

2431 - INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

The School Board recognizes the value of interscholastic athletics and the positive impact sports have on students. A program of interscholastic athletics for students is an integral part of the total school experience and benefits the community as a whole. The program should foster the growth of school loyalty within the student body as a whole and stimulate community interest in athletics. Participation in the District's interscholastic athletics programs by a student is a privilege, not a right.

The program of interscholastic athletics shall include all activities relating to competitive sport contests, games, events, or sport exhibitions involving individual students or teams of students from high schools in this District with those from a high school in another district.

Competition involving ☒ middle schools (grades 6-8) ~~☐ combination middle school programs (grades 6-8)~~ ~~☐ junior high schools (grades 7-9)~~ **[END OF OPTIONS]** shall be in accordance with the Florida High School Athletic Association's (FHSAA's) bylaws.

Since the primary purpose of the interscholastic athletics program is to enhance the education of participating students, as indicated in this policy, the Board places top priority on maximum student participation and the values of good sportsmanship, team play, and fair competition, rather than on winning, particularly at sub-varsity levels. No student shall be excused from a class or supervised study for an extended period of time to participate in interscholastic athletics.

An interscholastic contest is any competition between organized teams or individuals of different schools in a sport recognized by the FHSAA, and therefore shall be subject to all regulations pertaining to such contests. The interscholastic athletics program shall be considered an essential part of the total school program and shall be under the principal's direction and general supervision. The principal shall select the personnel to direct and to act as coaches and advisors.

Interscholastic athletics should provide students the opportunity to exercise and test their athletic abilities in a context greater and more varied than that which can be offered by a school or the District alone. It should also offer an opportunity for career and educational development. The game activities and practice sessions should provide many opportunities to teach the values of competition and good sportsmanship.

Appropriate adult supervision consistent with Florida law shall be provided to all students. All athletic coaches and sponsors of extra-curricular activities involving outdoor practices or events shall complete annual training in exertional heat stroke (EHS) identification, prevention, and response, including effective administration of cooling zones.

Eligibility and Regulation

All middle schools and high schools shall be members of the FHSAA and governed by its rules and regulations. All District students (including transfer students) shall satisfy the eligibility requirements established by the FHSAA, Florida law, Board Policy 2431.01, and Policy 5610.05.

Students enrolled in a private school, charter school (including full-time virtual charter schools), Florida Virtual School (FLVS), home education students enrolled in a full-time virtual instruction program under F.S. 1002.45, or educated at home are permitted to participate in a District interscholastic or intrascholastic sport and must fulfill the same academic and nonacademic requirements as any other participant.

A student who participates in an interscholastic or intrascholastic activity at a District public school and who transfers from that school during the school year must be allowed to continue to participate in the activity at that school for the remainder of the school year if:

- A. during the period of participation in the activity, the student continues to meet the requirements specified in F.S. 1006.15.
- B. the student continues to meet the same standards of acceptance, behavior, and performance which are required of other students participating in the activity, except for enrollment requirements at the school at which the student participates.

- C. the parents of the student participating in the activity provide for the transportation of the student to and from the school at which the student participates. The school the student attends, the school at which the student participates in the activity, and the Board are exempt from civil liability arising from any injury that occurs to the student during such transportation.

The Principal of each District school shall be responsible for determining each participant's eligibility pursuant to State law, the rules of this Board, and the bylaws of the FHSAA. Any school that allows an ineligible student to participate shall be subject to the penalties set forth in Florida law and the bylaws of the FHSAA. (see also Policy 2431.01)

~~The Superintendent shall develop appropriate administrative procedures for the operation of the interscholastic athletics program. Such regulations should provide for the following safeguards:~~
The interscholastic athletics program requires as follows:

- A. Prior to enrolling in the sport,
 - 1. each participant shall submit to a thorough physical examination by a physician;
 - 2. and parents shall report any past or current health problems along with a physician's statement that any such problems have or are being treated and pose no threat to the student's participation;- Physicals must be dated June 1st or later of the current school year.
 - 3. and beginning in the 2026-2027 school year and thereafter, the first time a student who is in grades 9 through 12 participates in an interscholastic athletic competition or is a candidate for an interscholastic athletic team, the student shall complete at least one (1) electrocardiogram screening that meets the requirements of F.S. 1006.165. A student shall be granted an exception to the electrocardiogram requirement if the parent of the student objects in writing to the student receiving an electrocardiogram because the electrocardiogram is contrary to the student's religious tenets or practices or if a physician licensed under F.S. Chapter 458 or Chapter 459 in good standing with the Board of Medicine or Board of Osteopathic Medicine, as applicable, provides a certificate of medical exception.
- B. The District must pursue public and private partnerships to provide low-cost electrocardiograms to the student. A student athlete is exempt from the requirements in F.S. 1006.20 if the student resides in a school district that is unable to obtain a public or private partnership to provide an electrocardiogram at a rate of less than \$50 per student.
- C. Any student who is found to have a health condition which may be life-threatening to self or others shall not be allowed to participate until the situation has been analyzed by a medical review panel that has determined the conditions under which the student may participate. Pursuant to F.S. 1006.20(2)d, the District shall not be liable for any student with a health condition who has been authorized to play by the parent(s) if the parent(s) of the student objects in writing to the student undergoing a medical evaluation because such evaluation is contrary to his/her/their religious tenets or practices.
- D. Any student who incurs an injury requiring a physician's care is to have the written approval of a physician prior to the student's return to participation.
- E. In order to minimize health and safety risks to student-athletes and maintain ethical standards, school personnel, coaches, athletic trainers, and lay coaches should never dispense, supply, recommend, or permit the use of any drug, medication, or food supplement solely for performance-enhancing purposes.
- F. The Superintendent and District school Principals will require that sportsmanship, ethics, and integrity characterize the manner in which the athletic program is conducted and the actions of students who participate.

In order to support the FHSAA's program to strengthen sportsmanship, ethics, and integrity, the Board commits itself to:

- A. ~~attend and enjoy school athletic activities, serving as a positive role model and expecting the same from parents, fans, participants, coaches, and other school personnel;~~
- B. ~~recognize the value of school athletic activities as a vital part of education.~~
- A. ☒ adopt policies (upon recommendation of the administration) which reflect the District's educational objectives and promote the ideals of good sportsmanship, ethics, and integrity;
- B. ☒ reinforce the concept that participation in athletic activities are a privilege, not a right;
- C. ☒ attend and enjoy school athletic activities, serving as a positive role model and expecting the same from parents, fans, participants, coaches, and other school personnel;
- D. ☒ support and recognize participants, coaches, school administrators, and fans who display good sportsmanship; and
- E. ☒ recognize the value of school athletic activities as a vital part of education.

Participation by Agreement

An individual District public school student who is otherwise eligible to participate in interscholastic ~~extracurricular~~ extra-curricular activities may either participate in any such activity at any public school in the District in which the student resides or develop an agreement to participate in such activity at a private school, unless the activity is provided by the student's traditional public school. Such student must:

- A. meet the same standards of acceptance, behavior, and performance that are required of other students in extra-curricular activities at the school at which the student wishes to participate.
- B. before participation, register with the school the student's intent to participate in interscholastic extra-curricular activities as a representative of the school. The student must be able to participate in curricular activities if that is a requirement for an extra-curricular activity.

Recruiting Prohibited/Penalties

The Board recognizes that the recruitment of student athletes is strictly prohibited by F.S. 1006.20. The FHSAA, through its bylaws, has prescribed penalties, sanctions, and an appeals process for athletic recruiting violations. These penalties and sanctions may be applied by the FHSAA against a member school, student athletes, and coaches. In addition to FHSAA penalties and sanctions, District employees found to have engaged in the improper recruitment of a student athlete may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

A student may not be declared ineligible based on violation of recruiting rules unless the student or parent has falsified any enrollment or eligibility document or accepted any benefit or any promise of benefit if such benefit is not generally available to the school's students or family members or is based in any way on athletic interest, potential, or performance.

Eligibility Appeals

If the Principal determines that a transfer student is ineligible to participate in interscholastic athletics, a student may submit an appeal in accordance with Florida law and the FHSAA's Bylaws.

F.S. 1002.20
 F.S. 1006.15
 F.S. 1006.165
 F.S. 1006.195
 F.S. 1006.20