of the designated performance space.”

Submitted by Chris Cook, Orlando Visual (IA)

Rationale: Current rules establish minimum floor dimensions for the competition area but do not address vertical clearance within that space. As a result, some regional sites include overhead obstructions within the 60' x 90' performance area, such as overhangs.

Due to the nature of our activity, these obstructions create safety concerns and can result in damage to host facilities. Establishing a minimum vertical clearance standard ensures that the competition area is fully usable and provides greater consistency across regional events.

The recommended vertical clearance of 20 feet was chosen to account for common overhead obstructions, such as fully raised basketball goals, that may exist in facilities meeting WGI's current minimum ceiling height requirement of 25 feet. This standard is intended to reflect a practical and achievable usable performance space already present in many venues used for indoor athletic competition.

Financial Impact: N/A

Administrative Review: *Approval of this proposal could result in the loss of a current event site if suitable replacement sites cannot be secured.*

Proposal #30

Include the following or similar clauses under 4.15 Eligibility and 5.4 Eligibility in the WGI Policy Manual: "All groups must be an active member of a WGI Circuit Partner if their hometown is within 400 miles of any WGI Circuit Partner to be eligible."

Submitted by Thomas Logan, Sulphur HS (SA)

Rationale: These clauses serve to protect the circuit partners and their interests. Without this clause, performing groups can leave circuit partners to perform with unaffiliated performing arts associations/circuits while maintaining their eligibility for WGI, costing circuit partners the income that those groups would bring in the form of their dues and attendance/purchases at Circuit Championships. As the role and expectations of circuit partners expands in WGI, it is important for WGI to work hand in hand with Circuit partners to ensure consistency and favorable financial outcomes.

Financial Impact: Minimal, unless there are a substantial amount of units that are not affiliated with a circuit partner

Administrative Review: *Any scholastic eligibility proposals passed by any Advisory Board is referred to Governance Committee and then the Board of Directors to maintain equity across all three divisions within WGI.*

Proposal #31

Reduce the interval times for each class by one (1) minute for Open & World Classes, and 30 seconds for A Class

- **World Class: from ten (10) to nine (9) minutes**
- **Open Class: from nine (9) to eight (8) minutes**
- **A Class: from eight (8) to seven and one half (7:30) minutes**

Submitted by Dale Powers, Director of Color Guard

Rationale: This proposed change would reduce the overall length of a show day by as much as one hour at Regional prelims and approximately 35 minutes on Regional finals days on Sunday. At World Championships, the change would reduce schedules at each show site by approximately 60–70 minutes.

We continue to face significant challenges with completion times at most two-day events. Because Regional Plus Finals are featured to use double panels, we are increasingly unable to get judges and event staff home on the same day as the event. Our operational goal is to consistently complete Sunday events by 3:00 PM.

If this proposal is not adopted, we will be forced to consider one or more of the following alternatives:

- Eliminate double panels at Regional Plus finals
- Reduce the number of finalists advancing in all classes at Regional Plus events

Example of potential Finals advancement changes:

- World Class: from 100% to 80%

- Open Class: from 75% to 60%
- A Class: from 50% to 40%

These adjustments would allow us to maintain the same number of groups advancing to Championships while still shortening event days, creating additional flexibility for weather delays, and allowing Semi-Final and Finals schedules to be completed earlier.

Additionally, many groups are already performing within the newly proposed one-minute interval reduction:

- SA: 80%
- IA: 87%
- IO: 68%
- SO: 87%
- World: 87%

This data demonstrates that the proposed interval adjustment is already achievable for most participating groups and would create meaningful operational improvements across the season.

Financial Impact:

Administrative Review: The financial impact would be minimal, as WGI could potentially accept a few additional entries into prelims based on the class composition of registered groups at certain smaller regional events.

Proposal #32

All Timing & Penalty judges shall maintain audio recordings during performances involving manual timing responsibilities.

Timing & Penalty judges shall verbally identify and record:

- initiation of timing (when the start button is pressed),
- stopping of timing (when the stop button is pressed),
- timing interruptions,
- extraordinary timing circumstances,
- and significant delays affecting performance start or continuation.

These recordings shall serve as the official audit resource for timing inquiries and extraordinary circumstance reviews.

If a recording is unavailable, corrupted, incomplete, or does not clearly document timing administration, the Contest Administrator and Director of Percussion, or designated representative, may review whether sufficient documentation exists to validate the assessed timing penalty.

Submitted by Kuntal Shah, Enloe Magnet HS (SA)

Rationale: Practice: This procedure shall apply to all WGI Regional and Championship events utilizing manual Timing & Penalty administration. Audio recordings shall be maintained in accordance with existing WGI timing review and inquiry procedures.

Standardized verbal timing documentation strengthens the integrity, consistency, and auditability of the existing Timing & Penalty recording process while preserving current adjudication authority and timing procedures.

Clear timing documentation also reduces ambiguity during post-performance review and creates a more transparent process for ensembles, adjudicators, and contest administration.

Financial Impact: This proposal utilizes the existing Timing & Penalty recording infrastructure already implemented by WGI and therefore requires minimal operational or financial investment beyond procedural standardization and judge training. This protects WGI and the T&P judge by providing auditable information for any appeal.

Administrative Review: No financial impact, but an addition to the duties of the Timing and Penalty judge.