

Athletic Placement Process (APP) Update

August 6, 2026

The Athletic Placement Process (APP) evaluates 7th and 8th grade students to determine if they can safely compete at the Junior Varsity or Varsity level. For the first time since 2017, the process is changing.

Who is making the change?

The New York State Board of Regents has officially adopted changes that took effect on **July 29, 2026**.

Why are changes being made?

These changes are intended to modernize the APP while continuing to prioritize student health, safety, and appropriate placement.

What's changing?

Key differences in the new APP process include:

- 7th and 8th grade students may only try out for high school teams **by invitation of the school or district Athletic Director**. Once students are deemed eligible to try out, the same selection criteria must be applied consistently to all participants.
- The **Tanner Sexual Maturity Scale has been eliminated entirely**. NYSED determined there are more appropriate, less intrusive, and research-based methods for assessing a student's readiness for interscholastic athletics.
- Rather than relying on physiological maturity, healthcare providers will **evaluate a student's overall physical readiness** for participation while considering research-based factors associated with injury risk.
- APP will now use the **same pre-participation health examination** for school athletics. It will no longer be a separate medical process.
- There is a new **focus on overall health, injury risk, strength, skill, and safety**. Previously, APP solely focused on physiological maturity.

What does this mean for our athletic program?

The overall purpose of the APP remains the same: to ensure that student-athletes who are considered for participation at a different competition level are physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially prepared while maintaining student safety.

Based on the adopted regulations, New Paltz's process will include the following:

- **Coaches will identify and recommend student-athletes** they believe are

appropriate candidates for the Athletic Placement Process.

- The Athletic Director will **review those recommendations and invite** eligible student-athletes to participate in the APP tryout process.
- Parent/guardian permission will still be required before a student may participate in the APP evaluation.
- Coaches will evaluate student-athletes using objective, sport-specific criteria that assess:

- Physical fitness
- Sport-specific skills
- Knowledge of the sport
- Personal and social responsibility

- Coaches will develop a consistent evaluation process that is applied equally to every student participating in the tryout. For example, if a coach chooses to include a one-mile run as part of the evaluation for a cardiovascular sport such as cross country, track and field, soccer, or basketball, that assessment will be administered consistently to all students being evaluated for that sport.

At this time, NYSED has not provided guidance regarding the length or specific structure of the evaluation period. We will communicate those details if/and when they become available.

What are the next steps?

As NYSED releases additional implementation guidance, we will review our local procedures to ensure they remain fully compliant while continuing to provide safe, equitable, and meaningful athletic opportunities for our student-athletes.

This fall, the 7th and 8th grade athletes who have already been identified by coaches will go through the new APP. In keeping with these new regulations, **parents cannot request that their children test up moving forward.**

In addition, we will be revising our current processes and policies to reflect these state-mandated changes.

Where can I learn more?

NYSED has released a [FAQ document](#) that is available to view.