

# **Report of the Alignment Committee to the District Executive Committee March 24, 2023**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Toastmasters International (TI) indicates *One of the most important elements of success is planning. Becoming a Distinguished District requires strategic planning by District leaders with a focus on the District mission.* TI identifies two key strategic activities for districts: District Success Plan; and District Alignment. District Alignment impacts staffing needs and contest trophy selection, and is the subject of this Alignment Committee Report (Report).

A district must review and amend, if necessary, its alignment of the clubs, Areas and Divisions once each year. Districts form an Alignment Committee to consider a plan that services the clubs in the most effective way possible and which meets the requirements outlined in *Protocol 7.0 District Structure, 1. Club Assignments* in the [Governing Documents](#). It is important for the Alignment Committee to consider club growth as well as club loss when contemplating an alignment. Further, TI cannot accept alignments that do not meet policy requirements. Therefore, the Alignment Committee needs to ensure the proposed alignment is within policy prior to bringing it forward for consideration by the District Executive Committee (DEC) and the District Council.

The DEC will recommend a proposed alignment during its April 8, 2023 meeting. After the District Council approves an alignment at the Annual Business Meeting, the approved alignment will be reported to TI by July 15. With one exception, District 39 cannot make changes after approval by the District Council, so it's important to ensure the alignment is correct and will be effective throughout the year.

## **ALIGNMENT COMMITTEE**

As discussed during the District Executive Committee Meeting on September 24, 2022, District Director Denise Gutherz, DTM, named, without objection, Program Quality Director Lance McMahan, DTM, as Chair of the Alignment Committee. The Alignment Committee prepared this Report for consideration by the District Executive Committee. The Alignment Committee consulted with the District 39 Division and Area Directors in preparation of this Report.

## GOVERNING DOCUMENT

*Protocol 7.0: District Structure, 1. Club Assignments*, provides as follows:

- A. Area and Division organization is defined and described in [Article XII](#), Sections 1, 3(b), and 3(e) of the Bylaws of Toastmasters International and in [Article VI of the District Administrative Bylaws](#).
- B. When a new Member club is organized, it is assigned to the District within which boundaries it meets. Exceptions are only considered with the concurrence of the District Councils involved and with the approval of the Board of Directors.
  - I. The assignment of a new club to an Area is made by the District Director, subject to approval by the District Executive Committee.
  - II. Changes to the alignment of a new club must be reported to World Headquarters by the District Director within 30 days of the club's charter date. Any changes received after 30 days will not be reflected until the following July 1.
- C. When a club moves its meeting location into the geographic boundaries of another District, its District affiliation does not change until the next July 1. This change must be reported to World Headquarters and both District Directors within 30 days of that date.
- D. The best interests of the clubs and District are taken into consideration when assigning clubs to Areas.
  - I. Areas consist of four (4) to six (6) clubs; however, an Area may consist of three (3) clubs on July 1 only when an effort to charter a fourth club is in process.
  - II. Under no circumstances may an Area have more than six (6) clubs on July 1.
  - III. Advanced clubs shall not be segregated into Areas.
  - IV. Areas may be segregated by language, subject to the approval of the District Council.
  - V. Districts assign clubs to Areas based upon:
    - a. Geographic proximity to other clubs
    - b. The ability of an Area Director to effectively provide service, without requiring the clubs to change how meetings are conducted to accommodate an Area Director visit
    - c. Club size and strength (e.g., paid, active, disbanding)
    - d. Prospective clubs and expected growth
    - e. The likelihood of eligibility for Distinguished programs (e.g., club base of the Area<sup>1</sup> or Division)
- E. A Division must have a minimum of three (3) Areas.

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<sup>1</sup> Author's note: The District Recognition Program indicates (and TI confirmed) that Areas with a club base less than three are not eligible for Distinguished recognition.

## **STAFFING and TROPHY CONSIDERATIONS**

Alignment into Areas and Divisions impacts staffing requirements and contest trophy selection.

### **STAFFING**

The District Leadership Handbook indicates an Area Director is needed for each Area, along with an Assistant Area Director for Program Quality, an Assistant Area Director for Club Growth, and an Area Secretary. Four people are required to properly staff one Area.

Similarly, a Division Director is needed for each Division, along with an Assistant Division Director for Program Quality, an Assistant Division Director for Club Growth, and a Division Chief Judge. Four people are required to properly staff one Division.

If an Area is composed of 4-6 clubs at charter strength, then 80 to 120 people would be available from which to draw staffing for the Area. If the clubs have lower membership, fewer people would be available to staff both the Area and Division teams.

### **CONTEST TROPHY SELECTION**

Districts purchase medallions, plaques, and/or trophies to recognize winners of Area, Division, and District contests. The amount Districts can budget towards contests is a percentage of District income, which itself depends on paid memberships. Changes to the number of Areas and Divisions impacts the cost and/or quality of contest recognition materials.

## **NUMBER of AREAS and DIVISIONS**

Until March 23, 2023, District 39 had a base of 117 clubs<sup>2</sup> for the current year (June 1, 2022 – July 30, 2023), and no new clubs have chartered. While a few clubs are likely to charter in the near future, two clubs have recently closed, and several clubs did not renew their dues in October. Further, renewals are due by April 1, 2023, and greater information about club status and membership levels will be known when the District Executive Committee needs to make a recommendation on April 8 regarding realignment.

Due to the level of uncertainty, this Report does not include a specific proposal for alignment of clubs into Areas and Divisions. Even so, it is possible to identify the

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<sup>2</sup> A club which had been suspended (and therefore would not have been included in realignment) came into good standing on March 23, 2023, thereby increasing the club base for District 39 to 118. This example analysis does not consider 118 clubs due to time constraints.

number of Areas and Divisions which could be proposed based on a base of 117 clubs and the membership strength of those clubs as of February 15, 2023.

Here is the distribution of the 117 clubs by their membership as of February 15:

Membership Range Feb 15	Clubs in Range
0-2	3
3-7	5
8-12	56
13-20	40
21-29	9
30-40	4

In the following example of clubs distributed into Areas, the 8 clubs with 7 or fewer members would be placed in the Areas with 6 clubs. If these 8 clubs did not increase their membership to 8 or more, they would not be part of the base and would eventually be suspended. Note this is a "trial and error" analysis; changing the number of areas with 6 clubs, for example, would require changing the number of areas with 4 clubs to make the total clubs add up to 117.

CLUBS into AREAS		
Clubs/Area	# Areas	Clubs
6	8	48
5	13	65
4	1	4
	22	117

Areas would then be distributed into Divisions based on the number of Areas calculated above (22) and ensuring all Divisions have no less than 3 areas. This analysis is based on a Division having no more than 5 Areas.

CLUBS into AREAS			AREAS into DIVISIONS		
Clubs/Area	# Areas	Clubs	Areas/Div	# Div	Areas
6	8	48	5	2	10
5	13	65	4	3	12
4	1	4	3	0	0
	22	117		5	22

In this example, two Divisions have 5 Areas each and three Divisions have 4 Areas each.

## CONCLUSIONS

Alignment is key to district success, impacting staffing needs, District expenses, and whether an Area has the potential to be distinguished.

## STAFFING

Alignment determines how many Area and Division Directors will be needed and, in turn, how many support staff are required. Therefore, it is critical each Area and Division have sufficient membership from which to draw leaders. If the clubs are at charter strength, an Area with four clubs (the minimum) would have 80 members from which to draw leaders and support staff. Given most of our clubs are at less than charter strength, there are advantages to having 5 or more viable clubs in each Area.

## EXPENSES

Alignment impacts the quality of trophies which may be purchased. The greater the number of Areas and Divisions, the less which may be spent per trophy. Toastmasters limits expenditures for contests to 5% or less of the District budget. Reducing the number of Areas and Divisions would reduce the cost and/or increase the quality of contest trophies.

## DISTINGUISHED AREA

Alignment determines whether an Area has the potential to be a Distinguished Area. The District Recognition Program indicates (and TI has confirmed) that Areas with a club base less than three are not eligible for Distinguished recognition. Clubs with fewer than 8 members as of July 1, 2023 will not be included in the club base unless they later bring their membership to 8 or more. Club renewals (which are due April 1) could significantly impact realignment.

## NEXT STEP

The Alignment Committee anticipates providing one or more specific alignment proposals for consideration by the District Executive Committee on or before the DEC's April 8, 2023 meeting.

Respectfully,

*Lance McMahan*

Lance K. McMahan, DTM  
Alignment Committee Chair  
Toastmasters International, District 39