TAKE

13 MINUTES

A 13-minute why, what and how of the UIL

PURITY: EDUCATIONAL COMPETITION

The purpose of the UIL is to organize and properly supervise contests that assist in preparing students for citizenship. It aims to provide healthy, character building, educational activities carried out under rules providing for good sportsmanship and fair play for all participants. Sensibleorganized competition under proper controls has demonstrated its value and furnished inspiration to talented students for many years. The UIL does not provide a contest for every student, but does fill the need for those with the physical and intellectual capacity to excel in activities beyond the classroom. The UIL has the active support of most of the school executives, teachers, and citizens in Texas.

SCHOOLS MAKE THE RULES

The Constitution and Contest Rules contain rules for UIL activities and standards of eligibility to be met by students to earn the privilege of representing their schools in interschool contests. These rules apply to participating schools and students.

From the beginning, administrators from across Texas have served on UIL committees and helped write and establish rules and administrative guidelines. By voluntary adoption of rules, school people discipline their own interschool activities.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The Legislative Council, the rule-making body, is composed of 24 public school administrators. Twenty are elected by school superintendents, with a representative chosen from each of the five conferences and from the non-urban and rural regions of the state. The chair of the Council appoints eight members from larger schools, to ensure a more balanced representation of ethnicity, gender, and school populations.

The Council acts on many proposed amendments. An affirmative vote by a majority of superintendents is required to change an eligibility rule or to make a major change in UIL policy. Rules approved by the Council or by vote of member schools require further approval of the Commissioner of the Texas Education Agency before they are implemented.

DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

District executive committees are composed of one-school administrators from each school in a UIL district. These committees exemplify grass roots control at its best. They arrange contest schedules and certify district representatives for the next level of competition. They administer and enforce the rules and settle disputes within a district. They have original jurisdiction over all eligibility questions within the district.
STATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
The State Executive Committee, appointed by the Commissioner of the Texas Education Agency, is composed of seven school administrators, representing each of the four geographical regions and each of the five conferences, and a minimum of four at-large members. This committee interprets the rules, settles disputes between different UIL districts and disputes which arise past the district level, conducts investigations and hearings of alleged violations, and hears appeals.

ADMISTRATION
The UIL office is located at 1701 Mavor Road in Austin. The UIL is administered by the director and a support staff of approximately 40 people. Many contests are directed by University of Texas at Austin faculty who teach in the area of the contests they direct. UIL staff members cannot penalize any school or student; they may give an opinion or staff interpretation. Only the appropriate committee can give a final interpretation or apply a penalty.

HOW IS THE UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE FUNDED?
The University of Texas at Austin provides land for the building, furniture and administrative support for the UIL.

The League’s sources of income are: membership dues; participation fees; contest fees; open records productions; publication sales; the admission price for state level cross-country, swimming and diving, tennis, wrestling and one-act play contests; an annually determined percentage of admission prices for state level baseball, basketball, soccer, volleyball, and marching band contests; an annually determined percentage of football and basketball post district gate receipts; proceeds from radio and television broadcasting and telecasting contracts; as well as proceed from sponsorships and advertising.

The UIL publishes and sells many bulletins. The money the UIL receives is used to publish the Constitution and Contest Rules and other UIL publications used in UIL activities; to purchase printed material to improve UIL contests; to conduct state contests.

IN OTHER STATES
Other states and many Canadian provinces have similar organizations. It is to the credit of the school people of Texas that theirs is recognized as one of the best. Many states have patterned their leagues after the UIL. Texas has often been called on to help its neighbors with their programs, and UIL employees have been named to national offices and committees in recognition of their expertise.

WHAT DOES THE UIL DO?
• Provides students with educational experiences through competition.
• Promotes good sportsmanship and cooperation among member schools.
• Works to prevent exploitation of students by special interest groups.
• Publishes the Leaguer newspaper, which is provided to coaches and administrators of all member schools, UIL adjudicators and officials, and interested news media in Texas.
• Provides the use of speech video tapes and athletic tournament and rules films through The UT-Austin Film Library and the National Federation of State High School Associations.
• Works closely with associations to provide better officiating and adjudication for UIL contests.
• Sponsors regional conferences and clinics for athletic, music, theatre and academic contests.
• Provides materials to schools for use in UIL contests.
• Seeks to safeguard the health and welfare of students by requiring physical examinations for participation in athletics.
• Seeks to keep awards for achievement on a sensible basis by restricting the cost and type.
• Sponsors district, regional and state tournaments or meets in athletic, music, theatre and academic contests.
• Provides theatre teachers with an extensive Drama Loan Library of more than 26,000 plays.
• Sponsors the InterScholastic League Press Conference.
• Administers the Texas InterScholastic League Foundation which provides scholarships for theatre and academic state competitors.

CLASSIFICATION OF SCHOOLS
Texas school people believe that there is more equitable competition on a state-wide basis when schools compete with other schools of comparable size. UIL member schools are divided into five conferences according to enrollment. Conferences, in order of enrollment, are 5A, 4A, 3A, 2A and A.

Protect Your Eligibility is a pamphlet outlining basic regulations for students and parents. According to UIL standards, students are eligible to represent their school in interscholastic activities if they:
• have not graduated from high school.
• are full-time, day students in the school, and have been in regular attendance at the school since the 6th class day of the present school year, or have been in regular attendance for 15 or more calendar days before the contest or competition.
• are in compliance with state law and rules of the State Board of Education.
• are enrolled in a four-year program of high school courses, and initially enrolled in the 9th grade not more than 4 years ago nor in the 10th grade not more than 3 years ago.
• were not recruited.

ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS
• are not in violation of the awards rule, and
• meet the specific eligibility requirements for academic, music and/or athletic competition.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?
Properly administered extracurricular activities are good for students and are educational. However, individuals, civic groups, professional organizations and schools must cooperate to keep competitive events educational. Students should learn to obey and respect rules. As a citizen interested in the welfare and education of Texas youth, you should discourage attempts to circumvent rules, or to exploit, commercialize or use high school students.

If you have questions, concerns or suggestions, talk to local school authorities or UIL staff members. They can explain standards governing competition, amateurism, awards, age limits, scholastic requirements, all-star games, physical examinations and other regulations.

ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS (cont.)
• meet all the requirements above, and
• have not changed schools for the purpose of participating in a UIL academic contest.

ELIGIBILITY FOR ACADEMIC CONTESTS
• meet all the requirements above, and
• have not changed schools for the purpose of participating in a UIL music contest.

ELIGIBILITY FOR MUSIC CONTESTS
• meet all the requirements above, and
• have not changed schools for the purpose of participating in a UIL academic contest.

ELIGIBILITY FOR ATHLETIC CONTESTS
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