

504.06R1 - 8th Grade Student Athlete Participation in High School Athletics

Iowa House File 2591 states that schools may allow eligible 8th-grade students to participate in high school extracurricular athletic contests, subject to school academic standards and implementation rules. The Iowa City Community School District supports appropriate opportunities for student-athletes to participate at the highest level that aligns with their abilities and the needs of the athletic programs. Therefore, any 8th-grade student who wants to participate must do the following:

1. Complete the [Intent to Participate](#) form. This form must be completed 2 weeks prior to the start of the athletic season. Here is a [link](#) to the athletic season start dates.
2. Meet all district and athletic department eligibility requirements. For more information, see the [Parent-Athlete Manual](#) section on the district website.
3. Comply with team, school, and athletic department expectations.

The building principal, athletic director, and head varsity coach will jointly determine whether an 8th-grade student-athlete may participate. Participation may be approved when the student demonstrates exceptional varsity-level athletic ability or when additional participants are needed to maintain a viable program due to insufficient roster numbers at any level.

Participation Protocol

- Varsity team roster spots will first be offered to eligible high school student athletes.
- An 8th-grade student-athlete who demonstrates exceptional athletic ability may be considered for varsity participation on a case-by-case basis.
- If insufficient participation exists to maintain lower-level teams, eligible 8th-grade student-athletes may also be considered to support the overall program.
- The determination of insufficient participation numbers will be made prior to the tryouts being held.
- The high school varsity coach will contact all potential 8th-grade student athletes and their parent(s)/guardian(s) with tryout information.
- Tryout procedures may vary by sport.
- Following the tryout, if selected, the high school varsity coach and an administrator will meet with the student-athlete and parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss terms and expectations.
- Any concerns regarding the tryout or selection process must be addressed through the District's [Activities Conflict Resolution Protocol](#).

Important Rules and Guidelines

1. One level per sport per season; students may participate at either the middle school level or high school level for a specific sport season, but not both.
2. In accordance with state law, once an 8th-grade student-athlete is placed on an official competition roster at either the middle school or high school level, the placement is final for that sport and season. The student-athlete shall remain at that level for the duration of the season.
3. The high school varsity coach will have the final authority regarding team participation, position assignments, and playing time. Selection to the high school varsity team does not guarantee participation in contests or a specific amount of playing time.
4. Eighth-grade student-athletes approved to participate in a high school athletic program will be required to meet the district's high school academic eligibility standards during the athletic season in which they are participating.
5. An eighth-grade student-athlete who participates in a tryout for a specific high school team, is not selected, and subsequently transfers to another middle school attendance area, shall be ineligible to participate in high school varsity interscholastic athletics for 140 calendar days.
6. Students who participate in high school athletics in 8th grade are still subject to all in-district transfer rules and guidelines.
7. Parents and guardians are solely responsible for transporting their 8th-grade student to and from practices, competitions at ICCSD facilities, team meetings, conditioning sessions, other team-related activities, and District transportation will not be provided for daily participation activities.

Winter, Spring, and Summer Athletic Seasons:

Information about eighth-grade participation opportunities in winter, spring, and summer sports will be shared by the ICCSD closer to each respective season. Additional details will be communicated by the ICCSD high school's Athletics Department throughout the school year.

Other Extracurricular Activities:

- Cheer: The Iowa Cheerleading Coaches' Association (ICCA) limits participation to students in grades 9-12.
- Dance: The Iowa Dance Team Association (IDTA) allows 8th grade students to participate; however, the association leaves the decision to local school districts. Due to timing, ICCSD 8th grade students will not be allowed to participate this inaugural year.
- Speech/Debate: The Iowa High School Speech Association (IHSSA) has integrated 8th-grade students into its membership; however, participation of 8th-grade students is left entirely up to the local school districts. ICCSD is waiting to receive more guidance for these activities before allowing 8th-grade students to participate.