



DRAFT MINUTES

APRIL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MINUTES

April 14, 2026

**1980 Providence Parkway
Mt. Juliet, TN 37122**

Note: The following plan is used in recording the business transacted by the Legislative Council. First name listed is the one who made the motion; second name listed is the one who seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously unless otherwise noted.

Call to Order

Present: Dan Black, Angie Cass, Joe Gaddis, Bo Griffin, McKee Humphreys, Jonathan Kee, Robert Sain, Kenneth Sholl, Les Trotter, Keith Turner, Dr. David Woods, Greg Wyant. Ex officio members present were Grant Swallows, President of the Board of Control, Russ Plummer, representing the Tennessee Athletic Coaches Association, Dan Schlafer, representing the Tennessee School Boards Association, Bryan Brown, representing the Tennessee Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association, and Kurt Dronebarger, representing the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents. Rick Colbert and Sarah Ingalls, representing Thompson Burton, attorneys for the association, were also present. Present from the state office staff were Mark Reeves, Matthew Gillespie, Richard McWhirter, Joe Blair, EJ Wood, David Uyl, Shonnie Speicher, Heather Carter, Lexie Crawford, and Lauren Jones.

Litigation Report

No litigation report was required for this meeting.

Roll Call

Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting

Griffin - Gaddis: To approve the Minutes from the December 11, 2025, meeting without reading since members had been sent a copy to review

The members of the Legislative Council voted by roll call.

*Dan Black: Yes
Angie Cass: Yes
Joe Gaddis: Yes
Bo Griffin: Yes
McKee Humphreys: Yes*



Jonathan Kee: Yes
Robert Sain: Yes
Kenneth Sholl: Yes
Les Trotter: Yes
Keith Turner: Yes
Dr. David Woods: Yes
Greg Wyant: Yes

Yes: 12, No: 0

Motion Carried.

Old Business

Clarification on TSSAA Sports Calendar

The Legislative Council took action to make the following change effective immediately. School coaches may begin coaching their own children on an independent team during the preseason or offseason, provided no other students from the school are on the team, except for the coaches' child.

Wyant - Griffin: To go into effect immediately.

The members of the Legislative Council voted by roll call.

Dan Black: No
Angie Cass: Yes
Joe Gaddis: Yes
Bo Griffin: Yes
McKee Humphreys: Yes
Jonathan Kee: Yes
Robert Sain: Yes
Kenneth Sholl: No
Les Trotter: Yes
Keith Turner: No
Dr. David Woods: Yes
Greg Wyant: Yes

Yes: 9, No: 3

Motion Carried.



Proposed Change to Article I Section 10 (Coaches Education Requirements) - submitted by Arlington High School

Wyant - Turner: To remove the requirement to take the NFHS First Aid, Health and Safety Course but keep the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching Course requirement for classified employees.

The members of the Legislative Council voted by roll call.

Dan Black: Yes
Angie Cass: Yes
Joe Gaddis: Yes
Bo Griffin: Yes
McKee Humphreys: Abstain
Jonathan Kee: Yes
Robert Sain: Yes
Kenneth Sholl: Yes
Les Trotter: Yes
Keith Turner: Yes
Dr. David Woods: Yes
Greg Wyant: Yes

Yes: 11, No: 0, Abstain: 1

Motion Carried.

Discussion of Pre-Season Events: Article I Section 8 TSSAA Sports Calendar (Scrimmage Rule) and Article IV Section 10 (Jamborees)

Wyant - Sholl: To approve the revised proposal (attached RLC redline).

The members of the Legislative Council voted by roll call.

Dan Black: Yes
Joe Gaddis: Yes
Bo Griffin: Yes
Jonathan Kee: Yes
Robert Sain: Yes
Kenneth Sholl: Yes
Les Trotter: Yes



Keith Turner: Yes
Dr. David Woods: Yes
Greg Wyant: Yes

Yes: 10, No: 0

Motion Carried.

Proposed Change to Article II, Section 12d (Athletic Coaching Link) of the TSSAA Bylaws

The state office will work on a proposal to address summer participation.

Wyant - Kee: To table until after the discussion of summer participation's impact on eligibility for transfer students.

The members of the Legislative Council voted by roll call.

Dan Black: Yes
Angie Cass: Yes
Joe Gaddis: Yes
Bo Griffin: Yes
McKee Humphreys: Yes
Jonathan Kee: Yes
Robert Sain: Yes
Kenneth Sholl: Yes
Les Trotter: Yes
Keith Turner: Yes
Dr. David Woods: Yes
Greg Wyant: Yes

Yes: 12, No: 0

Motion Carried.

Woods - Griffin: To deny.

The members of the Legislative Council voted by roll call.

Dan Black: Yes
Angie Cass: Yes
Joe Gaddis: Yes



Bo Griffin: Yes
Jonathan Kee: Yes
Robert Sain: Yes
Kenneth Sholl: Yes
Les Trotter: Yes
Keith Turner: Yes
Dr. David Woods: Yes
Greg Wyant: Yes

Yes: 11, No: 0

Motion Carried.

New Business

Definition of Athletic Record

Turner - Trotter: To deny.

The members of the Legislative Council voted by roll call.

Dan Black: Yes
Angie Cass: Yes
Joe Gaddis: Yes
Bo Griffin: Yes
McKee Humphreys: Yes
Jonathan Kee: Yes
Robert Sain: Yes
Kenneth Sholl: Yes
Les Trotter: Yes
Keith Turner: Yes
Dr. David Woods: Yes
Greg Wyant: Yes

Yes: 12, No: 0

Motion Carried.

Transfer Rule Recommended Revisions



Griffin - Sholl: To approve the proposed changes and give the state office permission to make editorial changes to the "rezoning" provision and the "transition provision" to provide more clarity.

The members of the Legislative Council voted by roll call.

Dan Black: Yes
Angie Cass: Yes
Joe Gaddis: Yes
Bo Griffin: Yes
McKee Humphreys: Yes
Jonathan Kee: Yes
Robert Sain: Yes
Kenneth Sholl: Yes
Les Trotter: Yes
Keith Turner: Yes
Dr. David Woods: Yes
Greg Wyant: Yes

Yes: 12, No: 0

Motion Carried.

Recruiting Rule Recommended Revisions

Kee - Wyant: To approve.

The members of the Legislative Council voted by roll call.

Dan Black: Yes
Angie Cass: Yes
Joe Gaddis: Yes
McKee Humphreys: Yes
Jonathan Kee: Yes
Robert Sain: Yes
Kenneth Sholl: Yes
Les Trotter: Yes
Keith Turner: Yes
Dr. David Woods: Yes



Greg Wyant: Yes

Yes: 11, No: 0

Motion Carried.

Proposed Change to Football Sports Calendar

Turner - Sain: To approve.

The members of the Legislative Council voted by roll call.

Dan Black: Yes

Angie Cass: Yes

Joe Gaddis: Yes

Bo Griffin: Yes

McKee Humphreys: Yes

Jonathan Kee: Yes

Robert Sain: Yes

Kenneth Sholl: Yes

Les Trotter: Yes

Keith Turner: Yes

Dr. David Woods: Yes

Greg Wyant: Yes

Yes: 12, No: 0

Motion Carried.

TSSAA Membership Requests

The staff is recommending that deadlines be established for applying for membership for a school to be eligible to participate in the postseason tournament series and for other schools to be required to include a school in their respective schedule for district or region competition.

Present: Angie Cass.

Turner - Kee: To approve.

The members of the Legislative Council voted by roll call.

Dan Black: Yes

Angie Cass: Yes



Joe Gaddis: Yes
Bo Griffin: Yes
Jonathan Kee: Yes
Robert Sain: Yes
Kenneth Sholl: Yes
Les Trotter: Yes
Keith Turner: Yes
Dr. David Woods: Yes
Greg Wyant: Yes

Yes: 11, No: 0

Motion Carried.

Proposal to Create a Tiered Disqualification Structure for Ejections

Sain - Gaddis: To deny as written and give the state office the opportunity to research how other states handle the issue.

The members of the Legislative Council voted by roll call.

Dan Black: Yes
Angie Cass: Yes
Joe Gaddis: Yes
Bo Griffin: Yes
Jonathan Kee: Yes
Robert Sain: Yes
Kenneth Sholl: Yes
Les Trotter: Yes
Keith Turner: Yes
Dr. David Woods: Yes
Greg Wyant: Yes

Yes: 11, No: 0

Motion Carried.

Alumni Games Proposal



Wyant - Trotter: To accept.

The members of the Legislative Council voted by roll call.

<i>Dan Black:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Angie Cass:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Joe Gaddis:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Bo Griffin:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Jonathan Kee:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Robert Sain:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Kenneth Sholl:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Les Trotter:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Keith Turner:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Dr. David Woods:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Greg Wyant:</i>	<i>Yes</i>

Yes: 11, No: 0

Motion Carried.

Proposal Concerning Suspension Accountability and Schedule Manipulation

Sain - Griffin: To table.

The members of the Legislative Council voted by roll call.

<i>Dan Black:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Angie Cass:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Joe Gaddis:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Bo Griffin:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Jonathan Kee:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Robert Sain:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Kenneth Sholl:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Les Trotter:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Keith Turner:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Dr. David Woods:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Greg Wyant:</i>	<i>Yes</i>

Yes: 11, No: 0



Motion Carried.

Discussion Items

Discussion of Summer Participation's Impact on Eligibility for Transfer Students

No action was required. The state office will bring a recommendation back for the membership to consider at the Regional Meetings.

Discussion of Amateur Rule

No action was required. This item will be placed on the Regional Meeting agenda.

Discussion of Period of Ineligibility for Transfer Students

No action was required. This item will be added to the Regional Meeting agenda for discussion.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Griffin - Turner: To adjourn.

The members of the Legislative Council voted by roll call.

<i>Dan Black:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Joe Gaddis:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Bo Griffin:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Jonathan Kee:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Robert Sain:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Kenneth Sholl:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Les Trotter:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Keith Turner:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Dr. David Woods:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Greg Wyant:</i>	<i>Yes</i>

Yes: 10, No: 0

Motion Carried.



TSSAA Coaches by Category

2024-25 Totals

9825 Full-Time Certified Teacher
239 Retired Educator
6169 Non-Faculty
1300 Classified Employee

Full-time certified teacher (a minimum of 100 school days) of a board of education with a Tennessee teaching license or the equivalent.

Retired educator (five or more years' experience) with a valid Tennessee state teaching license or the equivalent.

Non-faculty – Anyone approved by the principal, superintendent, and/or local board of education in the normal course of employment procedures in accordance with applicable state law.

Classified Employee – Any individual employed by a member school or school system in a position that does not require a teaching license or the equivalent. A Classified Employee must be employed 30 hours or more per week in a non-coaching position and may not be an independent contractor or an employee of an independent contractor.

Course Completions by School Year

Course Completed School Year	HIGH			MIDDLE			Grand Total
	Classified	Non-faculty	Total	Classified	Non-faculty	Total	
2025	85	503	588	75	297	372	960
2024	188	1,396	1,584	155	686	841	2,425
2023	222	1,358	1,580	186	646	832	2,412
2022	209	1,354	1,563	200	552	752	2,315
2021	180	1,099	1,279	165	545	710	1,989
2020	150	941	1,091	67	323	390	1,481
2019	174	915	1,089	24	313	337	1,426
2018	158	1,042	1,200	11	368	379	1,579
2017	159	1,016	1,175	11	281	292	1,467
2016	144	969	1,113	8	301	309	1,422
2015	169	901	1,070	7	298	305	1,375
2014	178	959	1,137	8	350	358	1,495
2013	168	834	1,002	7	286	293	1,295
Grand Total	2,184	13,287	15,471	924	5,246	6,170	21,641

NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching Course Content

- **1 Educational Athletics and t...**

● 7 Sections

-
- Course Welcome
 - Unit 1 Objectives
 - History, Mission and Purpose of Interscholastic Athletics
 - The Role of Teacher/Coach
 - Coaching Philosophy
 - The Place of Winning in Interscholastic Athletics
 - Expected Outcomes of Interscholastic Athletics

- **2 The Teacher/Coach as Manager**

● 6 Sections

-
- Unit 2 Objectives
 - Organization
 - Administration
 - Health and Well-being
 - Management of Stakeholders
 - Legal/Liability Concerns

- **3 The Teacher/Coach and Inter...**

● 5 Sections

-
- Unit 3 Objectives
 - An Optimal Coaching Environment
 - Communication
 - Feedback
 - Mental Skills

- **4 The Teacher/Coach and Physi...**

● 10 Sections

-
- Unit 4 Objectives
 - Teaching and Learning
 - Rest and Recovery

- Training Schedule
- The Individual Practice Session
- Growth and Development
- Nutrition
- Hydration
- Performance Enhancing Substances
- Injury Prevention

- **5 The Coach as Teacher**

- 6 Sections

-
- Unit 5 Objectives
 - Teaching and Learning
 - Technical Skill Development
 - Tactical Awareness
 - Practice Planning
 - Coaching During Competition

- **6 Course Conclusion**

- 1 Sections

-
- Conclusion

NFHS First Aid, Health and Safety Course Content

- **1 Introduction**

- 1 Sections

-
- Course Welcome

- **2 Providing Care**

- 11 Sections

-
- Unit 2 Introduction
 - Unit 2 Learning Objectives
 - Your Role in the EMS System
 - Emergency Action Planning
 - Checking a Conscious Adult or Athlete
 - Spinal Injuries
 - The Recovery Position
 - Moving the Injured
 - Shock
 - Blood-Borne Pathogens
 - Preventing Infectious Disease Transmission

- **3 Breathing and Respiratory P...**

- 5 Sections

-
- Unit 3 Introduction
 - Unit 3 Learning Objectives
 - Breathing Emergencies
 - Asthma
 - Choking Procedures

- **4 Sudden Illness**

- 9 Sections

-
- Unit 4 Introduction
 - Unit 4 Learning Objectives
 - Recognizing Sudden Illness

- Seizures
- Strokes
- Diabetes
- Sickle Cell Trait
- Allergic Reactions
- Anaphylaxis

- **5 Environmental Emergencies**

- 6 Sections

-
- Unit 5 Introduction
 - Unit 5 Learning Objectives
 - Hydration
 - Heat-Related Emergencies
 - Cold-Related Emergencies
 - Lightning

- **6 Soft Tissue Injuries**

- 7 Sections

-
- Unit 6 Introduction
 - Unit 6 Learning Objectives
 - Closed Wounds
 - Open Wounds
 - Controlling External Bleeding
 - Burns
 - Special Situations

- **7 Injuries to Muscles, Bones ...**

- 6 Sections

-
- Unit 7 Introduction
 - Unit 7 Learning Objectives
 - Types of Injuries
 - Splinting an Injury
 - Head, Neck and Back Injuries

- Concussion
- **8** [Mental Health and Anxiety D...](#)
 - 5 Sections

- Unit 8 Introduction
- Unit 8 Learning Objectives
- Mental Health Problems
- Anxiety Disorders
- The Coach's Role
- **9** [Preventing Infectious Disea...](#)
 - 4 Sections

- Unit 9 Introduction
- Unit 9 Learning Objectives
- Skin Conditions and Infections
- Mono
- **10** [Conclusion](#)
 - 1 Sections
-



The NFHS is an accredited institution by Cognia and exceeds the same high standards that are expected from schools across



Chris Davis
Principal
Arlington High School

12060 Arlington Trail * Arlington, TN 38002 * 901.389.2497 * 901.389-2498 Fax * www.acsk-12.org

August 20, 2025

Dear Members of the TSSAA Board of Control,

I am writing on behalf of Arlington High School to respectfully request consideration for a revision to the TSSAA bylaws. Article I, Section 10 A. 3. of the TSSAA Bylaws requires that all classified (non-certified) employee coaches must complete both the **NFHS First Aid** and **NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching** courses prior to assuming coaching responsibilities. (Said section of the Bylaws states that the fee for high school division Non-Faculty Coaches is \$75.00; however, it is our understanding that the fee is now \$100.00.)

Proposal:

We propose that **full-time classified employees** who serve in coaching roles be classified the same as **full-time certified teachers** for the purposes of required training. Under this change, **only non-faculty coaches** would be required to complete the **NFHS First Aid, Health and Safety** course and the **NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching** online course.

Rationale:

- 1. Redundancy with District Training Requirements:**
Many districts already require all full-time employees—including classified personnel—to undergo regular training in basic first aid, CPR, and student safety protocols. Requiring completion of the NFHS First Aid course in addition to district-mandated training often results in unnecessary redundancy and administrative burden and lessen the cost of already cash-strapped athletic programs.
- 2. Support for Understaffed Athletic Programs:**
As schools face increasing challenges in filling coaching vacancies, particularly in smaller or rural districts, relaxing this requirement for classified employees would enable schools to better utilize internal personnel who are already familiar with school procedures, students, and the community.
- 3. Encouraging Broader Participation in School Athletics:**
Amending this Bylaw would encourage broader participation from support staff in athletic programs, helping schools provide more diverse and well-rounded extracurricular opportunities for students.

Arlington Community Schools offer educational and employment opportunities without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, or genetic information and adheres to the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Proposed Amendment to TSSAA Bylaw Article I, Section 10 A. 3. (Draft):

Non-faculty Coaches must complete the NFHS "Fundamentals of Coaching" and "First Aid, Health, & Safety for Coaches" courses prior to assuming the position. Coaches who have successfully completed the ASEP Coaches Education Course prior to May 15, 2013, will not be required to take the NFHS courses. Member schools must pay an annual registration fee per Non-faculty Coach. The fee for high school division Non-Faculty Coaches is \$75.00. The fee for middle school division Non-Faculty Coaches is \$50.

Proposed Amendment to TSSAA Bylaw Article I, Section 10 (1) and (4) (Draft):

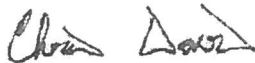
A Full-Time School Employee is defined as an individual who meets either of the following criteria:

- Holds a Tennessee teaching license or the equivalent and is employed as a full-time certified teacher by a board of education for a minimum of 100 school days. OR*
- Is employed by a member school or school system in a non-licensed position, working 30 hours or more per week in a non-coaching role. This individual must be a direct employee of the school or school system and not an independent contractor or employed by an independent contractor.*

We greatly appreciate the leadership and oversight the TSSAA provides in maintaining the safety, professionalism, and educational integrity of interscholastic athletics in Tennessee. We believe this proposed amendment would support schools in building sustainable coaching staff models while maintaining student safety and competitive fairness.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this proposal further or provide supporting documentation if needed.

Respectfully submitted.



Chris Davis
Principal
Arlington High School



Article I Section 8 TSSAA Sports Calendar (Scrimmage Rule)

Article IV Section 10 (Jamborees)

~~Scrimmage Rule—After the TSSAA first official day of practice in all sports, a school cannot practice with or scrimmage another school until both schools have practiced a minimum of three days. No tournament format of any type may be used. Scrimmages should look more like practice than games. Once a school has played their first game, there can be no more scrimmages. (Applies to High School & Middle School Division) In the high school division a school may have a maximum of four scrimmages or two scrimmage dates or one scrimmage date and two scrimmages (A scrimmage date is defined as more than two schools scrimmaging on the same day)~~

Exhibition game - An exhibition is a competition between two schools that occurs prior to the TSSAA Date of First contest for each sport. In the high school division, a school may have a maximum of four exhibition games or two exhibition dates. (An exhibition date is defined as two or more schools participating against each other on the same day). Registered TSSAA officials must be used for exhibition games. Schools are subject to the same sportsmanship requirements and penalties when participating in an exhibition game. School teams may practice with each other from the TSSAA Date of First Practice until the TSSAA Date of First Contest, but TSSAA officials may not be used unless the game is recognized as an exhibition. Any student enrolled and in regular attendance at a school is eligible to compete in an exhibition.

Jamborees Section 10.

A member school may participate in one jamboree per sport, provided (a) the jamboree is held before any of the participating schools play their first game; (b) the jamboree is sponsored by the participating schools and all proceeds go to the participating schools; (c) the jamboree is conducted in accordance with the following regulations:

- A. No team or participant shall play more than the equivalent of half of a game or contest.
- B. Registered TSSAA officials must be used.
- C. Schools must hold membership in TSSAA or membership in a Tennessee conference in order to be eligible to participate in a jamboree. (Out-of-state schools must obtain approval from their state association before participating.)
- D. In the high school division, football schools may participate in a jamboree as early as Thursday of the week preceding the opening of football season.
- E. In the high school division, basketball schools may participate in a jamboree one week preceding the opening of basketball season. Participation in such a jamboree shall not count as



a regular-season contest or pre-season scrimmage provided the jamboree meets the above regulations.

Article I Section 8 TSSAA Sports Calendar (Scrimmage Rule)

Scrimmage Rule – After the TSSAA first official day of practice in all sports, a school can~~not~~ practice with or scrimmage with another school ~~until both schools have practiced a minimum of three days. No tournament format of any type may be used. Scrimmages should look more like practice than games.~~ Once a school has played their first game, there can be no more scrimmages. (Applies to High School & Middle School Division) In the high school division a school may have a maximum of four scrimmages or two scrimmage dates or one scrimmage date and two scrimmages (A scrimmage date is defined as more than two schools scrimmaging on the same day) If registered TSSAA officials are used for a scrimmage, the schools are subject to the same sportsmanship requirements and penalties that apply to regular season contests.

TSSAA Legislative Proposal - Summer Workout Coaching Link

Dear Mr, Reeves and Members of the TSSAA Legislative Council,

Lipscomb Academy respectfully submits the following proposal to Article II, Section 12 d. of the TSSAA Bylaws which describes the type of activity constituting a “coaching link.”

Current Bylaw: Article II. Section 12. Ineligible Transfer Students.

The following transfer students are ineligible for a period of twelve months from the student's last participation date, unless a different period of ineligibility is specified:

- d. (Varsity, JV) If a student with an athletic record transfers to a new school where an “athletic coaching link” existed in the past 12 months, that student is ineligible for 12 months past their first date of enrollment at the new school at all levels in the specific sports where a linkage was present. Links may include (1) attendance at an individual camp (and then transferring); (2) playing on non-school (independent) teams where the school coach is the coach or served as an administrator for the independent team/league (and then transferring to that coach’s school); (3) transferring into a school where a former coach has been hired; and (4) transferring to a school where a former or current personal trainer or strength and conditioning coach is employed.*

Proposed Edition: Article II. Section 12. Ineligible Transfer Students.

- d. (Varsity, JV) If a student with an athletic record transfers to a new school where an “athletic coaching link” existed in the past 12 months, that student is ineligible for 12 months past their first date of enrollment at the new school at all levels in the specific sports where a linkage was present. Links may include (1) attendance at an individual camp (and then transferring); (2) playing on non-school (independent) teams where the school coach is the coach or served as an administrator for the independent team/league (and then transferring to that coach’s school); (3) transferring into a school where a former coach has been hired; **and** (4) transferring to a school where a former or current personal trainer or strength and conditioning coach is employed; **and (5) participating in voluntary summer workouts with any member of a schools coaching staff (and then transferring to that school).***

Rationale

While the current “coaching link” bylaw discourages coaches from using auxiliary means (club, camps and individual training) to draw athletes to their school, it allows (by exclusion) the use of voluntary summer workouts for, effectively, the same purpose.

Currently, a student may participate in voluntary summer workouts at multiple schools, evaluating different teams, coaches and facilities, and then transfer to one of those schools without consequence, as long as no recruiting conversations are reported and proven.

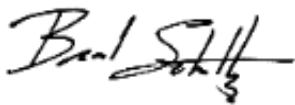
Utilizing summer workouts in this manner was not attractive prior to the adoption of the first time transfer exception (Article II, Section 13, subsection m), which all but eliminated eligibility consequences for transferring. Now that the likelihood of ineligibility tied to transferring is greatly reduced - nearly 90% approval for transfers (based on early 20205-2026 data) - using summer workouts as an admissions/athletics funnel is significantly more attractive.

This type of activity at any other point of the year would be a violation of both the spirit and letter of the TSSAA Bylaws. Two examples:

- The Practice rule (*Article II, Section 14*), restricts participation to only enrolled students in regular attendance.
- The Coaching Link (*Article II, Section 12. d.*), enforces a 12 month period of ineligibility should a student transfer to a school after working with one of the schools coaches in the previous 12 months.

If a student is subject to a period of ineligibility for transferring to a school after working with one of the schools coaches in club, private training, individual camp, or a previous school environment within the last 12 months, the same rule should apply to a student who participates in summer workouts with a schools staff prior to enrolling at that school.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Schultz". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "B" and a long, horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Brad Schultz
Lipscomb Academy
Head of School

Section 11. Students Under Discipline: (Varsity, JV) If a student has satisfied all other requirements for eligibility but was under discipline at his/her former school, the student shall be ineligible at the new school in all sports for twelve months or until the disciplinary charges have been removed, whichever is less. A student is considered to be "under discipline" if he or she has been suspended from school and/or placed in an alternative setting. The discipline has been removed if the school that has imposed the disciplinary action would allow the student to re-enroll.

Students Changing Schools

Section 11.2. General Provisions. (Varsity)

~~**Under Discipline: (Varsity, JV)** If a student has satisfied all other requirements for eligibility but was under discipline at his/her former school, the student shall be ineligible at the new school in all sports for twelve months or until the disciplinary charges have been removed, whichever is less. A student is considered to be "under discipline" if he or she has been suspended from school and/or placed in an alternative setting. The discipline has been removed if the school that has imposed the disciplinary action would allow the student to re-enroll.~~

Purposes: The purposes for restricting athletic eligibility for a transfer student are (1) to maintain academics as the primary purpose of secondary education, (2) to prevent exploitation of children for the sake of interscholastic athletics, and (3) to preserve stability in the interscholastic athletic programs of the member schools and maintain fair competition between schools. The restrictions in these Transfer Rules are also intended to deter recruiting for athletic purposes.

"Transfer Student" Defined. A transfer student is ~~any student changing schools for any reason other than having completed the highest, or terminal, grade at another school. A student who must change schools because he/she has completed the highest grade at his/her previous school is not considered a transfer student and is eligible to participate in athletics at any school he/she attends, without further approval~~ **is a change from one school to another for any reason other than completion of the highest or terminal grade, by a student with an athletic record.**

"Athletic Record" Defined. A student has an "athletic record" if the student has played in an interscholastic contest at the varsity, junior varsity, ninth grade, or any other level, on behalf of a TSSAA member school or a school that is a member of a state athletic association holding membership in the National Federation.

Executive Director Approval Required. A school may not allow a transfer student to participate in athletics until ~~his/her~~ **the student's** eligibility has been verified and approved by the Executive Director. The school is responsible for the accuracy and completeness of the information supplied to the Executive Director for this purpose.

Participation While Ineligible. If a student who is ineligible, under these provisions regarding students changing schools, competes in a contest while ineligible, then the student upon becoming eligible under these provisions will nonetheless be ineligible to participate in twice the number of contests in which ~~he/she participated as an ineligible student~~ **the student participated while ineligible** or will be ineligible for the remainder of the season, whichever is less (~~See Article III, Sections 12-15~~). The school will also be disciplined in accordance ~~to~~ **with** Article III, Sections 12-15.

Section 11.3. Ineligible Transfer Students.

The following transfer students are ineligible for a period of twelve months from the student's last participation date, unless a different period of ineligibility is specified:

- ~~a. (Varsity) A student who engages in three or more days of practice after the TSSAA first official date of practice with a school in which the student is enrolled shall be ineligible in that sport for that season if the student enrolls in another school without a corresponding change in the residence~~ **or meeting the provisions of Section 13 (m);**
- ~~b. (Varsity) A student who transfers as a result of a change of residence is ineligible unless (1) the old residence is outside the territory of the new school, (2) the new residence is outside the territory of the old school, and (3) the new residence is inside the territory of the new school;~~
- ~~c. (Varsity) If a student has been ruled eligible as a result of a change of residence, and any member of the family unit returns to the former residence before the student has been enrolled in the new school for one complete school year (or twelve months if the transfer occurred during the school year), the student will be ineligible for twelve months from his/her last participation date;~~
- ~~d. (Varsity, JV) If a student with an athletic record transfers to a new school where an "athletic coaching link"~~

existed in the past 12 months, that student is ineligible for 12 months past their first date of enrollment at the new school at all levels in the specific sports where a linkage was present. Links may include (1) attendance at an individual camp (and then transferring); (2) playing on non-school (independent) teams where the school coach is the coach or served as an administrator for the independent team/league (and then transferring to that coach's school); (3) transferring into a school where a former coach has been hired; and (4) transferring to a school where a former or current personal trainer or strength and conditioning coach is employed.

This rule does not apply if the student moves to his/her new schools after completion of the highest ending grade at his/her previous school.

- i. **(Varsity)** A student who transfers after having previously transferred under Subsection 14(A) shall be ineligible for twelve months from the student's last participation date, regardless of when the transfer occurs, unless the student is eligible under Subsection 14(B);
- ii. **(Varsity)** A student who transfers at any time other than between school years shall be ineligible for twelve months from the student's last participation date, unless the student is eligible under Subsection 14(B);
- iii. **(Varsity)** A student who engages in three or more days of practice after the TSSAA first official date of practice with a school in which the student is enrolled shall be ineligible in that sport for that season if the student then enrolls in another school;
- iv. **(Varsity, JV)** If a student with an athletic record transfers to a new school where an "athletic link" existed in the past 12 months, that student is ineligible for 12 months from the student's first date of enrollment at the new school at all levels in the specific sports where a link was present. Links may include, but are not limited to, (1) attendance at an individual camp (and then transferring); (2) playing on non-school (independent) teams where the school coach is the coach or served as an administrator for the independent team/league (and then transferring to that coach's school); (3) transferring into a school where a former coach has been hired; and (4) transferring to a school where a former or current personal trainer or strength and conditioning coach is employed.

This provision does not apply if the student moves to his/her new school after completion of the highest ending grade at his/her previous school.

If the ineligible transfer student has an athletic record for the previous or current school year in any TSSAA sanctioned sport, the student will be ineligible to participate in the sport(s) in which an athletic record has been established.

Section 134. Eligible Transfer Students. (Varsity)

Except as otherwise provided in Section 123 above, the following transfer students are eligible:

- ~~a.~~ The student has no athletic record in the previous twelve months in any sport sponsored by TSSAA;
- ~~b.~~ There has been a bona fide change of residence by the student's entire family unit in which (1) the old residence is outside the territory of the new school, (2) the new residence is outside the territory of the old school, and (3) the new residence is inside the territory of the new school. If such a change of residence occurs between school years, the student must transfer at the beginning of the school year to be eligible. If the change of residence occurs during the school year, the student may transfer without loss of eligibility (1) at the time his/her parents change residence; (2) at the end of the next report card period; (3) at the close of the semester or term; or (4) at the close of the school year;
- ~~c.~~ The student changes schools as a direct result of re-zoning **of the existing residence of the student's family unit** or re-assignment of students by the local school system provided the student transfers at the time they are re-zoned or re-assigned;
- ~~d.~~ The student is moving from a boarding school where they are a boarder to the school serving the territory where his/her parents live, or vice versa, provided the student has attended the school he/she is leaving for a minimum of twelve months and provided the principal at the school he/she is leaving indicates in writing that the move is not for athletic or disciplinary reasons. The move must be at the beginning of the school year. (Note: The school must be outside the day school territory of the boarding school.);
- ~~e.~~ The student is transferring to a **member** school in the same **school** system into the earliest grade offered at that **member** school, i.e. at the student's first opportunity to move to that school;
- ~~f.~~ The student who has been determined by a Court to be dependent and neglected and consequently changes residences and schools as a result of a Court order;
- ~~g.~~ The first time the student changes residence from one parent to the other as a result of a court-ordered custody change, so long as the principal of the former school attests in writing that the move was not for athletic or disciplinary reasons; or
- ~~h.~~ The first time the student changes residence from a guardian to either or both parents as a result of a court-ordered custody change, so long as the principal of the former school attests in writing that the move was not for athletic or disciplinary reasons;

- ~~i. The student is attending school where the student's parent/guardian works as a full-time certified teacher, that parent/guardian takes a full-time job as a certified teacher at a different school, and the student transfers to the school where the parent/guardian takes the new job. The transfer must take place when the parent/guardian takes the job or, if the job change occurs during the school year, the transfer must take place when the parent/guardian takes the new job or must be made at the beginning of the following school year;~~
- ~~j. The student who transfers from school A to school B and then returns to school A without having participated in any sanctioned sport at any level or without practicing three or more days after the first official TSSAA day of practice in any sport at any level at school B. This must be verified in writing by the administration of school B.~~
- ~~k. A student transfers from a member school to a non-traditional setting but continues to participate for the same member school;~~
- ~~l. A non-traditional student transfers to the member school where he/she is already participating;~~
- ~~m. The first time the student transfers to another school due to a significant academic, social-emotional, environmental or mental health need provided that the sending school's administration does not attest that the transfer is for athletic or disciplinary reasons within seven days of notification of the transfer;~~
- ~~n. The student is moving as a direct result of the dissolution of the student's home due to death;~~
- ~~o. The student is moving as a direct result of the divorce or separation of the student's parents; provided a complaint or petition for absolute divorce or legal separation has been filed with a court having jurisdiction to grant the divorce;~~
- ~~p. The student is in foster care and has consequently changed residences and schools as a result of a change in placement; and~~
- ~~q. The student changes schools as a direct result of the military deployment of their parent or guardian.~~

A. First Time Transfers

1. As required by Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-2-901, the first time a middle school student (grades 6-8) or a high school student (grades 9-12, or a student who participates in varsity high school athletics as an 8th grade student) transfers from one school to another, upon verification and approval by the Executive Director, the student shall be eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics at his or her new school, so long as (1) the transfer occurs in the summer between the end of one school year and the beginning of the ensuing school year, and (2) the student is not ineligible under Subsection B or by virtue of some other eligibility rule (e.g., Academic Rules, Age Rule, Semester Rule, Recruiting Rule, Tuition and Financial Aid Rule, etc.). The eligibility provided for in this provision shall not apply in the case of a second or subsequent transfer at the middle school or high school level or in the case of a mid-school-year transfer by a student.
2. **Transition Provision.** A student who transfers for the first time during the 2025-2026 school year prior to April 15, 2026, and who meets all other requirements of subsection (A)(1) above, shall also be eligible at his or her new school at the beginning of the 2026-2027 school year despite the transfer not having occurred in the summer.

B. Other Eligible Transfer Students.

A student who transfers for one of the following reasons shall be immediately eligible, regardless of when the transfer occurs and regardless of whether the student has previously transferred:

1. The student changes schools as a direct result of re-zoning of the existing residence of the student's family unit or re-assignment of students by the local school system provided the student transfers at the time they are re-zoned or re-assigned;
2. The student who has been determined by a Court to be dependent and neglected and consequently changes residences and schools as a result of a Court order;
3. The student is moving as a direct result of the dissolution of the student's home due to death;
4. The student is in foster care and has consequently changed residences and schools as a result of a change in placement; or
5. The student changes schools as a direct result of the military deployment of their parent or guardian.

Non-Traditional Students (Varsity, JV)

Section 156. This bylaw establishes the minimum eligibility requirements for a non-traditional student desiring to practice, tryout, and participate at any level in extracurricular athletics at a member school:

1. The **student** must reside in the TSSAA member school's territory.
2. The parent or guardian must notify the principal of the TSSAA member school of the non-traditional student's intent to try out and possibly participate before the first official practice date in the sport.
3. A non-traditional student participating for an independent school must pay full tuition and abide by all financial aid rules. For the purpose of this rule, "full tuition" is defined as the same amount paid by all other students enrolled and in regular attendance at the school.
4. **An enrolled student may move from a member school to a non-traditional setting and continue to participate for the same school, provided they meet all other requirements.**
5. **A non-traditional student may move to the member school where they participate and continue to participate for that school.**
6. Non-traditional students must meet all other eligibility requirements.

Special **Exceptional** Cases Involving Hardship

Section 234. Except for the eligibility rules regarding age and the number of semesters in school, TSSAA ~~shall have the authority to~~ **shall have the discretion to** set aside the effect of any eligibility rule upon an individual student **in an exceptional case** when:

- (a) the circumstances causing the student to fail to satisfy the eligibility rule were unforeseen ~~and~~ **or** unavoidable;
- (b) application of the rule to the student works an undue hardship in light of the unforeseen ~~and~~ **or** unavoidable circumstances; **and**
- (c) application of the rule would not accomplish the purpose **or purposes** for which the rule was intended; ~~and~~ .
- ~~(d) in the case of a change of schools, the change is for reasons unrelated to participation in athletics.~~

The hardship application must be submitted by the school at which eligibility is sought, and ~~the~~ the burden of establishing each of these elements to the Executive Director's satisfaction is upon ~~the~~ that school at which eligibility is sought. The individual student must meet the TSSAA definition of *enrolled* at the school where eligibility is sought in order for the Executive Director to consider the hardship case.

Any decision of the Executive Director on any request for a waiver of eligibility rules under this Section may be appealed *de novo* to the Board of Control at its August, November, January March or **June** meetings. The Board of Control only considers appeals at the June meeting on behalf of students that meet the TSSAA definition of *enrolled* at their new school. If the appeal to the Board of Control or any materials in connection with that appeal are received by TSSAA less than one full week prior to the scheduled Board of Control meeting, the member school at which eligibility is sought shall be responsible for all additional expenses associated with providing copies of that material to the Board of Control. ~~A school appealing a decision of the Executive Director under this Section must have an~~ **If no** administrator (principal, assistant principal, or athletic director) **of the appealing school is** present at the Board of Control meeting, **the hardship appeal will be determined, without a hearing, based solely on the written materials submitted.**



Level 1: Indirect Solicitation

- Coaches commenting on or sharing students' social media posts before the student is enrolled at the school (see definition of "enrolled" in TSSAA Bylaws).

Examples of Level 1 Violations

- **The "Retweet":** A coach or school athletic account retweets, likes or comments on a prospective student's "I am blessed to announce I will be playing for [School] next year" graphic.
- **The "Welcome Post":** The school's social media manager creates a "Welcome to the Family" graphic for a prospective transfer student.
- **The "Public Comment":** A coach commenting, "*Can't wait to get to work!*" on a prospective student's transfer announcement post.

Standardized Penalties

- Loss of half of off-season practice opportunities and one year of probation
- The student in question may be declared ineligible for participation at the school involved.
- \$750 total fine (\$250 level 1 recruiting, \$500 1-year probation)

Level 2: General Recruiting / Protocol Violations

- Responding to an inquiry made by a student athlete or family member without referring the individual or family to the administrative official or officials of the school who normally deal with the admission process.
- General social media posts encouraging student-athletes to transfer (call to action)
- Public communications, advertisements/social media posts that market athletic opportunities for student-athletes but do not market the entire school program.

Examples of Level 2 Violations

- A coach posting: "If you aren't getting the playing time you deserve, my DMs are open."
- A coach posting: "It's never too late to come be a Badger!"
- A coach responds to a DM from a student at another school with information about how they can apply to come to their school, rather than referring that student to the admissions office.
- A video or social media post which markets the advantages of an academic program to student-athletes as opposed to marketing the advantages of the academic program to all prospective students.
- A video or social media post which highlights the athletic program as opposed to marketing the total school program and includes a call to action to apply or enroll.

Standardized Penalties

- Loss of half of off-season practice opportunities for two years and two years of probation



- The student in question may be declared ineligible for participation at the school involved.
- \$1500 total fine (\$500 level 2 recruiting, \$500 year 1 probation, \$500 year 2 probation)

Level 3: Targeted Recruiting (Direct Contact)

- Direct, private, or third-party contact initiated by a person directly or indirectly associated with a school to a specific student-athlete enrolled at another school to solicit or encourage the student-athlete's enrollment.

Examples of Level 3 Violations

- A coach sends a Direct Message (DM) or text to a student-athlete at another school to ask whether they are interested in transferring or applying to that school.
- A coach asks a current player or booster to contact a specific student at another school to "recruit" them.
- A coach of an independent team that uses a school's facilities for practice encouraging students who are not enrolled at the school to consider transferring.
- A booster club member or program donor initiates contact with a prospective athlete or their family encouraging them to apply or transfer to the school they support.

Standardized Penalties

- The school will be given a choice of removing the coach for a specified number of contests and pay a fine of \$500.00 or face further disciplinary action. The school shall not allow the suspended coach to attend games while under suspension.
- Program placed on restrictive probation (removal from postseason tournament series) for one year followed by 1-year Probation.
- Removal of all off-season practice opportunities in year one, removal of half of the off-season practice opportunities in year two.
- The student in question will be declared ineligible to participate for a minimum of one year at all levels of competition at the school, in violation of the recruiting rule.
- \$2750 total fine (\$750 level 3 recruiting, \$1000 year 1 restrictive probation, \$500 year 2 probation, \$500 coach penalty)

Level 4: Aggravated Recruiting (Inducements)

- Targeted recruiting (Level 3) coupled with the promise or provision of "extra benefits" or financial incentives to the student or their family by a person directly or indirectly associated with a school.

Examples of Level 4 Violations

- Cash, gift cards, any items of commercial value, moving expenses, rent/housing, job opportunities, or "under the table" monetary promises.
- Offering and NIL opportunity contingent upon enrollment at a particular school.



Standardized Penalties

- The school will be given a choice of removing the coach for a specified number of contests and pay a fine of \$500.00 or face further disciplinary action. If the school chooses to suspend the coach, the school shall not allow the suspended coach to attend any games while suspended.
- Program placed on restrictive probation for two years, followed by one year of probation.
- Removal of all off-season practice opportunities for two years
- Removal of half of the off-season practice opportunities in year three.
- The student in question will be declared ineligible to participate for a minimum of one year at all levels of competition at the school in violation of the recruiting rule.
- \$4000 total fine (\$1000 level 4 recruiting, \$1000 year 1 restrictive probation, \$1000 year 2 restrictive probation, \$500 year 3 probation, \$500 coach penalty)

Draft

Recruiting Rule

(Varsity) Section 17. Athletic recruiting is prohibited. Athletic recruiting is the use of influence on a student or the parents or guardians of a student, by any person(s) directly or indirectly associated with the school, to secure or retain a student for athletic purposes. In the event that there is a violation of this rule, there shall be a penalty against the school, and the student(s) who was the subject of the violation ~~shall~~ **may become** ineligible ~~for a minimum of one year~~ **at the school involved.**

~~The penalty and any additional period of ineligibility beyond the one-year minimum will be determined by~~ **The Executive Director will determine the level of the recruiting violation** based on a consideration of the number of violations involved, the number of student-athletes involved, the nature of the violation(s), the individual(s) responsible for the violation(s), and the extent to which the violation may have been knowing, deliberate, or in reckless disregard of the provisions of this rule ~~and the commentary that accompanies this rule.~~

There are four levels of Recruiting Rule Violations:

Level 1: Indirect Solicitation

- Coaches commenting on or sharing students' social media posts before the student is enrolled at the school (see definition of "enrolled" in TSSAA Bylaws).

Standardized Penalties

- Loss of half of off-season practice opportunities and one year of probation
- The student in question may be declared ineligible for participation at the school involved.
- \$750 total fine (\$250 level 1 recruiting, \$500 1-year probation)

Level 2: General Recruiting / Protocol Violations

- Responding to an inquiry made by a student athlete or family member without referring the individual or family to the administrative official or officials of the school who normally deal with the admission process.
- General social media posts encouraging student-athletes to transfer (call to action)
- Public communications, advertisements/social media posts that market athletic opportunities for student-athletes but do not market the entire school program.

Standardized Penalties

- Loss of half of off-season practice opportunities for two years and two years of probation
- The student in question may be declared ineligible for participation at the school involved.
- \$1500 total fine (\$500 level 2 recruiting, \$500 year 1 probation, \$500 year 2 probation)

Level 3: Targeted Recruiting (Direct Contact)

- Direct, private, or third-party contact initiated by a person directly or indirectly associated with a school to a specific student-athlete enrolled at another school to solicit or encourage the student-athlete's enrollment.

Standardized Penalties

- The school will be given a choice of removing the coach for a specified number of contests and pay a fine of \$500.00 or face further disciplinary action. The school shall not allow the suspended coach to attend games while under suspension.
- Program placed on restrictive probation (removal from postseason tournament series) for one year followed by 1-year Probation.
- Removal of all off-season practice opportunities in year one, removal of half of the off-season practice opportunities in year two.
- The student in question will be declared ineligible to participate for a minimum of one year at all levels of competition at the school, in violation of the recruiting rule.
- \$2750 total fine (\$750 level 3 recruiting, \$1000 year 1 restrictive probation, \$500 year 2 probation, \$500 coach penalty)

Level 4: Aggravated Recruiting (Inducements)

- Targeted recruiting (Level 3) coupled with the promise or provision of "extra benefits" or financial incentives to the student or their family by a person directly or indirectly associated with a school.

Standardized Penalties

- The school will be given a choice of removing the coach for a specified number of contests and pay a fine of \$500.00 or face further disciplinary action. If the school chooses to suspend the coach, the school shall not allow the suspended coach to attend any games while suspended.
- Program placed on restrictive probation for two years, followed by one year of probation.

- Removal of all off-season practice opportunities for two years
- Removal of half of the off-season practice opportunities in year three.
- The student in question will be declared ineligible to participate for a minimum of one year at all levels of competition at the school in violation of the recruiting rule.
- \$4000 total fine (\$1000 level 4 recruiting, \$1000 year 1 restrictive probation, \$1000 year 2 restrictive probation, \$500 year 3 probation, \$500 coach penalty)

The Executive Director may adjust the level and/or penalty for the violation if it is self-reported by the school. Repeated offenses may result in more severe penalties and will be determined by the Executive Director.



Article I, Section 1

Section 1. High school membership shall be open to any Category 1, 2, 3, or 4 school in Tennessee which includes grade 9 and/or higher. Any school participating in a sanctioned sport(s) that is desiring membership in TSSAA may make application to the Board of Control by the November meeting prior to the school year in which they would like to join. Any school desiring to only participate in a cooperative program that is desiring membership in TSSAA should make application to the Board of Control by the June meeting prior to the school year in which they would like to join. Prior member schools that continue to serve students within the state of Tennessee may also make application to the Board of Control by the November meeting prior to the school year in which they would like to join. Contracts for membership shall be approved or rejected annually by the Board of Control.

Middle school membership shall be open to any Category 1, 2, 3, or 4 school that includes the 6th, 7th, or 8th grade, for boys and girls interscholastic competition. Any Category 1, 2, 3, or 4 school that terminates with the 6th grade may be a member for the purposes of forming a cooperative program for the 6th grade students only. Any school participating in a championship event sport that is desiring membership must submit their request to join by November 15th prior to the school year in which they would like to join. Any school desiring to only participate in a cooperative program that is desiring membership should submit their request to join by June 1st prior to the school year in which they would like to join. Contracts for membership shall be approved or rejected annually by the Board of Control.

Member schools that withdraw from the TSSAA membership must be a limited member for one year upon application to renew membership. Schools that make application after the aforementioned deadlines may be approved for membership, but will not be eligible for postseason competition, nor will member schools be required to schedule contests with them.

Submitted to: Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association
Submitted by: Cleveland High School / Cleveland City Schools
Date: February 11, 2026

Proposal to Establish a Tiered Disqualification Structure

Purpose of the Proposal

Cleveland High School and Cleveland City Schools respectfully propose the adoption of a tiered disqualification structure for ejections in interscholastic athletics. The purpose of this proposal is to promote consistency, proportional accountability, and educational discipline within TSSAA member schools.

Currently, disqualifications often result in uniform penalties regardless of the severity or intent of the act. A tiered system would allow consequences to better align with the nature of the offense while maintaining clear standards and statewide consistency.

Rationale

Proportional Accountability

Not all disqualifications are equal in severity. Actions such as leaving the bench area without participating in an altercation differ significantly from actions involving physical aggression or intentional harm. A tiered structure allows penalties to reflect the seriousness of the behavior.

Educational Discipline

Interscholastic athletics exist to teach accountability, sportsmanship, and growth. Discipline should be corrective and instructive. A structured system that distinguishes between levels of misconduct reinforces appropriate behavioral standards while avoiding blanket penalties that may not fit the conduct.

Consistency Across Member Schools

A clearly defined tiered framework reduces ambiguity and promotes uniform application statewide. It also provides administrators and coaches with clearer guidance when addressing incidents.

Clarity for Officials and Schools

Defined categories would assist officials in properly documenting incidents and allow schools to understand the resulting suspension expectations in advance.

Proposed Tier Structure

Tier I – Minor Procedural Violations

Examples:

- Leaving the bench area without engaging in physical confrontation
- Unsporting conduct technical fouls without physical aggression
- Verbal dissent not involving threats

Recommended Penalty:
Automatic suspension of one contest

Tier II – Moderate Misconduct

Examples:

- Throwing an object in frustration
- Physical contact not resulting in injury
- Escalating a confrontation without initiating a punch

Recommended Penalty:
Automatic suspension of two contests

Tier III – Severe Misconduct

Examples:

- Throwing a punch
- Intentional striking of an opponent
- Actions resulting in injury
- Leaving the bench area and actively engaging in a fight

Recommended Penalty:
Automatic suspension of three or more contests, subject to review

Review and Appeals

For Tier III incidents, the proposal recommends a mandatory administrative review at the district or state level to ensure fairness and consistency. This would allow TSSAA to evaluate context while maintaining firm accountability.

Benefits of a Tiered System

- Aligns consequences with the severity of actions
- Protects student-athletes while maintaining strong discipline
- Enhances clarity for officials, schools, and parents
- Reduces perception of inconsistency in enforcement
- Strengthens the educational mission of athletics

Conclusion

A tiered disqualification model provides a balanced approach to discipline. It maintains accountability while recognizing that not all infractions carry the same level of severity. By implementing a structured framework, TSSAA can reinforce sportsmanship standards while promoting fairness and consistency across member schools.

Cleveland High School and Cleveland City Schools respectfully request consideration of this proposal during the next legislative cycle

Submitted to: Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association
Submitted by: Cleveland High School / Cleveland City Schools
Date: February 11, 2026

Proposal Regarding Alumni Games Counting as an Official Contest

Cleveland High School and Cleveland City Schools respectfully submit this proposal for consideration regarding the status of alumni games within the regular season framework.

We are requesting that alumni games no longer be permitted to count as an official contest toward a team's regular season total under TSSAA regulations. Alumni events can serve as meaningful community traditions and positive engagement opportunities. However, counting them as official contests presents concerns related to competitive equity, student-athlete safety, scheduling integrity, and the overall purpose of interscholastic athletics.

This proposal is not intended to eliminate alumni events. Instead, it seeks to clarify their role by designating them as non-countable exhibitions that do not apply toward the maximum number of allowable contests under TSSAA bylaws.

Reason for the Request

Competitive Equity

Programs across the state vary significantly in alumni participation and structure. Some alumni games are highly competitive, while others are more informal in nature. Allowing these events to count as official contests can create inconsistencies in scheduling and competitive balance from school to school.

Student-Athlete Safety

Alumni participants are not enrolled students and are not subject to the same eligibility requirements, conditioning standards, or oversight as current student-athletes. Differences in age and physical maturity may increase the risk of injury. Official contests should involve only eligible student-athletes competing under consistent standards.

Educational Purpose

TSSAA athletics exist to serve enrolled students. Each allowable contest should prioritize competition between member schools. When an alumni game counts toward the regular season limit, it reduces opportunities for student-athletes to compete against peer institutions.

Scheduling Integrity

The maximum contest limit exists to promote fairness in scheduling, postseason qualification, and statistical evaluation. Including alumni games within that limit can distort the competitive framework and create unintended disparities.

Proposed Revision

We recommend that TSSAA bylaws be amended to state:

Alumni games shall not be counted as an official contest toward the maximum allowable number of regular season contests. Alumni events may be conducted as preseason or postseason exhibitions provided they comply with applicable TSSAA safety and supervision standards.

This adjustment would preserve community traditions while protecting the integrity of the regular season structure.

Conclusion

Alumni games can remain valuable community events. However, they should not occupy one of the limited official contest opportunities available to student-athletes. Reclassifying alumni games as non-countable exhibitions promotes fairness, safety, and consistency across all member schools.

We respectfully request consideration of this proposal during the next rules review cycle.

Submitted to: Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association
Submitted by: Cleveland High School / Cleveland City Schools
Date: February 11, 2026

Proposal to Strengthen Suspension Accountability and Prevent Schedule Manipulation

Purpose

Cleveland High School and Cleveland City Schools respectfully submit this proposal to the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association requesting the adoption of clear policy language that prohibits the addition or modification of contests for the purpose of satisfying a suspension resulting from a disqualification.

The purpose of this proposal is to preserve the integrity of disciplinary action and ensure consistent accountability across all TSSAA member schools.

Background

Under the current structure, when a student-athlete or coach is suspended for a specified number of contests, there is potential for schedules to be adjusted after the disqualification occurs. In certain circumstances, additional contests may be added or substituted following the suspension.

While schedule changes may not always be made with improper intent, the absence of explicit policy language creates inconsistency across member schools and weakens the intended impact of disciplinary penalties.

Rationale

Integrity of Discipline

A suspension is intended to carry meaningful competitive consequences. If contests can be added or modified after a disqualification in order to satisfy the suspension more quickly or conveniently, the integrity of the penalty is diminished. Discipline must reflect real competitive impact, not scheduling flexibility.

Statewide Equity

All member schools should operate under uniform standards. Without clear limitations, scheduling adjustments may create uneven accountability across classifications and regions. A consistent statewide framework ensures fairness.

Clarity and Protection for Schools

Clear policy language removes ambiguity and protects administrators from pressure to alter schedules in response to disciplinary outcomes. It establishes firm expectations and strengthens institutional decision-making.

Proposed Policy Language

It is recommended that TSSAA bylaws include the following provisions:

Contests used to satisfy a suspension resulting from a disqualification must be part of the team's officially published schedule at the time the disqualification occurs. Member schools shall not add, substitute, or otherwise modify contests for the purpose of satisfying or reducing the impact of a suspension.

In the event a member school elects to add a contest after a disqualification has occurred, the suspended student-athlete shall remain ineligible until the originally scheduled number of contests, as they existed at the time of the disqualification, have been completed.

If a scheduled contest is canceled and not rescheduled in the ordinary course of the season, the suspension shall carry forward to the next regularly scheduled contest.

Anticipated Impact

- Preserves the integrity of suspension penalties
- Ensures consequences reflect the original competitive calendar
- Eliminates incentives to manipulate scheduling
- Promotes statewide fairness and consistency
- Reinforces accountability within educational athletics

Conclusion

Accountability is foundational to interscholastic athletics. Discipline must be meaningful, consistent, and resistant to circumvention. By clarifying that suspensions are tied to the originally established schedule, TSSAA will strengthen competitive integrity and public confidence in its disciplinary framework.

Cleveland High School and Cleveland City Schools respectfully request consideration of this proposal during the next legislative review cycle.



Summer Participation Possible Regulations

No student may participate in summer activities with any member school other than the school they attended the previous spring unless they have been officially designated as a "Student of Record" at the new school.

Independent Schools

- A student becomes a "Student of Record" at an independent school once the student has completed his/her classes and exams at his/her previous school, signed the school's enrollment contract, and paid the necessary deposit.

Public Schools

- A student becomes a "Student of Record" at a public school once the student has completed his/her classes and exams at his/her previous school and appears in the school's Student Information System, **OR** once the student has filed a formal "Declaration of Intent to Participate" with the school or district-level administration.

The Legislative Council could agree on a penalty for the school that allows a student who is not a student of record to participate in summer activities.

Amateur Rule (Varsity, JV) Section 18.

In order to be eligible to participate a student must be an amateur.

An “amateur” is a student who has never received payment for athletic performance, who has never used and is not using his/her knowledge of athletics or his/her athletic skill for pay in exchange for pay in the sports which this Association governs, and who has always contested under his/her own name is an amateur. (Accepting money for officiating athletic contests, payment for instructional services, or for working as an employee in a city or county recreation program is not a violation of this regulation). A student does not cease to be an amateur if he/she accepts money for officiating athletic contests, payment for instructional services, or compensation for working as an employee in a city or county recreation program. Bowling, golf and tennis students will abide by USBC, USGA, and USTA regulations in accepting pay.

Students may receive payment for activities not related to performance provided that they are if the activities are carried out in a manner that does not suggest or reasonably suggest the endorsement or sponsorship of the TSSAA member school. The student's activities for which they are he/she is compensated may not include an image or likeness of the student in a uniform, or other clothing or gear depicting the name or logo of the TSSAA member school the student is attending or has attended. No reference to TSSAA accolades or championships may be used in the student's activities for which he/she is compensated.

~~A student who violates any portion of the Amateur Rule shall be penalized according to the sanctions below.~~ The member school the student attends shall ensure that the following consequences for violating the Amateur Rule are imposed:

- a. First Violation: The student shall receive a formal warning and return any award(s) or money received in violation of this rule. ~~TSSAA shall direct the student in violation to;~~ and the student shall immediately remove any endorsement, advertisement, sponsorship, or other promotional activity that is in violation of the Amateur Rule.
- b. Second Violation: The student shall be ineligible to participate in interscholastic athletics at any level of competition for a period of one (1) year from the date of TSSAA's determination of the second violation.
- c. Third Violation: The penalty and any additional period of ineligibility will be determined by the Executive Director based on a consideration of the nature of the violation(s) and the extent to which the violation(s) may have been knowing, deliberate, or in reckless disregard of the provisions of this rule.

If it can be determined that the violation occurred solely in relation to a specific sport, any period of ineligibility for second or third violations shall apply only to that specific sport.

Note: ~~It is expected that the TSSAA member school will ensure adherence to any of the above penalties imposed on their student.~~

Name, Image, and Likeness Guideline: A student athlete may profit from the student's name, image, or likeness ("NIL"). While the student or the student's family may be compensated for the student's own NIL, the compensation must not be expressly or impliedly conditioned on the student's participation in interscholastic athletics for a particular school. NIL at the high school level is not "pay for play."

Neither a student athlete nor the student's family may be a member of or receive compensation or any other benefit, whether in money or in kind, from a "Collective." A Collective is any entity, organization, or group that is established for the purpose of compensating or benefiting an individual student athlete or group of student athletes, or their families, based on their affiliation with or attendance at certain schools.

A support organization such as a booster club is not considered a Collective if the organization is operated under the supervision of a member school and provides monetary or other benefits to the school such as improvements to school athletic facilities, school athletic equipment, school team meals or other school team benefits, provided the benefits are not directed to individual student athletes or groups of student athletes or their families.

A violation of this guideline may violate the Recruiting Rule as well as the Amateur Rule. Student athletes violating this guideline may be subject to loss of eligibility to compete in TSSAA activities, and any member school that knowingly allows any student athlete to violate this guideline may be subject to penalties in accordance with the TSSAA Bylaws.



Possible Revision to Period of Ineligibility

A transfer student who does not meet the requirements for varsity eligibility, shall be ineligible as follows:

- The student is ineligible for **30 calendar days** or **one-half (1/2)** of the maximum number of contests in that sport, whichever is less. The student shall also be ineligible for postseason competition.