



A GUIDE TO NON-TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS & STUDENTS

MHSAA rules are minimum standards. Schools may adopt higher standards or may deny eligibility where MHSAA rules permit. Local rules which exceed MHSAA minimum standards prevail. Local schools determine for themselves the existence of these options and, if applicable, how to share state funding.

In General . . .

- A. A student of a non-traditional school may be eligible at the school where he or she is physically taking and passing at least 66 percent of full credit load potential for a full-time student provided (1) local policy allows, (2) these credits count toward graduation requirements at the school where he/she is enrolled and intends to graduate, (3) that school does not have any interscholastic athletics, and (4) that the high school counts the students and lists the program/school on its Enrollment Declaration Form submitted the previous February.
- B. Courses taken in a school other than the one in which a student is enrolled may be counted toward athletic eligibility in the school of actual enrollment provided arrangements for current eligibility reports are made between the schools. This may apply to:
 1. **Adult Education**, including night school
 2. **Alternative/Gifted Education**
 3. **Colleges and Universities**
 4. **Distance Learning/Virtual High Schools**
 4. **Home Education**
 5. **Nonpublic Schools**
 6. **Public School Academies** (charter schools)
 7. **Special Education**
 8. **Vocational Education**, including skills centers and tech centers

Adult Education/Night School – If a student is enrolled in the adult education or night school program of his/her community for at least some courses and receives credit toward graduation at the high school in the district of his/her residence, that student may be eligible for interscholastic athletics at his/her base (original) high school only, provided local policy allows and the student is passing the equivalent of 66 percent of full credit load potential for a full-time student overall which count toward the graduation requirements of the high school to be represented.

Alternative/Gifted Education – If a student is placed in a non-traditional program, including an alternative school or school for highly motivated or unusually gifted students that is administered directly or through a consortium by that student's school district, and the non-traditional school does not have an interscholastic program, that student may be eligible at his/her base (original) high school only, provided local policy allows and that student is passing the equivalent of 66 percent of full credit load potential for a full-time student overall which count toward the graduation requirements of the high school to be represented and that school counts its resident students in that alternative/gifted program for MHSAA tournament classification purposes.

Colleges, Universities – If a regularly enrolled undergraduate high school student takes courses in advance of the high school level, these courses may be included for high school graduation credit and for athletic eligibility purposes; and that student may be continue to be eligible at his/her base (original) high school only, provided local

policy allows and that student is passing the equivalent of 66 percent of full credit load potential for a full-time student overall which count toward graduation requirements of the high school to be represented. A school may reduce the required course load to not less than 50% of the normal full credit load potential for a full-time student to allow flexibility for students' travel to, enrollment in, or attendance at a school approved off-campus college program.

Distance Learning/Virtual High Schools – If a regularly enrolled undergraduate student takes courses via correspondence, television, or the internet, these courses may be included for high school graduation credit and for athletic eligibility purposes at his/her base (original) high school only, provided local policy allows and that student is passing the equivalent of 66 percent of full credit load potential for a full-time student overall which count toward graduation requirements of the high school to be represented.

Home Education – If a student is unable to attend school but remains enrolled in it and instructed by its teachers through a "homebound" program, that student may be eligible for interscholastic athletics at the school where he/she is enrolled, provided local policy allows and the student is passing the equivalent of 66 percent of full credit load potential for a full-time student overall which count toward the graduation requirements of the high school to be represented.

Nonpublic Schools – See Part II for five options

Public School Academies (Charter Schools) – See Part II for five options.

Special Education

If a student is placed by an Individual Education Program Committee in a special education program at another MHSAA member high school, that student may be eligible at his/her high school of residence or the high school to which he/she is assigned, provided local policy allows and the student is passing the equivalent of 66 percent of full credit load potential for a full-time student overall which count toward the graduation requirements of the school from which he/she expects to graduate. The choice is available one time in grades 9-12.

Vocational Education, Skills Center, Tech Center

If a student is enrolled in a vocational education program, skills center or technical center administered directly or through a consortium by that student's school district, that student may be eligible at his/her base (original) high school only, provided local policy allows and that student is passing the equivalent of 66 percent of full credit load potential for a full-time student overall which count toward the graduation requirements of the high school to be represented. A school may reduce the required course load to not less than 50% of the normal full credit load potential for a full-time student to allow flexibility for students' travel to, enrollment in, or attendance at a school approved off-campus vocational education program.

I.

Existing Athletic Opportunities for Home-Based Students

Outside of Schools – Students of home schools may participate in sports through youth leagues, church leagues, YMCA/YWCA, boys/girls clubs, health/fitness clubs, etc.

Within Schools (If local school policy allows) –

THREE OPTIONS:

Option 1 - Home School Sponsors and Conducts an Athletic Program:

Home school groups are encouraged to sponsor and conduct self-sufficient athletic programs for their students and compete against any other schools except in football against MHSAA member high schools.

Option 2 - Enrolled in a Home School, Taking Courses at Another School:

A student who is enrolled in a home school that sponsors no teams in any sports may participate on sports teams of a high school immediately upon enrollment at that school if that student is taking and passing at least

66 percent of full credit load potential for a full-time student of course work (usually four or five full subjects) at the high school to be represented.

The two schools may set up the academic reporting procedures that suit them, so long as they meet the minimum requirement of providing academic progress reports at least every ten weeks.

Option 3 - Enrolled at a High School, Taking Courses at Home:

Provided local high school policy allows, a student who is enrolled in a high school may take as many courses as he/she wishes at home and still remain eligible for athletics at that high school as long as the student is doing passing work in at least 66 percent of full credit load potential for a full-time student (usually four or five full subjects) for which the traditional public or private high school will post credit on that student's transcript.

The two schools may set up the academic reporting procedures that suit them, so long as they meet the minimum requirement of providing academic progress reports at least every ten weeks.

II.

Existing Athletic Opportunities for Students of Public School Academies & Nonpublic Schools

Outside of Schools – Students of public school academies and nonpublic schools may participate in sports through youth leagues, church leagues, YMCA/YWCA, boys/girls clubs, health/fitness clubs, etc.

Within Schools – (If local school policy allows)

FIVE OPTIONS:

Option 1 - Public School Academy or Nonpublic School Sponsors and Conducts an Athletic Program:

Public school academies and nonpublic schools are encouraged to sponsor and conduct self-sufficient athletic programs for their students and compete against any other schools.

Option 2 - Cooperative Programs:

If a public school academy or nonpublic school joins the MHSAA, it may combine with one or more other member schools to jointly sponsor teams in one or more sports.

Cooperative program application forms are available on MHSAA.com and require the approval of the board of education and administration of each school, as well as the league/conference in which the program will participate.

Deadline for fall season sports is April 15.

Deadline for winter season sports is Aug. 15.

Deadline for spring season sports is Oct. 15.

Cooperative programs are permitted in all 24 sports when the combined 9-12 enrollment of the cooperating schools does not exceed 1,000 students.

Even if the combined enrollment of the schools exceeds 1,000 students but does not exceed 3,500 students, cooperative programs are permitted in eight sports which are sponsored by fewer than 250 MHSAA member schools: girls gymnastics, boys and girls lacrosse, boys and girls swimming and diving, boys and girls skiing and ice hockey. The 3,500 student limit may be exceeded for up to three years if none of the schools in the cooperative agreement has sponsored the sport previously.

In a cooperative program, all cooperating schools must be MHSAA members. There is no cost for MHSAA membership, but each member school's governing board must adopt each year a resolution which obligates the school to enforce all MHSAA rules and regulations as to its own students and faculty in all MHSAA tournament sports. MHSAA Membership Resolutions are available from the MHSAA office.

In cooperative programs, all cooperating schools contribute students, resources and oversight to the effort.

A school may sponsor its own teams in some sports and enter a cooperative program with another school in other sports.

Option 3 - Enrolled in a Public School Academy or Nonpublic School, Taking Courses at Another School:

A student who is enrolled in a public school academy or nonpublic school that sponsors no teams in any sports may participate on sports teams of a high school if that student is taking and passing at least 66 percent of full credit load potential for a full-time student (usually four or five full subjects) at the high school to be represented. The two schools determine for themselves how to share state funding for the student and what, if any, athletic participation fee is appropriate.

Option 4 - Enrolled at a High School, Taking Courses at a Public School Academy or Nonpublic School:

A student who is enrolled in a high school may take as many courses as he/she wishes at a public school academy or nonpublic school and still remain eligible for athletics at that high school as long as the student is doing passing work in at least 66 percent of full credit load potential for a full-time student (usually four or five full subjects) for which the traditional public or private high school will provide credit on that student's transcript. The two schools may set up the academic reporting procedures that suit them, so long as they meet the minimum requirement of providing academic progress reports at least every ten weeks.

The two schools determine for themselves how to share state funding for the student and what, if any, athletic participation fee is appropriate.

Option 5 - Continuing Eligibility:

A student who has been attending one high school for at least two semesters may enroll in another MHSAA member school that offers a specialized curriculum which is not available at the first school and continue to be eligible at the first school in sports not sponsored by the specialized school.

The student must be taking and passing at least 66 percent of full credit load potential for a full-time student overall, there must be regular academic reports between the schools, and there must be compliance with all other eligibility requirements of the MHSAA and both schools.

The determination of whether the specialized curriculum of one school without a sport is not available in the curriculum of a school with that sport shall be made by the school providing the sport. The majority of courses provided by the school without the sport must be different in type (not degree of difficulty) from those available at the school with the sport.

The two schools determine for themselves how to share state funding for the student and what, if any, athletic participation fee is appropriate.

NOTE: This Appendix is a summary of policy, not a complete description. Consult the MHSAA Handbook for further detail.