The Mississippi Athletic Conference has abandoned all hope of playing football within its league next season, opting instead for Class 4A district football.

"It is the position of the Mississippi Athletic Conference to move forward with the district football concept," the MAC schools declared in a press release Thursday.

The decision came after Davenport Assumption, one of the 10 MAC schools, elected to play at the Class 3A level next season instead of continuing to participate in the league.

The MAC's decision to embrace Class 4A district football leaves the Mississippi Valley Conference as the only league in the state that has not officially declared for district football. Xavier and Dubuque Wahlert are moving from Class 4A to 3A next year for football, leaving the 12 other MVC schools searching for answers.

The MAC's decision to accept district football was not unanimous, but reflected the overall sentiment in the league.

"In light of the decision by three schools in Eastern Iowa to participate in football at their enrollment level, the Mississippi Athletic Conference believes the district football concept is inevitable," the MAC declared in its statement.

If the 21 Class 4A schools in the MAC and the Valley had stuck together, it might have been possible for the two leagues to continue with conference football next year under a hybrid schedule of interleague play. Now that possibility has been eliminated.

The 12 schools from the Mississippi Valley Conference plan to meet Jan. 7 at Cedar Rapids Washington High School to discuss their future.