

CENTRAL CITY INVITED TO JOIN THE LOU PLATTE CONFERENCE

As the 2015-2016 School Year came to a close, Central City Public Schools received an invitation from Lou Platte Conference officials, officially asking Central City to join the Lou Platte Conference for the 2017-2018 School Year. Major college conference changes of recent years have trickled down to the high school ranks, as declining enrollment, logistics, and constantly changing demographics have changed the landscape of Nebraska. The State of Nebraska has seen multiple schools change conferences in recent years, and many more changes will be made in the near future.

The Central Conference will already see changes for the upcoming school year with the departure of Fairbury to the Southern Conference and the addition of Adams Central to replace Fairbury. The Central Conference currently consists of Grand Island Northwest, Crete, Schuyler, Seward, York, Aurora, Holdrege, Columbus Lakeview, Adams Central, and Central City. Only Central City, Adams Central, and Columbus Lakeview are consistently classified by the NSAA, as Class C, with the other members of the conference classified as Class B.

Central City had previously involved themselves in discussions with the Lou Platte Conference, but at that time, the Lou Platte was not looking to expand. Adams Central has left the Lou Platte for the 16-17 School Year and Kearney Catholic will be leaving the conference at the conclusion of the 17-18 School Year. The Lou Platte is made up of Class C-1/C-2 schools including: Ord, St. Paul, Gibbon, Wood River, Ravenna, Centura, Doniphan-Trumbull, and Loup City-Arcadia. Amherst has also received an invitation along with Central City to join the conference.

15-16 Three Grade Enrollments According to Conferences

Central Conference	Three-Grade Enrollment	Lou Platte Conference	Three-Grade Enrollment
GI Northwest	532	Ord	148
Crete	423	<i>Central City</i>	135
Schuyler	393	St. Paul	135
Seward	354	Gibbon	121
York	309	Wood River	116
Aurora	295	Ravenna	109
Holdrege	283	Centura	107
Columbus Lakeview	236	Doniphan-Trumbull	105
Adams Central	230	Loup City/Arcadia	105
<i>Central City</i>	135	<i>Amherst</i>	85

Conference decisions sometimes lead to difficult discussions in regards to school size, competition, logistics, pride, and tradition. These are all important aspects to consider when considering conference alignment. The Central City district must balance tradition and pride of being a long-time member of the Central Conference with taking a real look at current student numbers and the ability to put students in competitive, successful scenarios.

Central City's 16-17 student enrollment will be the lowest that will be seen in many years to come and the NSAA number of 135 will place football in Class C-2 (typically C-1) and track in Class C (typically B). In future years, the district's NSAA number will increase into the 160s and with continued growth, the district's NSAA number will continue to increase, but will still be well below the next smallest school in the Central Conference. While competing in the Central Conference and competing against schools two and three times larger, Central City has not seen a conference championship since the 2013 wrestling conference championship and the girls have not won a conference championship since the girls golf team won in 2011.

LAST CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP ACCORDING TO ACTIVITY

Play Production – No Championships

Speech – No Championships

Girls Cross Country – No Championships

Boys Cross Country – No Championships

Softball – No Championships

Volleyball – 2001 West Division Champions and 2001 Tournament Champions

Prior to 2001, 1993 Tournament Champions

Girls Golf – 2011 Meet Champions

Prior to 2011, no championships

Girls Basketball – 2006 West Division Champions

No Tournament Champions

Prior to 2006, 2005 West Division Champions

Boys Basketball – 1990 West Division Champions

No Tournament Champions

Prior to 1990, 1977 West Division Champions

Wrestling – 2013 Conference Champions

Prior to 2013, Conference Champions 2008-2011

Girls Track – 2004 Conference Champions

Prior to 2004, 1999 Conference Champions

Boys Track – 1951 Conference Champions

Prior to 1951, 1950 Conference Champions

The Central City District has been very happy with the Central Conference and discussions of departing the conference have nothing to do with any type of discontent, but strictly a look at numbers and putting students in successful situations. District officials have until January 1st, 2017 to make a decision on the Lou Platte invitation. If Central City accepts the invitation, they will become official members of the Lou Platte Conference and begin competition in that conference for the 17-18 School Year.