

Agenda for the Board of Education Meeting, 5:00 PM
Monday, November 24, 2025 at the Central Office at the Falls City Middle School

The agenda sequence is provided as a courtesy. The board reserves the right to consider items in the sequence it deems appropriate. Therefore, we encourage patrons to attend the meeting from the beginning.

1. **Business Items:**
 - 1.1. Roll Call, Open Meetings Act Notice, and Pledge of Allegiance
 - 1.2. Approval of Absences
 - 1.3. Approval of Agenda
 - 1.4. Public Comment is limited to the items on the agenda
2. **Old/New Action Items:**
 - 2.1. Discuss and take action on going 11 man or 8 man for football for the next two-year cycle.
3. **Executive Session: Requested by member, approved by majority, as per statute**
4. **Adjournment and Next Meetings: The next regular monthly Board of Education meeting is scheduled for December 8th, 2025, at 7:00 P.M. in the Central Office at Falls City Middle School. Regular and special meeting agendas are kept in the Office of the Superintendent. Board Committee meetings TBD.**



FALLS CITY

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Special Board Meeting - November 24th, 2025

Recommendation to the Board of Education

Regarding the Structure of the Football Program: 8-Man vs. 11-Man Football

From: Ethan Sullivan, High School Principal and Gale Dunkhas, Assistant Principal/AD

Overview

After extensive review of participation data, safety considerations, competitive outlook, and stakeholder feedback, including parents and students, we present the following recommendation regarding whether Falls City High School should participate in 8-man or 11-man football for the upcoming NSAA cycle.

Our recommendation is rooted in two priorities:

1. Ensuring the safety of our student-athletes, and
2. Rebuilding and sustaining a healthy, positive football program with room for growth.

Participation Numbers and Trends

The data reflected in our parent meeting, paired with updated enrollment and participation information, clearly frames the current reality of our program.

Key Points

- At the time of the parent meeting, 26 students were signed up for football next year, with only 8 of them being juniors or seniors. The program will be dominated by underclassmen.
- Since then, participation has increased from 26 to 28, with several additional students considering joining.
- The overwhelming consensus from student meetings is that our kids simply want to play football. They are not choosing between the sport and another activity based on the 8-man vs. 11-man format.
- Although a handful have personal preferences, no student reported that the format decision would prevent them from playing.

This feedback reflects an important truth: our kids value participation over format, and our job is to structure a program that allows that participation to be safe, meaningful, and sustainable.

Safety and Developmental Considerations

The parent-meeting data paints a clear picture of the risk in continuing 11-man football next cycle:

- The team will have very few upperclassmen to anchor varsity competition.
- Underclassmen would be placed into high-impact roles against older, more physically developed opponents.
- Coaches and parents consistently expressed concern about increased injury risk, lack of depth, and potential game forfeitures due to roster limitations.

Given these concerns, student safety must remain the leading factor in the board's decision.

Program Growth, Culture, and Long-Term Stability

The parent feedback, supported by our ongoing administrative conversations with students, shows strong belief that 8-man football provides the best path for:

- Rebuilding participation
- Increasing JV opportunities
- Creating positive early experiences for underclassmen
- Reducing the physical mismatch that has challenged the program in recent years
- Reinforcing a culture centered on growth, teamwork, and confidence

Additionally, the NSAA classification cycle is only for two years. If participation increases significantly, Falls City can return to 11-man in the next cycle. This decision is not permanent, and 8-man allows us to rebuild without being forced into unsafe matchups.

Playoff Eligibility and Scheduling

We acknowledge the temporary two-year playoff ineligibility associated with transitioning to 8-man due to enrollment.

However:

- The majority of our students expressed that the ability to safely play football is far more important than immediate playoff eligibility.
- Several local and regional schools offer quality competition in 8-man.
- The number of JV and developmental opportunities will increase significantly in 8-man, allowing us to build a stronger varsity program in the future.

Student Voice and Program Direction

Over the past weeks, Mr. Sullivan has held numerous individual and group meetings with current and prospective players. Their message has been consistent:

“We just want to play football.”

They reiterated that the format does not determine their participation interest.

This level of buy-in from students signals that our program is in a position to grow if we create conditions that support safety and success.

Recommendation

Based on available data, safety considerations, parent and student feedback, current enrollment trends, and the trajectory of our football program, we formally recommend that Falls City High School transition to 8-man football for the upcoming NSAA cycle.

Rationale for This Recommendation

- Improved safety for a roster that will be mostly freshmen and sophomores
- Student feedback strongly indicates flexibility and a desire simply to play
- Greater opportunities for JV games and skill development
- Reduced risk of game forfeitures
- A two-year window to rebuild before potentially returning to 11-man
- Alignment with community feedback, which emphasized player safety, participation, and culture building

Conclusion

Our recommendation is not about choosing tradition over change or convenience over difficulty. It is about:

- Protecting our students,
- Strengthening our program, and
- Positioning Falls City football for long-term growth.

With the right leadership and support, 8-man football provides the safest and most stable path forward for our student-athletes and our community.

We respectfully submit this recommendation to the Board of Education for consideration ahead of the NSAA declaration deadline.