

**281—36.8(280) Eligibility requirements.**

**36.8(1)** *Local eligibility and student conduct rules.* Local boards of education may impose additional eligibility requirements not in conflict with these rules. Nothing herein is to be construed to prevent a local school board from declaring a student ineligible to participate in interscholastic competition by reason of the student's violation of rules adopted by the school pursuant to Iowa Code sections 279.8 and 279.9. A member or associate member school shall not allow any student, including any transfer student, to compete until such time as the school has reasonably reliable proof that the student is eligible to compete for the member or associate member school under these rules.

**36.8(2)** *Scholarship rules.*

a. All contestants are to be enrolled and in good standing in a school that is a member or associate member in good standing of the organization sponsoring the event.

b. All contestants who have attained the age of 20 years old are not eligible.

c. All contestants in grades 9 through 12 will receive credit in at least four subjects, each of one period or "hour" or the equivalent thereof, at all times. To qualify under this rule, a "subject" will meet the requirements of 281—Chapter 12. Coursework taken from a postsecondary institution and for which a school district or accredited nonpublic school grants academic credit toward high school graduation is used in determining eligibility. No student is to be denied eligibility if the student's school program deviates from the traditional two-semester school year.

(1) Each contestant shall be passing all coursework for which credit is given and making adequate progress toward graduation requirements at the end of each grading period. Grading period, graduation requirements, and any interim periods of ineligibility are determined by local policy. For purposes of this subrule, "grading period" means the period of time at the end of which a student in grades 9 through 12 receives a final grade and course credit is awarded for passing grades.

(2) If at the end of any grading period a contestant is given a failing grade in any course for which credit is awarded, the contestant is ineligible to dress for and compete in the next occurring interscholastic athletic contests and competitions in which the contestant is a contestant for 20 consecutive calendar days, unless the student has already served a period of ineligibility for 20 consecutive calendar days in another school-sponsored activity. A student will not serve multiple periods of ineligibility because of a failing grade.

d. A student with a disability who has an individualized education program will not be denied eligibility on the basis of scholarship if the student is making adequate progress, as determined by school officials, toward the goals on the student's individualized education program, unless the course in which the student receives a failing grade has no relationship to those goals.

e. A student who meets all other qualifications may be eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics for a maximum of eight consecutive semesters upon entering the ninth grade for the first time, including students who participated during eighth grade. However, a student who engages in athletics during the summer following eighth grade is also eligible to compete during the summer following twelfth grade. Extenuating circumstances, such as health, may be the basis for an appeal to the executive board that may extend the eligibility of a student when the executive board finds that the interests of the student and interscholastic athletics will be benefited.

f. All member schools will provide appropriate interventions and necessary academic supports for students who fail or who are at risk to fail.

g. A student is academically eligible upon entering the ninth grade, including students who participated in eighth grade.

h. A student is not eligible to participate in an interscholastic sport if the student has, in that same sport, participated in a contest with or against, or trained with, a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA), National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), or other collegiate governing organization's sanctioned team. A student may not participate with or against high school graduates if the graduates represent a collegiate institution or if the event is sanctioned or sponsored by a collegiate institution. Nothing in this subrule precludes a student from participating in a one-time tryout with or against members of a college team with permission from the member school's administration and the respective collegiate institution's athletic administration.

i. No student is eligible to participate in any given interscholastic sport if the student has engaged in that sport professionally.

j. The local superintendent of schools, with the approval of the local board of education, may give permission to a dropout student to participate in athletics upon return to school if the student is otherwise eligible under these rules.

k. Remediation of a failing grade by way of summer school or other means does not affect the student's ineligibility. All failing grades will be reported to any school to which the student transfers.

**36.8(3) General transfer rule.** A student in grades 9 through 12 who transfers from a school in another state or country or from one member or associate member school to another member or associate member school shall be ineligible to compete in interscholastic athletics for a period of 140 consecutive calendar days, as defined in 281—Chapter 12, exclusive of summer enrollment, unless one of the exceptions listed in paragraph 36.8(3)“a” applies. The period of ineligibility applies only to varsity level contests and competitions. In ruling upon the eligibility of transfer students, the executive board will consider the factors motivating student changes in residency, which it may consider from both direct and circumstantial evidence. Unless otherwise provided in these rules, a student intending to establish residency must show that the student is physically present in the district for the purpose of making a home and not solely for school or athletic purposes.

a. Exceptions. The executive officer or executive board will consider and apply the following exceptions in formally or informally ruling upon the eligibility of a transfer student and may make eligibility contingent upon proof that the student has been in attendance in the new school for at least ten school days:

(1) Upon a contemporaneous change in parental residence, a student is immediately eligible if the student transfers to the new district of residence or to an accredited nonpublic member or associate member school located in the new school district of residence. In addition, if with a contemporaneous change in parental residence, the student had attended an accredited nonpublic member or associate member school immediately prior to the change in parental residence, the student may have immediate eligibility if the student transfers to another accredited nonpublic member or associate member school. For purposes of this subparagraph, a contemporaneous change in parental residence includes a change in a student's residence from the residence of one parent or guardian to the residence of a different parent or guardian.

(2) If the student is attending in a school district as a result of a whole-grade sharing agreement between the student's resident district and the new school district of attendance, the student is immediately eligible.

(3) A student who has attended high school in a district other than where the student's parent(s) resides, and who subsequently returns to live with the student's parent(s), becomes immediately eligible in the parent's resident district.

(4) A student whose residence changes due to any of the following circumstances set forth in Iowa Code section 256.46 is immediately eligible provided the student meets all other eligibility requirements in these rules and those set by the school of attendance. For purposes of Iowa Code section 256.46(1)“d,” participation in a foreign exchange program is based on a J-1 visa issued by the United States government, unless the student attends the school primarily for athletic purposes.

(5) A transfer student who attends in a member or associate member school that is a party to a cooperative student participation agreement, as defined in rule 281—36.13(280), with the member or associate member school the student previously attended is immediately eligible in the new district to compete in those interscholastic athletic activities covered by the cooperative agreement.

(6) Any student whose parents change district of residence but who remains in the original district without interruption in attendance continues to be eligible in the member or associate member school of attendance.

(7) A special education student whose attendance center changes due to a change in placement agreed to by the district of residence is eligible in either the resident district or the district of attendance, but not both.

(8) A student who is found by the attending district to be a homeless child or youth as described in rule 281—33.2(256) is eligible.

(9) In any transfer situation not provided for elsewhere in this chapter, the executive board will exercise its administrative authority to make any eligibility ruling that it deems to be fair and reasonable. The executive board will consider the motivating factors for the student transfer, which it may consider from both direct and circumstantial evidence. The determination will be made in writing with the reasons for the determination clearly delineated. The burden of proving entitlement to administrative discretion under this provision lies with the party seeking it.

b. In ruling upon the transfer of students who have been emancipated by marriage or have reached the age of majority, the executive board will consider all circumstances with regard to the transfer to determine if it is principally for school or athletic purposes, in which case participation will not be approved.

c. A student who participates in the name of a member or associate member school during the summer following eighth grade is ineligible to participate in the name of another member or associate member school in the first 140 consecutive calendar days of ninth grade unless a change of residence has occurred after the student began participating in the summer.

d. A school district that has more than one high school in its district will set its own eligibility policies regarding intradistrict transfers, subject to Iowa Code section 279.82(6).

**36.8(4)** *Open enrollment transfer.* The transfer of a student in grades 9 through 12 whose transfer of schools had occurred due to a request for open enrollment is governed by Iowa Code section 282.18(9).

**36.8(5)** *Eligibility for other enrollment options.*

a. *Shared-time students.* A nonpublic school student who is enrolled only part-time in the public school district of the student's residence under a "shared-time" provision or for driver education is not eligible to compete in interscholastic athletics in the public school district.

b. *Dual enrollment.* A student who receives competent private instruction, not in an accredited nonpublic or public school, may seek dual enrollment in the public school of the student's resident district and is eligible to compete in interscholastic athletic competition in the resident school district provided the student meets the eligibility requirements of these rules and those set by the public school of attendance.

If a student seeking such dual enrollment is enrolled in an associate member school of the union or association, the student is eligible for and may participate in interscholastic athletic competition only for the associate member school or a school with which the associate member school is in a cooperative sharing agreement. (Eligibility in such case is governed by rule 281—36.1(280).)

Any ineligibility imposed under this chapter begins with the first day of participation under dual enrollment. Any period of ineligibility applies only to varsity level contests and competitions.

c. *Competent private instruction.* A student who receives competent private instruction, and is not dual-enrolled in a public school, may participate in and be eligible for interscholastic athletics at an accredited nonpublic school if the student is accepted by that school and the student meets the eligibility requirements of this chapter and those set by the accredited nonpublic school where the student participates. Application will be made to the accredited nonpublic school on a form provided by the department.

If a student seeking such participation is enrolled in an associate member school of the union or association, the student is eligible for and may participate in interscholastic athletic competition only for the associate member school or a school with which the associate member school is in a cooperative sharing agreement. (Eligibility in such case is governed by rule 281—36.1(280).)

Any ineligibility imposed under this chapter begins with the first day of participation with the accredited nonpublic school. Any period of ineligibility applies only to varsity level contests and competitions.

**36.8(6)** *Summer camps and clinics and coaching contacts out of season.*

a. School personnel, whether employed or volunteers, of a member or associate member school shall not coach that school's student athletes during the school year in a sport for which the school personnel are currently under contract or are volunteers, outside the period from the official first day of practice through the finals of tournament play. However, school personnel may coach a senior student from the coach's school in an all-star contest once the senior student's interscholastic athletic season for that sport has concluded. In addition, volunteer or compensated coaching personnel shall not require students to

participate in any activities outside the season of that coach's sport as a condition of participation in the coach's sport during its season.

*b.* A summer team or individual camp or clinic held at a member or associate member school facility shall not conflict with sports in season. Coaching activities between June 1 and the first day of fall sports practices will not conflict with sports in season. The associations in their discretion may establish a dead period up to 14 calendar days in length. During a dead period, coaches will not be allowed to have contact with students.

*c.* Penalty. A school whose volunteer or compensated coaching personnel violate this rule is ineligible to participate in a governing organization-sponsored event in that sport for one year with the violator(s) coaching.

**36.8(7)** *Nonschool team participation.* The local school board will, by policy, determine whether or not participation in nonschool athletic events during the same season is permitted and provide penalties for students who may be in violation of the board's policy.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 256.46, 280.13 and 282.18.

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