

PROPOSED

Board Policy IDE(1): Competitive Interscholastic Athletics, Grades 6-12

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This policy applies to Competitive Interscholastic Athletics, including athletics for grades 6-12. This includes competitive interscholastic activities specifically pertaining to organized athletic sports, which shall include cheerleading.

I. Competitive Athletics Grades 9-12

The Board of Education supports the offering of competitive interscholastic activities in grades 9-12 subject to reasonable rules and regulations concerning eligibility to participate and on the condition that participation in such activities in grades 9-12 shall not interfere with the academic achievement of participating students.

The Board endorses and adopts the requirements set forth in the Constitution and By-Laws of the Georgia High School Association (GHSА), including any amendments thereto, for determining the eligibility of students in grades 9-12 to participate in competitive interscholastic athletic activities.

Rules and regulations pertaining to competitive interscholastic athletics in grades 9-12 are contained in the Georgia High School Association Constitution and By-Laws handbook, which is accessible online at <https://www.ghsa.net/>.

The students must meet all eligibility requirements, including but not limited to those related to enrollment, residency, credit and annual physical examinations, for participation in high school athletics as defined by the Georgia High Schools Association (GHSА).

Consistent with GHSА By-Laws Section 1.62(n), high school students in grades 9-12 enrolled full-time in District schools that meet the United States Department of Education's definition of a "magnet school" may participate in GHSА competitive interscholastic athletic activities at the school they would ordinarily attend according to DeKalb County Board of Education attendance policy (the "home school"). Magnet schools currently approved by the Board of Education for home school athletic participation include DeKalb Early College Academy (DECA), DeKalb School of the Arts (DSA). Magnet student participation shall be subject to all GHSА guidelines and restrictions. Parents/guardians shall be solely responsible for providing all transportation necessary to the home school for participation in competitive interscholastic athletic activities.

II. Competitive Athletics Grades 6-8

The Board of Education supports the offering of competitive interscholastic activities in grades 6-8 subject to reasonable rules and regulations concerning eligibility, physical examinations, time restrictions, seasonal practice, special provisions, magnet schools, and home study participation.

A. Student Eligibility

1. The grading period shall be a semester as specified by the Board policy. The same period shall also be the minimum length of the ineligibility period.

2. Students participating in competitive inter-scholastic athletics shall pass a minimum of five subjects carrying credit toward grade promotion in the grading period immediately preceding participation.
 - a. Students initially enrolling in the first semester of the sixth grade are exempt from this requirement.
 - b. Exploratory subjects taken during the same semester are averaged to count as one subject for eligibility purposes.
3. Students participating in any competitive interscholastic athletics shall be enrolled full time in the District's public schools and shall take a minimum of five subjects carrying credit toward grade promotion during the grading period of participation. This requirement shall be subject to the requirements of the Dexter Mosely Act, outlined within Section III of this Policy.
4. Student eligibility shall be determined on the first school day of a semester. A student is eligible to practice/condition for first semester activities if the student passed a minimum of five subjects carrying credit toward grade promotion during the preceding second semester.
 - a. A maximum of two subjects taken in summer school and carrying credit toward grade promotion may be counted for eligibility purposes for participation in first semester activities.
 - b. If a student receives an incomplete for a subject that will be used to establish eligibility, make-up work may be completed to change the incomplete to a grade provided that the opportunity is available to all students.
 - c. Make-up work must be completed within 15 school days after the beginning of the second semester.
 - d. A student is ineligible until make-up work is completed and the required passing grade(s) is/are recorded in the student's permanent record.
5. Independent study courses credit taken in summer school may not be used to gain eligibility.
6. Summer school credits earned in non-accredited home study programs or non-accredited private schools may not be used to gain eligibility. For summer school credits to be accepted for eligibility purposes from either private schools or home study programs, the credits must be earned in programs approved by the accrediting agency recognized by the State Board of Education in accordance with Rule 160-5-1-.15.
7. Retention of students for athletic purposes is prohibited.

B. Physical Examinations

All students in grades 6 -8 who participate in competitive interscholastic athletics shall have an annual physical examination prior to participation in any tryout, practice, or conditioning, whichever comes first. The physical exam must be conducted by a licensed medical physician, doctor of Osteopathic medicine, nurse practitioner or a physician's assistant. The exam must be signed by an M.D., D.O., or by a Physician's Assistant, or an Advance Practice Nurse who has been delegated that task by an M.D., or D.O. The physical examination form shall include the date that the exam was performed (month, day, year), the student's name, and the physician's signature.

C. Time Restrictions for Activities

1. Competitive interscholastic athletics shall be conducted outside the school day.
2. Competitive interscholastic athletics group and/or individual practice on a day preceding a school day may not begin prior to the end of the school day and must end no later than four hours after the school day ends.
3. Only one day or night each week preceding a school day may be used to schedule the same competitive interscholastic activity; tournaments are excluded from this restriction.
4. The number of games scheduled shall not exceed 60 percent of the number of regularly scheduled games played by the high school varsity in any given sport. One tournament, not to exceed four games, may be played in addition to the regular season games.

D. Seasonal Practice

1. Spring football practice shall be scheduled so that it does not interfere with other regular season sports, academics, or assessments/final exams.
2. If an individual player is participating in the playoffs for one sport, the player shall be excused from practicing with any other school organized sport for the duration of the playoffs.
3. Neither school personnel, sponsors nor coaches shall suggest, require, or otherwise attempt to influence students to participate, practice and/or condition for a competitive interscholastic activity during the school day.

E. Special Provisions

1. Special education students shall meet the same eligibility requirements as regular students, except that the courses passed must be according to the student's IEP. Special Olympics or other athletic programs designed exclusively for students with disabilities are exempt.

2. Students who have not attained ninth grade status but are participating in junior varsity athletics shall abide by the appropriate grade requirements.
3. Ineligible students are prohibited from practicing or dressing out for competitive interscholastic events.
4. To be eligible to participate in middle school interscholastic activities, a student shall not be age 15 prior to May 1st, preceding the year of participation.
5. Eighth grade students are eligible to participate on high school junior varsity teams at the feeder high school only if the middle school does not offer the sport.
6. Participation by a middle school student in a high school athletic program does not count toward the years for high school participation.

F. **Magnet School Student Participation**

Middle school students enrolled full time in a District magnet school, specifically DeKalb Elementary School of the Arts (DESA), Wadsworth Magnet School, and Kittredge Magnet School, may participate in competitive interscholastic athletic activities at their “home school,” defined as the school they would ordinarily attend, according to DeKalb County Board of Education attendance policy.

The following conditions must be met:

1. Students may not participate in competitive interscholastic athletic activities at their home school unless the sport is not offered at the magnet school in which student is enrolled.
2. Students shall be required to comply with all DCSD eligibility requirements.
3. Students shall remain subject to all applicable requirements for continued enrollment and participation in competitive interscholastic athletic activities at DeKalb Elementary School of the Arts, Wadsworth Magnet, and Kittredge Magnet.
4. Parents/guardians shall be solely responsible for providing all transportation necessary to the home school for participation in competitive interscholastic athletic activities.

III. **Additional Provisions**

1. **Home Study Students, Grades 6-12**

Consistent with the Dexter Mosley Act, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-319.6, home study students in grades 6-12 shall be eligible to participate in co-curricular activities and competitive interscholastic athletic activities under the sponsorship, direction, and control of the resident school or resident school system, provided that the home study students meet the requirements outlined within the Act.

2. Procedures and Regulations

The Superintendent or designee shall have the responsibility for developing and implementing uniform procedures for regulating competitive interscholastic athletic activities in grades 6-12 that adhere to the guidelines set forth.