

SUBJECT: SPORTS AND THE ATHLETIC PROGRAM**General Principles and Eligibility**

Athletics are an integral part of a well-balanced educational program. The District's interscholastic athletic program will conform with the Commissioner's regulations, as well as the established rules of the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) and the State Education Department.

Athletic eligibility requires that the student:

- a) Provide written parental or guardian consent. The consent form must contain information regarding mild traumatic brain injuries (concussions) as specified in the Commissioner's regulations.
- b) Obtain medical clearance from the school physician or nurse practitioner or the student's personal physician. The school physician or nurse practitioner retains final approval on any physicals performed by a student's personal physician.
- c) Meet the requirements for interscholastic competition as set forth by the Commissioner's regulations and the NYSPHSAA.
- d) Comply with all District rules, codes, and standards including academic standing applicable to athletic participation.

Administration is directed to develop regulations for academic standing required for student athlete participation. Such regulations should set a high standard to reflect the privilege that interscholastic athletics represents in the District.

Title IX Compliance

The Board supports equal athletic opportunities for members of both sexes through interscholastic and intramural activities. To ensure equal athletic opportunities for its students, the District will consider:

- a) Its accommodation of athletic interests and abilities (the nature and extent of sports offered, including levels of competition, team competition, and team performance);
- b) Equipment and supplies;
- c) Scheduling of games and practice time;
- d) Travel costs and opportunities for travel;

(Continued)

SUBJECT: SPORTS AND THE ATHLETIC PROGRAM (Cont'd.)

- e) Assignment and compensation of coaches;
- f) Locker rooms, practice, and competitive facilities;
- g) Available medical and training facilities and services; and
- h) The nature and extent of support, publicity, and promotion.

The District may consider other pertinent factors as well. Each of the factors will be assessed by comparing availability, quality, type of benefits, kind of opportunities, and form of treatment. Identical benefits, opportunities, or treatment are not required.

The District's Civil Rights Compliance Officer will coordinate the District's efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under Title IX. This person will be appropriately trained and possess comprehensive knowledge about applicable federal and state laws, regulations, and policies. To the extent possible, the District will not designate an employee whose other job duties may create a conflict of interest, such as the athletic director.

Booster Clubs

The District has a responsibility under Title IX to ensure that boys' and girls' programs are provided with equivalent benefits, treatment, services, and opportunities regardless of their source. When determining equivalency, therefore, benefits, services, and opportunities attained through private funds—including donations, fundraising, and booster clubs—must be considered in combination with all benefits, services, and opportunities.

Athletic Placement Process for Interschool Athletic Programs (APP)Philosophy

The District acknowledges that all students mature at varying rates. The Athletic Placement Process (APP) was designed for the few select, mature, and exceptionally skilled students to advance to an upper level, and for less developed students to participate at an appropriate lower level that is suited to their development and ability. The Athletic Placement Process is not a wholesale skilled tryout program for Junior Varsity and Varsity sports. Only students of exceptional and unusually advanced fitness, maturity and skill will be considered for placement through this program.

The purpose of the APP is *not* to be used to fill positions on teams, provide additional experience, provide an opportunity for middle school or junior high students when no modified program is offered, or to reward a student. Instead, it is aimed at the *few, select students* who can benefit from such placement because of their level of readiness.

(Continued)

SUBJECT: SPORTS AND THE ATHLETIC PROGRAM (Cont'd.)**Process****a) Step 1 – A Request for Consideration is Made**

A coach or a physical education teacher may ask the Director of Student Wellness, Activities, and Athletics to consider the student for participation in the Athletic Placement Process. Parent and/or student requests for participation in the APP will not be considered.

b) Step 2 – Referral by Director of Student Wellness, Activities and Athletic

The Director of Student Wellness, Activities and Athletics shall confirm that the student is suitable for consideration. Student athletes who are recommended by a coach or physical education teacher for APP *must, in the opinion of the Director of Student Wellness, Activities, and Athletics, be exceptional* in that their athletic knowledge, skill, strength, maturity, and citizenship would reasonably place them in a role where they have an immediate impact on and make consistent contributions to the success of the team. Absent this confirmation by the Director of Student Wellness, Activities, and Athletics, the student shall not be referred for consideration through the Athletic Placement Process.

Seventh grade students are not eligible to participate in APP *unless, in the opinion of the Director of Student Wellness, Activities, and Athletics - in consultation with the relevant coaching staff, athletic trainer, and district physician - such student poses a significant and imminent health and safety risk to those students she or he would be playing against due to size, strength, speed, and/or skill.* Any such student may then only participate in the APP with the approval of the Superintendent.

c) Step 3 – Administrative Approval

The student's current Building Principal, in consultation with other appropriate school staff, shall assess the student's readiness for consideration, which includes the academic, social, emotional and behavioral areas of the student's development. Because of the increased time demands of participation at the high school level, the student's academic performance, as determined by the student's current Building Principal, shall be at or above grade level.

If the student is not deemed to be academically, socially, emotionally, and behaviorally ready, the student shall not be referred for consideration through APP.

d) Step 4 – Written Parental Permission Required

If a student is referred by the Director of Student Wellness, Activities and Athletics and approved by the APP Review Panel as being academically, socially, emotionally and behaviorally ready to participate in high school sports through the Athletic Placement Process, then written parental permission shall be obtained authorizing the student to be medically evaluated.

(Continued)

SUBJECT: SPORTS AND THE ATHLETIC PROGRAM (Cont'd.)**e) Step 5 – Medical Clearance**

(Must be completed BEFORE the physical fitness portion of the process). If written permission is provided by the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), the District's Medical Director must approve the student's participation in the Athletic Placement Process. Determining the physical maturity level of the student is an important step in the APP. This is done to ensure that the student has attained a level of physical development at which the chances of growth plate or overuse injury are minimized.

The Medical Director will determine:

1. The physical maturity level of the student in relation to the sport and level in and at which they wish to participate, using the Tanner Scale;
2. The size, in height and weight, of the student in relation to the size of the average age and sex of the students against whom they wish to compete.

The physical maturity assessment requires the inspection of the entire body, including the breasts and genitals. The District does accept Tanner ratings from students' private medical providers. When a private medical provider conducts the Tanner exam, the results must be submitted to the Medical Director along with the student's relevant medical history and a statement as to the amount of time the private physician has been the student's physician. In cases where the Medical Director's determination differs from that of a private medical provider, there will be communication between the two to determine the best decision for the student in question. If there can be no consensus between the Medical Director and the private provider, the Medical Director's determination is final. If the student is determined not to have attained an appropriate physical maturity level for the desired sport and level, the process stops.

f) Step 6 – Physical Fitness Testing

This must be done by a certified physical education teacher who is not a coach of the sport for which the student will be trying out. The President's Physical Fitness Test has been selected as the test for this process, and the student must meet the 85th percentile level for their age in 4 out of 5 test components. Students trying out for swimming may choose to either do the 1 mile walk/run or the 500-yard swim. If the student fails to meet more than one of the physical fitness test standards, the student cannot be permitted to try out for the sport.

g) Step 7 – Qualification Determination

The results of the three evaluations (i.e., the Medical Director's evaluation, the Administrative Approval, and the physical fitness test) will be sent to the Director of Student Wellness, Activities and Athletics. Only students who pass all three parts of the Athletic Placement Process shall be

(Continued)

SUBJECT: SPORTS AND THE ATHLETIC PROGRAM (Cont'd.)

permitted to try out. There are no waivers. A student must meet the appropriate standards of physical and emotional maturity, size, fitness, and skill, in order to qualify.

h) Step 8 – Notification

The District's Director of Student Wellness, Activities and Athletics is responsible for ensuring that the final determination is provided to the student's parents, to competing school Districts, and to section executives. Until a student's parent(s)/guardian(s) are notified by the Director of Student Wellness, Activities and Athletics that their child has successfully completed the entire Athletic Placement Process, the student cannot attend any practices.

For the Athletic Placement Process, the Following Rules Shall Apply:

If a student has been recommended to try out for participation in a second sport as an APP student, the student does not need the APP procedure repeated for another sport if he/she achieved the required scores for fitness, maturity, and comparable physical size for the desired sport and level; however, a recommendation from the sport coach is still necessary a student to try out for participation in an additional sport.

Student Athletic Injuries

No injured student will be allowed to practice or play in an athletic contest. An appropriate medical professional should diagnose and treat an athlete's injuries. The coach should ensure that any player injured while under his or her care receives prompt and appropriate medical attention, and that all of the medical professional's treatment instructions are followed. The injured student has an obligation to promptly inform his or her coach of all injuries. No student will be allowed to practice or compete if there is a question whether he or she is in adequate physical condition. A physician's certification may be required before an athlete is permitted to return to practice or competition.

Athletic Program-Safety

The District will take reasonable steps to minimize physical risks posed to students participating in the interscholastic athletic program by:

- a) Requiring timely medical examinations of participants;
- b) Employing certified or licensed staff to coach all varsity, junior varsity, and modified practices and games;
- c) Providing or requiring certified or licensed officials to officiate all competitions;

(Continued)

SUBJECT: SPORTS AND THE ATHLETIC PROGRAM (Cont'd.)

- d) Ensuring that its players' equipment is safe and operates within the applicable manufacturers' guidelines;
- e) Ensuring that all home fields, courts, pools, tracks, and other areas where athletes practice, warm-up, or compete are safe and appropriate for use; and
- f) Providing professional development and training opportunities for all coaching staff.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 USC § 1681 et seq.

45 CFR Part 86

8 NYCRR §§ 135 and 136

NOTE: Refer also to Policies #3420 -- Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination
#7522 -- Concussion Management