

Lower Merion School District

Policy No.:	151
Section:	PROGRAMS
Title:	STUDENT ATHLETICS
Date Adopted:	2/28/11
Date Last Revised:	6/8/15

151 STUDENT ATHLETICS

Philosophy and Purpose

Pursuant to the District's Strategic Plan and within the confines of budgetary limitations, the Board supports a District athletic program designed to encourage and provide an opportunity for students of all ages and ability levels to develop gross- and fine-motor skills, good sportsmanship and cooperation, not just in the context of the District's educational program, but also through a variety of team-oriented and individual athletic activities.

Therefore, in addition to physical education as a required subject, extracurricular athletic participation is made available to students on a continuing basis.

Definitions

"Interscholastic sports" are those which are funded and fully staffed by the District and compete under the Rules and Regulations provided by the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association ("PIAA"), or other applicable governing body. Interscholastic sports teams compete against other schools both within and outside of the District.

"Intramural sports" are staffed and financially supported by the District and are not governed by the PIAA. Intramural sports teams compete against other teams within the school.

"Club sports" receive some support from the District whether financial and/or through use of facilities or equipment. Club Sports must follow the requirements for recognition as explained in the Administrative Regulation related to this Policy. Club sports teams compete against other schools both within and outside of the District and may include students from multiple District schools.

Guidelines

In keeping with this stated philosophy and purpose, the Board establishes the following guidelines for its athletic program:

1. Establishment of Program - Athletics are offered by the District, consistent with regulations of the State Board of Education and the PIAA (or other applicable governing body), as an integral part of the District's educational program and are designed to foster certain qualities and attitudes in participating students. Primary among these qualities and attitudes are:

Lower Merion School District

Policy No.: 151
Section: PROGRAMS
Title: STUDENT ATHLETICS
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- a. Cooperation and teamwork;
 - b. Good sportsmanship and fair play;
 - c. Self-discipline;
 - d. Self-confidence;
 - e. Loyalty;
 - f. Leadership;
 - g. Physical fitness;
 - h. An appreciation of, and capacity for, competition;
 - i. The ability to establish and attain goals;
 - j. An interest in life-long athletic endeavors.
2. Staffing – Consistent with other budgetary and educational priorities and other requirements of the District, the District shall endeavor to attract and hold qualified staff who are oriented to the teaching aspects of both the curricular athletic program and the extracurricular program.
3. Equal Opportunity - The District will operate athletic programs in compliance with all applicable Federal and State laws including Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972. Where no comparable sport or activity is available to a member of the other gender, a student of the excluded gender may try out for the team on an equal basis with other participants.

The District will take affirmative steps to ensure that a balanced program for males and females is maintained at all times. The following factors shall be considered in assessing the balance of the program:

1. Nature and extent of the sports offered and their accommodation of the interests and abilities of males and females both in terms of sports and levels of competition offered;
2. Provision of equipment and supplies;

Lower Merion School District

Policy No.:	151
Section:	PROGRAMS
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3. Scheduling of games and practice time;
4. Provisions for travel and per diem allowance;
5. Opportunity to receive coaching and academic tutoring;
6. Assignment and compensation of coaches and tutors;
7. Provision of locker room, practice, and competitive facilities;
8. Provision of medical and training facilities and services;
9. Provision of housing and dining facilities and services when applicable;
10. Nature and extent of publicity.

Although equal aggregate expenditures shall not be required, financial resources shall be allocated as necessary to provide facilities, equipment, supervision, supplies, and opportunities for participation and competition which fairly and legally accommodate the athletic interests and abilities of both males and females.

4. Program Equity - In keeping with the stated philosophy of the athletic program, the administration and coaches shall make constant and deliberate efforts to:
 - a. Ensure meaningful value is accorded all sports;
 - b. Ensure adequate attention is paid to participants in all sports regardless of public
 - c. Attitudes; and
 - d. Ensure equity among District schools at the elementary and middle school levels.
5. Competitive Dimension - Winning is an incentive in any sports context; a certain measure of team and individual success helps students develop the qualities and attitudes for which the program is established. However, the competitive dimension of the program shall also emphasize participation by many students, respect for opponents and officials, respect for one's coach and teammates, and attention to improving one's skills.
6. Management - Since athletics are a part of the educational program designed to meet the needs of the participants, all activities shall be organized and scheduled for the benefit of the participating students. Every effort shall be made to schedule athletic contests so as not to unduly or unreasonably interfere with students' academic programs.

Lower Merion School District

Policy No.: 151
Section: PROGRAMS
Title: STUDENT ATHLETICS
Date Adopted: 2/28/11
Date Last Revised: 6/8/15

7. Financial Support of Interscholastic Activities – Consistent with the Administrative Regulation accompanying this Policy, within budgetary limitations, and where otherwise deemed appropriate by the Board, the District shall consider how its schools compare to competing schools in providing the following:

1. Facilities;
2. Equipment;
3. Supervision; and
4. Supplies.

Priority shall be given at all times to protecting the health and safety of all participants. Individual teams are encouraged to raise funds consistent with applicable Board fundraising policies to support special opportunities and programs involving the team.

8. Program Offerings - The specific sports for males and females, and the levels offered in each sport, shall be reviewed by the principal of each building on an annual basis to ensure that the overall athletics program meets the requirements of this Policy and assures maximum educational value for the resources expended. Board approval shall be required for any sport involving a financial commitment by the Board or which may impact Title IX compliance. The following factors shall be considered by the Administration in recommending, and by the Board in assessing, the possibility of adding a new sport or adding a new level in an existing sport:

1. Contribution to the goals of the District and the athletic program as set forth in Section 1 above and in the District's school handbooks;
2. Effect on the balance between athletic opportunities for males and females;
3. Sustained interest by enough students to qualify as a team;
4. Financial feasibility, including insurance costs;
5. Availability of qualified coaching staff;
6. Cost and availability of facilities appropriate to the demands of the sport;
7. Availability of competition at other schools;
8. Safety issues and the ability of the school administration to provide adequate supervision of the program; and
9. Detrimental or other effect on participation and funding of existing sports.

The same factors shall be considered when the elimination of a sport or level is contemplated.

Lower Merion School District

Policy No.:	151
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Student Academic Eligibility

The Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) sets minimum standards for interscholastic activities. However, the Board of School Directors desires to set more stringent standards for high school students in grades 9 through 12 for all interscholastic athletic activities.

It shall be the policy of the Board of School Directors to determine the standards of eligibility to be met by all students participating in extra-curricular activities. Additionally, each student who participates in interscholastic activities must be covered by the maximum student accident insurance available, or its equivalent, be in good physical condition, be free of injury and shall have fully recovered from illness, as determined by a physician, before participating in any interscholastic athletic activity.

In all of these activities, students shall be subject to school and Board policies, including regulations of the Central League and PIAA if applicable. It is the desire of the Board that, to the extent applicable and practicable, all extracurricular interscholastic sports are offered subject to PIAA rules and regulations whether competition is specifically regulated by the PIAA or not.

Cross References:

Administrative Regulation No. 151, *Student Athletics*
Policy and Administrative Regulation No. 256, *Student Fundraising*
Policy and Administrative Regulation No. 916, *Booster Clubs*
Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association - Rules and Regulations