

Subchapter M. ELIGIBILITY

Section 400: STUDENT'S ELIGIBILITY FOR ALL UIL CONTESTS

Subject to the other sections of this subchapter, an individual is eligible to participate in a League varsity contest as a representative of a participant school if that individual:

- (a) is not a high school graduate (see Section 402);
- (b) is a full-time, day student in the participant high school the student represents (see Section 403, academic exception, Section 906 and Official Interpretations #2-5, Appendix I);
- (c) has been in regular attendance at the participant school since the sixth class day of the present school year or has been in enrolled and in regular attendance for 15 or more calendar days before the contest or competition (student becomes eligible on the fifteenth day) (see Section 404 and Official Interpretation #6, Appendix I);
- (d) is in compliance with rules of the State Board of Education; (see Section 401) and state law regarding credit requirements and grades (the school shall verify a student's grades on the basis of the official grade report and independently of involvement by the student);
- (e) has the required number of credits for eligibility during the first six weeks of school (see Section 409);
- (f) is enrolled in a four year program of high school courses (see Section 405);
- (g) initially enrolled in the ninth grade not more than four years ago nor in the tenth grade not more than three years ago (see Section 405 and Official Interpretation #7, Appendix I);
- (h) was not recruited (see Section 5 and section 406);
- (i) is not in violation of the Awards Rules (see Sections 480 through 482); and
- (j) meets the specific eligibility requirements for UIL academic competition in Section 420, for music competition in Section 430, and/or for athletic competition in Section 440.

Section 401: STATE LAW

- (a) **INTERPRETATION OF STATE LAW.** The Commissioner of the Texas Education Agency delegated hearing authority over matters pertaining to the enforcement of applicable state law to the UIL. UIL staff opinions should be requested on all state laws relating to UIL eligibility, and rules and regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education or the Texas Education Agency regarding the following as they apply to UIL eligibility:
 - (1) grades;
 - (2) credit requirements;
 - (3) number of contests per school week;
 - (4) limit on practice and performance per school week; and
 - (5) limit on school year absences for extracurricular activities.
- (b) **SOURCES OF INFORMATION.** In addition to calling or writing UIL staff, the UIL publishes a manual available to member schools entitled *TEA-UIL Side By Side* that contains interpretations and answers to frequently asked questions. It is available on the UIL website (www.uiltexas.org).
- (c) **VENUE.** In accordance with Texas Education Code 67.26, any lawsuit filed against the UIL shall be filed in Travis County.

Section 402: HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE

- (a) **COMPLETION OF HIGH SCHOOL.** A person is considered a high school graduate if that person received a diploma or other certificate signifying successful completion of high school from a high school or other institution of equal or higher rank, participated as a graduate in the graduation exercises of a high school, or complied with the requirements for graduation during a four-year program, whether or not the student participated in the graduation exercises. However, a student who has accumulated enough credits to satisfy graduation requirements prior to the end of four years, but remains in school as a full time student, is not considered a high school graduate under this rule.
- (b) **GED TESTING PROGRAM.** A student who receives an equivalency credential based on the General Education Development Testing Program is not considered a high school graduate, if that student remains in or returns to high school, and has not otherwise met the requirements for high school graduation.

Section 403: FULL-TIME DAY STUDENT

A person is considered a full-time day student if that person:

- (a) is enrolled and attends classes in a participant school for which the current year's participation fee has been paid, or is

- enrolled in the ninth grade or tenth grade on a campus separate from the high school, and who will, by school district policy and not by choice, attend a specific high school (see Official Interpretation #8, Appendix I);
- (b) is enrolled in the number of courses required by state law and by rules of the State Board of Education; and
 - (c) is in compliance with written transfer and admission policies of the local school district.

Section 404: REGULAR ATTENDANCE

- (a) A student is in regular attendance even though he or she is absent for 10 class days or less after enrolling in school because of illness or other unavoidable cause, if the parent or guardian submits a written statement certifying this as the reason for the absence and the principal approves the absence.
- (b) A student who does not enroll in and attend school within the first six class days is ineligible to participate until the 15th day after enrollment and attendance.
- (c) Students who are in an alternative program under TEC Section 37.006 may resume UIL participation on the first day they return to regular classes, with local school district approval.

Section 405: FOUR-YEAR PROGRAM OF HIGH SCHOOL COURSES

- (a) A student may participate in League contests during a program of high school courses over a period of four consecutive calendar years after the student first enrolls in the ninth grade. See Official Interpretation #6, Appendix I.
- (b) Students who never entered the ninth grade but were placed into the tenth grade have three consecutive years from their first entry into tenth grade to complete their high school eligibility.
- (c) Over-age eighth grade students who participate on the high school varsity team have four consecutive years, including grade 8, to complete their high school eligibility. See Section 1478 (b).

Section 406: RECRUITING

Recruiting is not only a violation by the student who has been recruited, but it is also a violation by the school and/or the school district personnel who recruited the student. It is a violation to recruit at all grade levels.

Section 407: ELIGIBILITY BURDEN OF PROOF

If a student's eligibility to compete in a League contest is questioned, the student has the burden in any proceeding to establish that he or she is eligible.

Section 408: BURDEN OF PROOF IN ALLEGATIONS OF VIOLATIONS

If a district executive committee or the State Executive Committee determines that a complaint or report of a violation has enough validity or substance to hold a hearing, the burden to disprove the allegations rests with the participant school, member school district or covered school district personnel charged with the violation.

Section 409: CREDIT REQUIREMENTS FOR ELIGIBILITY DURING FIRST SIX WEEKS

The standards below determine academic eligibility for the first six weeks of the school year. Students in non-compliance may request a hardship appeal of their academic eligibility through the UIL.

- (a) **GRADES NINE AND BELOW.** Students must have been promoted from the previous grade. See Official Interpretations #9 and #10, Appendix I.
- (b) **SECOND YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL.** Five accumulated credits that count toward state graduation requirements.
- (c) **THIRD YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL.** Ten accumulated credits that count toward state graduation requirements or student must have earned at least five credits within the last twelve months that count toward state graduation requirements.
- (d) **FOURTH YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL.** Fifteen accumulated credits that count toward state graduation requirements or student must have earned at least five credits within the last twelve months that count toward state graduation requirements.

Section 410: WAIVER FOR DISABILITY

Students with disabilities as defined by section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and/or Title II of the Americans With Disabilities Act, who are currently being served under either of those acts, may apply to the UIL staff for accommodations to applicable contest rules or playing rules. Contact the UIL waiver office or visit the UIL website for details and an application.

Section 420: ELIGIBILITY - ACADEMICS

Subject to the other sections of this subchapter, an individual is eligible to participate in a League varsity academic contest as a representative of a participant school if that individual:

- (a) meets all the requirements of Section 400; and
- (b) did not change schools for the purpose of participating in a UIL academic contest.

Section 430: ELIGIBILITY - MUSIC

Subject to the other sections of this subchapter, an individual is eligible to participate in a League varsity music contest as a representative of a participant school if that individual:

- (a) meets all the requirements of Section 400; and
- (b) did not change schools for the purpose of participating in a UIL music contest.

Section 440: ELIGIBILITY - ATHLETICS

Subject to the other sections of this subchapter, an individual is eligible to participate in a League varsity athletic contest as a representative of a participant school if that individual:

- (a) meets all the requirements of Section 400;
- (b) is a resident of the member school district (see Section 442), and a resident of the attendance zone in which the participant school being attended is situated,
 - (1) Or has been continuously enrolled in and regularly attending the school for at least the previous calendar year if his or her parents do not reside within the school district's attendance zone; see (5) (B) below for exception. Note: A student who has changed schools for athletic purposes may be declared ineligible for more than one calendar year. See Section 443 (f) (3).
 - (2) Or the student is attending a school outside the attendance zone where the parents reside because the school board or other appropriate authority changed district or attendance zone lines.
 - (3) Or is a transfer student from a public 8-grade ISD not containing a high school, who transferred at the first opportunity:
 - (A) to select a high school with geographical boundaries contiguous to his or her K-8 school; or
 - (B) to a high school for which the K-8 school attended receives state transportation funds; or
 - (C) to the high school located nearest the student's residence.
 - (4) *Intra-District Transfers.* A student who has an option to attend more than one high school within a school district, rather than being assigned to a school according to attendance zones, is eligible at the school first selected if he/she transfers at the first opportunity. If a student subsequently transfers to another school, the student is not eligible for varsity athletic competition until he/she has been in and regularly attended that school for at least the previous calendar year.
 - (5) *Foreign Exchange Students.*
 - (A) Foreign exchange students are ineligible for varsity athletic contests the first year they attend a participant school unless they are granted a waiver of the parent residence rule as outlined in Sections 465 and 468.
 - (B) Foreign exchange students who receive a foreign exchange waiver and participate in UIL varsity athletic contests during their first year in the host school may not participate in those same contests if they return for a second year to the host school. The student may, however, participate in any other UIL varsity sport.

See Official Interpretations #1 and 4, Appendix I.

- (c) is less than 19 years old on September 1 preceding the contest, or has been granted eligibility based on a disability which delayed his or her education by at least one year (see Section 446);
- (d) did not change schools for athletic purposes (see Sections 5 and 443);
- (e) is an amateur (see Section 441 and Official Interpretation #11, Appendix I); and
- (f) was eligible according to Section 400 (c) (fifteen calendar day rule) and Section 440 (b) (residence rule) at the participant school the student wishes to represent prior to the deadline for district certification (non-compliance results in ineligibility only in post-district competition in that sport).

Section 441: AMATEUR ATHLETIC STATUS

An amateur participates in athletics for the aesthetic, physical, mental, and social benefits to be derived. Therefore, the purpose of such participation is playing for the intrinsic rewards rather than for valuable consideration. The amateur rule is a safeguard against exploitation and commercialization of high school students. It poses a responsibility on the student at all times

(whether in school or outside school) to abide by the letter and intent of amateurism. Schools are charged with the responsibility of informing students of all applicable subsections of this rule and enforcing this rule. Administrators and coaches must insure that athletes receive only services specifically permitted by written rule. Any breach of the rule undermines the educational goals of interscholastic athletics.

- (a) **NOT AN AMATEUR.** For purposes of competing in an athletic contest, a student in grades 9-12 is not an amateur if that individual, within the preceding 12 months received money or other valuable consideration for teaching or participating in a League sponsored school sport or received valuable consideration for allowing his or her name to be used in promoting a product, plan or service related to a League contest or accepted money or other valuable consideration from school booster club funds for any non-school purpose. It is a violation of the athletic amateur rule for parents of student athletes to accept tickets to athletic contests where their children are participating. It is also a violation for parents of student athletes to accept free pass gate admission to athletic contests where their children are participating unless they are at the contest in another capacity, i.e., if the parent is an employee of the school or a board member, or working at a concession booth, etc. (See Official Interpretations #11 and 12, Appendix I.)
- (b) **EXCEPTIONS:**
 - (1) Seniors may sign a letter of intent or scholarship agreement which contains the conditions of a scholarship with a postsecondary institution.
 - (2) For purposes of competing in an athletic contest, the participant school, school district or a student's parent(s) may provide medical examination and services, athletic insurance, transportation and other travel expenses incurred in competing away from home, or supplies and services during and in connection with a game or practice period. Jerseys or game shirts may be worn on game day as well as during practice or competition, with school district approval.
 - (3) Participant schools and member school districts may permit student athletes to attend contests by permit admission through a pass gate.
 - (4) A student-athlete in grades 9-12 may accept funds that are administered by the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) pursuant to its Operation Gold program.
 - (5) Student athletes may accept small "goodie bags" consisting of cookies, candy and symbolic gifts from their classmates, if allowed by local school policy.
 - (6) Student athletes may accept travel expenses and attend free banquets in connection with an awards ceremony to accept a national and/or state-wide award, after completing their eligibility in that sport.
 - (7) This rule is sport-specific. For example if a student violates the rule in one sport, such as accepting a prize for winning a hole-in-one contest in golf, that student would be ineligible only for golf.
- (c) **INAPPLICABILITY TO LOWER GRADES.** The amateur rule applies only to student athletes in grades 9-12. This rule does not apply to students until the first class day of their 9th grade year. From that day it is in continuous effect during the school year and summer months until all athletic competition is completed in the 12th grade.
- (d) **INAPPLICABILITY TO SWIMMING.** Athletes may be paid for teaching beginning swimming and lifesaving, provided the fees do not exceed the prevailing rates for those services.
- (e) **STATUS REGAINED.** If a student did not realize that accepting the valuable consideration was a violation of the amateur rule and returns the valuable consideration within 30 days after being informed of the violation, that student may regain athletic eligibility as of the date the valuable consideration is returned. If a student fails to return it within 30 days, that student remains ineligible for one year from when he or she accepted it. During the period of time a student is in possession of valuable consideration, he or she is ineligible for varsity athletic competition in the sport in which the violation occurred. Any games or contests in which the student participated during that time would be forfeited as the minimum penalty.
- (f) **TEAM VIOLATION.** If the team violates this section, the penalty shall be assessed against the team and not against each individual.

Section 442: RESIDENCE IN SCHOOL DISTRICT AND ATTENDANCE ZONE

This section applies to the first calendar year of attendance in grades 9-12. Parent(s) in the context of this rule means parents or adoptive parents who adopted the student prior to the student's first entry in the ninth grade.

- (a) **PRESUMPTION OF RESIDENCE OF STUDENT, PARENT(S), SPOUSE.** The residence of a single, divorced or widowed student is presumed to be that of the parents of the student. The residence of a married student is presumed to be that of his or her spouse.
- (b) **GUARDIAN OF PERSON.** If a student's parents are alive but a guardian of his or her person was appointed by appropriate authority and recorded in the county clerk's office more than one year ago, the residence of the student is presumed to be that of the guardian if the student has continuously resided with the guardian for a calendar year or more.

If no legal guardianship has been taken out, three years' residence with and support of a contestant establishes guardianship within the meaning of this rule.

- (c) **GUARDIAN.** If a student's parents are dead and a guardian of his or her person has been appointed by appropriate authority, the residence of the student is presumed to be that of the guardian.
- (d) **RELATIVE; SUPPORTER.** If a student's parents are dead and a guardianship of his or her person has not been appointed, the residence of the student is presumed to be that of the grandparent, aunt, uncle, adult brother or sister or other person with whom the student is living and by whom the student is supported.
- (e) **CUSTODIAL.** The residence of a student assigned by appropriate authority to a foster home or a home licensed by the state as a childcare boarding facility, or placed in a home by the Texas Youth Commission, is presumed to be at the home. If a student's parent(s) move the student to a foster home in another school district, the student is not eligible, but may apply for a waiver.
- (f) **DIVORCED PARENTS.** The residence of a student whose parents are divorced is presumed to be that of either parent.
- (g) **SEPARATED PARENTS.**
 - (1) If a student's parents separate (and are not divorced), and if one parent remains in the attendance zone where the student has been attending school, the student's residence is presumed to be that of the parent who did not move.
 - (2) If a student transfers to a new school with a separated (but not divorced) parent, the student is ineligible for one calendar year, but may apply for a waiver.
- (h) **CRITERIA OF RESIDENCE.** The intent of this section is to insure that unless circumstances fit one of the exceptions above, any relocation of residence is a complete and permanent move for the family. The residence shall be the domicile which is a fixed, permanent and principal home for legal purposes. The residence is not bona fide under UIL rules unless it complies with all of the following criteria.
 - (1) Does the student's parent, guardian or other person whose residence determines the student's residence own a house or condominium or rent a house, apartment or other living quarters in the school district and attendance zone? *Parents must provide documentation to verify the purchase, lease or rental of a home located in the new attendance zone. A lease agreement or rental agreement should be for a reasonable duration.*
 - (2) Do the student and the parent or guardian have their furniture and personal effects in the district and attendance zone? *There should be no personal effects or furniture belonging to the family in the previous residence.*
 - (3) Do the student and the parent or guardian receive their mail (other than office mail) in the district and attendance zone? *The family should have submitted a change of mailing address to the Post Office.*
 - (4) Are the parents or guardians registered to vote in the district and attendance zone? *If either of the parents was registered to vote at the previous address, they should have applied for a new voter registration card at the new address.*
 - (5) Do the parents or guardians regularly live in the district and attendance zone and intend to live there indefinitely? *The new residence should accommodate the entire family. The former house should be on the market at a reasonable market price or sold, or the lease or rental agreement terminated. All utilities and telephone service should be disconnected or no longer in the family's name. All licensed drivers in the household should have complied with DPS regulations for changing their address.*
 - (6) Do parents live in the district and attendance zone for the first calendar year? *If the parents of a contestant move from the district or school zone before the student has been in attendance for one year, the student loses athletic eligibility in the school district from which the parents move, and remains ineligible there for varsity athletics until a year is up.*

See Official Interpretation #12, Appendix I.

Section 443: CHANGING SCHOOLS FOR ATHLETIC PURPOSES

- (a) **DETERMINATION BY DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.** The district executive committee is to determine whether or not a student changed schools for athletic purposes, when considering each student who changed schools and has completed the eighth grade, whether or not the student has represented a school in grades nine through twelve.
- (b) **COMMON INDICATORS.** District executive committees should look closely to determine if a student is changing schools for any athletic purpose. Some common indicators committees should include in their considerations include, but are not limited to: checking to see if a student was recruited; ascertaining whether a student was in good standing in the previous school, either academically or in a sports program; determining if a student was unhappy with a coach in the previous school; determining if a student played on a non-school team and is transferring to the school where members of the non-school team attend; determining if a student played on a non-school team and is transferring to the school where

the non-school team coach or a relative of the non-school team coach, is the school coach; and determining if a student received individual or team instruction from a school coach and is transferring to the school of that coach.

- (c) **INELIGIBLE.** A student who changes schools for athletic purposes is not eligible to compete in varsity League athletic contest(s) at the school to which he or she moves for at least one calendar year, even if both parents move to the new school district attendance zone. See (e) below.
- (d) **LENGTH OF INELIGIBILITY.** The district executive committee for the district into which the student moves shall determine when or if a student who moves for athletic purposes becomes eligible. See (c) above and (f) (3) below.
- (e) **PREVIOUS ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION FORM (PAPF).** An individual is presumed to have changed schools for athletic purposes if he or she participated with his or her former school in any League athletic contest or practice in grades eight through twelve during any previous school year until:
 - (1) the student's parents change their residence to the new school or attendance zone; (see Section 442 (g) for a student who changes residence with a separated parent); and
 - (2) the superintendent (or designated administrator) and principal and/or coach of the previous school sign a PAPF stating that the student was not recruited to the new school and did not change schools or attendance zones for athletic purposes; and
 - (3) the superintendent (or designated administrator) of the new school signs a PAPF stating that the student was not recruited and is not changing schools for athletic purposes; and
 - (4) the parents sign a PAPF either in front of the new school's administrator or a notary public that they reside in the new school district or attendance zone and the change was not made for their child's athletic purposes; and
 - (5) the district executive committee approves the completed PAPF.

NOTE: The district executive committee is not bound to determining only the status of students who participated at another school the previous or current year, as it relates to changing schools for athletic purposes.

- (f) **ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION BY DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.**
 - (1) If the district executive committee where the student attends school finds that the student did not change schools for athletic purposes and meets all the criteria listed in Section 442, it shall declare the student eligible if he/she meets all other eligibility requirements.
 - (2) If the district executive committee where the student now attends school finds that the student did not change schools for athletic purposes, it may declare that student eligible even though the school district from which he or she moved refused to sign the PAPF. (Extreme caution should be used in granting eligibility under this condition.)
 - (3) If the district executive committee where the student now lives finds at any time that the change was made for athletic purposes, it shall declare that student ineligible to participate in athletic contests for one year. This may include a student who did not compete at the previous school. If the committee decides that the period of ineligibility should be longer than one year, the committee shall transfer the case to the State Executive Committee.
 - (4) When officials from both the sending and receiving schools agree that a student changed schools for athletic purposes, the State Executive Committee will not hear or grant an appeal.
- (g) **MINIMUM PENALTY.** If a Previous Athletic Participation Form was not filed prior to competition and it was an inadvertent error and the student is actually eligible under Subchapter M of the *Constitution*, the district executive committee is not required to demand forfeiture or to rule the student ineligible. The committee may assess the minimum penalty of reprimand.
- (h) **NO PREVIOUS ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION FORM REQUIRED.** The Previous Athletic Participation Forms are not required if the student did not practice or participate with his or her former school in grades eight through twelve during any previous school year in any athletic activity or if the student was required to change schools because the school district or attendance zone lines were changed by the school board or other appropriate authority.

NOTE: (d) and (f) above speak to the applicability of the Previous Athletic Participation Form as it relates to students who have or have not represented another school in grades nine through twelve in either varsity or sub varsity competition. Section 440 (d) prohibits students from changing schools for athletic purposes.

Section 445: REPEATING GRADES FOR ATHLETIC PURPOSES

- (a) **LOSS OF ELIGIBILITY.** A student held back in the seventh or eighth grade for athletic purposes shall lose one of his or her four years of high school eligibility for each year he or she is held back for athletic purposes.
- (b) **LOSS OF FOURTH YEAR.** A student held back one year in the seventh or eighth grade for athletic purposes shall lose his or her fourth year of eligibility after entering the ninth grade.
- (c) **LOSS OF THIRD AND FOURTH YEARS.** A student held back for two years in the seventh or eighth grade for athletic purposes shall lose both the third and fourth years of eligibility after entering the ninth grade.

Section 446: AGE

- (a) **PROOF OF AGE.** A birth certificate attested by the appropriate official is the best evidence of the date of birth. If this evidence is not available, other credible evidence of the date of birth may be considered.
- (b) **NINETEEN OR OLDER ON SEPTEMBER 1.**
 - (1) *Eligibility.* A student who is nineteen or older on September 1 preceding the contest, and who initially enrolled in the ninth grade no more than four calendar years ago, and who prior to the end of his or her second year in high school was in special education, under the auspices of an ARD committee or identified as a 504 student by a 504 committee, is eligible to participate in a League varsity athletic contest as a representative of a participant school if:
 - (A) the student has or had a disability which delayed his or her education for a year or more; and
 - (B) the student is currently in special education and under the auspices of an ARD committee or is currently identified as a 504 student by a 504 committee, and
 - (C) the student has not already participated one extra year under this exception.
 - (2) *Requirements.* The requirements below are to be met by the superintendent. A student may apply for a waiver as outlined in Section 463 only if the superintendent does not submit proper verification.
 - (A) The following must be submitted to the superintendent of the school district for eligibility determination:
 - (i) Special education students must provide documentation of a special education status and documentation that a disability delayed their education by at least one year.
 - (ii) Students with a history of a disability must provide documentation from a 504 committee proving the existence and length of time of the disability that caused the delay of at least one year in their education.
 - (B) The superintendent must certify that the student has met eligibility requirements on a form prepared by the UIL office, and submit the completed form to the chair of the district executive committee. If a student is unable to obtain the required certification from the superintendent, the student may appeal the matter to the UIL Waiver Officer for disposition. See Section 463.
 - (3) *District Executive Committee.*
 - (A) The chair of the district executive committee will accept only completed certification forms. The following will be returned to the superintendent by the chair of the committee with eligibility denied:
 - (i) forms that do not certify that the student meets the requirements for eligibility;
 - (ii) forms that indicate that the student is not in compliance with the four-year rule and a waiver for that rule has not been granted.
 - (iii) forms that contain any missing information or missing signatures.
 - (B) The district executive committee will verify completed certification forms and declare the student eligible for varsity competition.
 - (C) The student remains ineligible for varsity athletics unless and until all eligibility is verified by the district executive committee.