

It is the responsibility of the Board of Directors, as granted by the Bylaws, to create or change Districts and their boundaries when it determines that redistricting would result in more efficient administration and growth.

Redistricting is defined as any of the following actions:

1. Merger

Two or more existing geographically contiguous (as determined by the Board of Directors) Districts are combined to form a single District.

Districts that are on the "At Risk" list who do not have a Governor-Elect by the Governors-Elect Conference may be subject to immediate merger.

[i] when an "At Risk" District fails to respond meaningfully to the written offer of assistance from the Board of Directors issued in accordance with Board Policy ID-25 or

[ii] when an "At Risk District's meaningful written response plan of action fails to achieve its goals within a reasonable time.

The "At Risk" District is combined with a geographically contiguous District as determined by the Board of Directors. In making its determination due regard shall be given to the fact that the "At Risk" District once was combined with another existing District but the primary consideration should be the Service Strength of the contiguous District with which the "At Risk" District may be combined. Service Strength is a value judgment derived from a District's Leadership, current Club and Membership achievements and history of service to youth. Districts that are on the "At Risk" list who do not have a Governor-Elect by the Governors-Elect Conference may be subject to immediate merger.

2. Annexation

A portion of one District is added to another District.

3. Splitting

Splitting an existing District into two or more Districts. Splitting may be considered when a District exceeds 125 Clubs and 5,000 members.

Any of these actions may be initiated by either:

A. Written petition of a District or Districts' board of directors, upon a majority vote, conveyed to the Board of Directors or President of Optimist International, or

B. Action of the Board of Directors of Optimist International

Section 1: Procedure for Merging Districts

The effective date of the Districts' merger will be October 1 of the administrative year following approval of the merger by the Board of Directors of Optimist International (not later than the march meeting of the Board of Directors). Immediately after Board approval, the Governors of the merging Districts shall be given written notification of the approval of the merger and the following steps must be taken during the current administrative year:

Step 1. Identification of Merging Districts

- A. Upon the final decision of the Board of Directors of Optimist International to effect a merger of the affected District with another District, the expiration of at least one (1) year from the Board's notice to such District in accordance with Article VII, Section One International Bylaws and the failure by the District affected to perform its part and otherwise respond meaningfully to such notice under Board Policy ID 25, and upon being notified of such final decision, the affected District shall form a task force possibly staffed from recent past Governors, finance chairs, and policy chairs of the affected District (not including the current Governor) to seek and identify a potential merger partner and make its recommendation to the Board within thirty days of notice of such final merger decision of the Board.
- B. Once a merger partner has been identified and approved by the Board of Directors of Optimist International, the effected District's task force shall begin working with the partner district as part of the merger team to plan and carry out the merger as set forth below.

Step 2: Governors of the effected Districts, as soon as possible after being notified of the merger approval, shall appoint a joint committee (not themselves) as the merger team with an even number of not more than eight members evenly representing each District e.g. four from each District if there is an eight member team, to oversee the general business of merger, possibly staffed by recent past Governors, finance chairs, or policy chairs but also including the Governor-Elect of the District with which the "At Risk" District is being merged, who will chair the committee and be the Governor of the newly combined district and the secretary/treasurer designated by such Governor-elect for the combined District. The joint committee members should have an open mind toward the merger and be objectively focused on getting the merger job done. The joint committee shall schedule and plan the special joint Convention, and prepare a draft budget and proposed strategic plan, and new District Policies for the combined District to be adopted at the special joint District Convention for the newly merged District.

Step 3: Governor-Elect of the new District attends Governors-Elect Conference in April.

Step 4: Establish District governance and plan for management of combined District Optimist youth and programs unique to each District keeping in mind the history and heritage of each District. Current Governors should invite The Joint Committee (merger team) to attend and the merger team should attend both District's Quarterly Meetings to facilitate merger and possibly to conduct training.

Step 5: Governor-Elect, Secretary-Treasurer Designate and Lieutenant Governors-Elect (if any) attend the International Convention and the training for their respective offices.

Step 6: Special joint convention delegates in August or September shall approve a budget, strategic plan and District Policies to take effect on October 1, the effective date of the merger and elect a Governor-Elect for the new District for the following year. (Note: existing Districts will not elect individual Governors-Elect.) The new Governor-Elect will appoint a Secretary-Treasurer for the following year. Joint convention of merging Districts is held in August or September. Final business of merging Districts is conducted in a joint session. Business pertaining to the conclusion of the administration of each District shall be conducted in separate sessions.

Step 7: As an option, two Districts may voluntarily unite together. The following incentives are offered for voluntary unification:

- For the first three years after the unification, the "new" District would receive 1.5 times what would be their normal allotment. It is strongly recommended that these additional funds be used for Leadership Development and Growth programs within the District.
- Any year, within the first three years after the unification that the District is a Distinguished District, the District will receive two times what would be its normal allotment.
- In any year of the first three years that the unified District builds more new Clubs than the average that the two separate Districts had built combined in the three years before the unification, the District will receive the Charter fee and 50% of the dues collected for one and a half years for Clubs built in excess of the average. For example, if District A had averaged two new Clubs built per year and District B had averaged three clubs built per year, the combined average would be 5 new Clubs. If a sixth Club is built, the District would then receive the Charter fee and 50% of the dues for that Club collected over the next eighteen months.

Step 8: Conclusion of final administration of merging Districts to be followed by merging of District funds after payment of all debts and audits of financial records of merging Districts.

Step 9: The Immediate Past Governors of each of the merging Districts shall serve as members of the board of directors of the new District. The individual who served as Governor of the District having the greatest number of members as of July 31 shall serve in said capacity for two years.

Step 10: The new merged District shall prepare a plan to grow both former District areas with a goal of splitting back in 5 to 10 years.

Step 11: As an incentive to help the new District financially, the new District shall receive Double the International Allotment for the first three years of the new District. And they will receive ½ of the charter fee for all new Clubs built over the average of new Clubs from the past three years of both former Districts.

Step 12: Special awards consideration may be given the new District in the way of adjustments made for membership losses from the At Risk District Clubs.

Section 2: Procedure for Annexation

The effective date of any annexation will be October 1 immediately following the approval by the Board of Directors of Optimist International. Immediately after approval of annexation the following steps must be taken:

Step 1: Governor of annexing District issues letter to presidents of Clubs being annexed regarding the upcoming annexation, and invites them to the upcoming District meetings.

Step 2: At the close of the administrative year, the District(s) from which Clubs are annexed shall determine net worth as of September 30 and shall provide the annexing District(s) a proportionate share of the District(s) net worth. Receivables due the District(s) from which the Clubs are being annexed shall be included in the recipient District's share of the proportional distribution of funds. The amount of the annexing District's allotment from Optimist International will be reduced if any of the annexed Clubs have not paid the International financial obligations.

Section 3: Procedure for Splitting Districts

The effective date of the District split will be October 1 of the second full administrative year following approval of the merger by the Board of Directors of Optimist International. Immediately after Board approval the following steps must be taken during the current administrative year:

Step 1: The Governor of the District being divided shall create such committees as may be necessary, including committees on rezoning, candidate qualifications and convention sites to expedite the business of the division within the dates specified by Optimist International.

Step 2: At the District Convention immediately following the approval of the split, separate sessions must be held for the new Districts at which District governance for

each District shall be determined and approved and Governors-Elect are elected (Charter Governor for the new District(s)).

Step 3: The International Board of Directors shall establish the amount of dues for each new District. Permission shall be granted by the Board of Directors for the new Districts to hold a special convention prior to the effective date of the split for the purpose of approving the amount of dues, or petitioning the Board for a different amount.

Step 4: At the District Convention immediately prior to the effective date of the split, separate sessions should be held for the Clubs in each of the new Districts to conduct business necessary for the next administrative year, including the nomination and election of Governors-Elect and the selection of future convention site(s).

Step 5: At the close of the final administrative year of the District being split, distribution of funds and assets to the new District(s) shall be made on a pro rata basis using the September 30 membership of the District being split. Such distribution is to be made only after the payment of all debts and the audit of financial records of the District being split. Copies of the final audit are to be provided to Optimist International and each new District.

The Optimist International Board of Directors may authorize reimbursement of travel expenses (in accordance with Policy I-19) to the International Convention for the additional Governors-Elect and District Secretary-Treasurers Designate of the new District(s) as it deems reasonable and proper, taking into consideration the financial condition of the Districts.

(Mar 1982; Jun 1985; Mar 1986; Jun 1988; Dec 1991; Mar 1994; Mar 2003; Dec 2005; Dec 2006; Mar 2007; Sep 2008; Feb 2013)