

CHAPTER 1178

INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY — EIGHTH GRADE, TRANSFER, AND OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS

H.F. 2591

AN ACT relating to open enrollment, student transfers, and interscholastic athletic eligibility requirements, and including effective date provisions.

Be It Enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa:

Section 1. Section 256.7, Code 2026, is amended by adding the following new subsection:

NEW SUBSECTION. 36. Adopt rules allowing students enrolled in grade eight to participate in any extracurricular interscholastic athletic contest or competition that is provided by a school district, nonpublic school, or charter school on the same basis as students who are enrolled in grades nine through twelve.

Sec. 2. Section 256.46, Code 2026, is amended by adding the following new subsection:

NEW SUBSECTION. 4. A student in grades nine through twelve who transfers from one school to another school shall be ineligible to compete in interscholastic athletics for a period of one hundred forty calendar days following enrollment in the new school, exclusive of summer enrollment, unless one of the exceptions listed in subsection 1 applies or a similar circumstance exists as determined by rule of the state board. The period of ineligibility applies only to varsity level contests and competitions.

Sec. 3. Section 282.18, subsection 11, paragraph a, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

A pupil who participates in open enrollment for purposes of attending a grade in grades nine through twelve in a school district other than the district of residence is ineligible to participate in varsity interscholastic athletic contests and athletic competitions during the pupil's first ~~ninety-school~~ one hundred forty calendar days of enrollment in the district. However, a pupil may participate immediately in a varsity interscholastic sport under any of the following circumstances:

Sec. 4. **EMERGENCY RULES.** The state board of education shall adopt emergency rules under section 17A.4, subsection 3, and section 17A.5, subsection 2, paragraph "b", to implement the section of this Act amending section 256.7. The rules shall be effective no later than August 1, 2026. Any rules adopted in accordance with this section shall also be published as a notice of intended action as provided in section 17A.4.

Sec. 5. **EFFECTIVE DATE.** The following take effect August 1, 2026:

1. The section of this Act amending section 256.46.
2. The section of this Act amending section 282.18.

Sec. 6. **EFFECTIVE DATE.** The following, being deemed of immediate importance, take effect upon enactment:

1. The section of this Act amending section 256.7.
2. The section of this Act requiring emergency rulemaking.

Approved June 2, 2026