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| <b>Descriptor Term:</b>   | <b>STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN<br/>INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS</b>  |
| <b>Descriptor Code:</b>   | <b>JI-P</b>  |
| <b>Draft Date Issued:</b>   | <b>June 25, 2009</b>   |
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The Guilford County Board of Education has established standards for participation in interscholastic athletics that are reflected in Board policy. To that end, GCS has developed procedures and forms to determine student eligibility and required certain assurances from students, parents, employees and coaches/assistant coaches. The purpose of these procedures is to put in place mechanisms for the implementation of those standards.

**Grade Point Average and Eligibility to Participate in Athletic Activities**

Students must meet all of the academic eligibility criteria required by the NCHSAA, the State of North Carolina and GCS in order to participate in interscholastic athletics. Students must be promoted from their previous grade in order to be eligible to participate in athletics the following semester. They must pass the requisite number of courses the previous semester and must be regularly enrolled during the semester in which they intend to participate. They must have maintained the GCS required grade point average of 2.0 in order to remain eligible to participate in the following semester and must have attended school a sufficient number of days to meet the attendance requirement.

– Prior to any participation in interscholastic athletic events, each head coach and athletic director is required to assure that every student rostered on any interscholastic athletic team meets the academic standards required for participation. Academic standards include both the course load requirements of NCHSAA and the minimum weighted GPA required by GCS. Athletic directors and head coaches are responsible for determining if the weighted GPA for each student athlete meets the standard established by Policy JI. The information used to assure academic eligibility shall also be presented to the principal of each school prior to the principal signing rosters as required by the NCHSAA.

## **Summer School**

Courses taken during a summer school program approved by principal under guidelines established by GCS may be used to recover credit affecting athletic eligibility for the fall semester. Per NCHSAA guidelines, credits earned during summer school may be applied to the immediately preceding spring semester for athletic eligibility purposes. **Summer school credits can be used to alter course load eligibility and GPA; however, summer school course grades will be added to the spring semester grades and calculated on that basis; they are not substituted for courses failed in the spring semester.** (Example: Student has four Bs and two Fs for the spring semester, with one of the Fs in Algebra. Student takes Algebra in a GCS-approved summer school program and gets a B. The new weighted GPA calculation would be the four Bs, the 2 Fs and the summer school B divided by seven.)

Traditional schools can use summer school grades earned to recalculate the second or spring semester grades to determine eligibility consistent with the above paragraph.

Eligibility will not be restored and the student cannot participate in athletics until the summer course requirements have been met and certified as complete.

Documentation of satisfactory completion will be required as part of the athletes eligibility folder.

Any student or parent who has questions about whether a summer school course will operate to impact eligibility should direct their inquiries to the school athletic director.

## **Students Assigned a Base School**

Each student will be assigned a “base” school for their high school career. The “base” school will be the student’s school of assignment according to the student’s domicile or administrative assignment as determined by GCS in their ninth grade year or whenever they first enter GCS in high school.

Students who attend schools other than their base schools after the beginning of ninth grade will have a 365-day waiting period from the date of enrollment at the non-base school before they are eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics.

Base schools may change in the event that any of the following occurs:

- a. The student is administratively assigned to a new school as a result of an administrative placement (Exceptional Children’s program, English as a Second Language, etc);
- b. The student is administratively transferred to another school for the purpose of enrolling in a recognized program (IB, Academy, etc.) and the student remains in the course of study throughout the student’s time at the new school;

- c. The Board imposes an attendance area change; or,
- d. The student's custodial parent or parents who are domiciled in the original attendance zone abandon their domicile in the original school attendance zone (temporary separation of either parent does not change domicile for athletic eligibility purposes) and show[s] sufficient evidence of domicile in the new attendance zone to constitute a change of domicile.

### **Recognized Programs**

Students who enroll in recognized programs at a high school will be allowed to participate in athletics without a waiting period, as their base schools will become the school of assignment as a result of the enrollment in the program. Programs that were established and are recognized by the Board are:

- Andrews Aviation Academy
- Andrews Early College of Health Sciences
- AP Capstone - Western High School
- The Dudley Academy of Education
- The Dudley Academy of Engineering
- The Dudley Academy of Health Sciences
- International Baccalaureate - Grimsley High School
- International Baccalaureate - High Point Central High School
- International Baccalaureate - Page High School
- International Baccalaureate - Smith High School
- The Southern Academy of Agriscience
- The Southern Academy of Education
- The Southern Academy of Medical Sciences
- ROTC
- Spanish Immersion Continuation - Grimsley

Students attending an early/middle college or other school without a sports program who have a bona fide change in residence into another school attendance zone, after having participated in sports at their attendance zone school (base sports school), may request to remain at the school for sports if the student remains enrolled in the early/middle college or other school without a sports program and the administration at the original base sports school is agreeable to allowing the student to remain at the school for sports.

### **Waiting Period of 365 Days for Transfer to Non-base School**

Unless otherwise provided, all students who attend schools other than their base schools during their high school career must wait 365 days prior to participating in athletics at their non-base school.

### **Proof of Domicile**

Annually, prior to participation in a sport for the current school year, parents and students are required to complete a residence verification form and provide at least two documents as proof of domicile. Those documents are presented to the head coach and athletic director and, if additional support is requested, the parent and student will comply as an express condition of participating in interscholastic athletics. In the event that there are conflicts in the information at the school or presented to the coach or athletic director, or if the parent and student fail to provide the requested information, the student will not be permitted to practice, dress out for, travel to or play in any event until the conflicts are resolved.

Students who are found to have used false information shall be prohibited from participating in any extracurricular activities, including sports, for a period of up to 365 days. Students and parents who fail to timely update their domicile information may also be subject to a period of ineligibility up to and including 365 days.

Cases of alleged impropriety related to residence will be investigated by the Athletic Eligibility Committee, to be established by the district athletic director. The Committee will consist of district-level representatives of human resources, student services and athletics as well as at least two regional student services administrators. If the Committee determines that the student was improperly enrolled, the student will lose athletic eligibility for a period up to 365 days and will be required to enroll in the appropriate school. Students and parents will be permitted to appear before the committee and present documentation supporting their position that the student was properly participating in interscholastic athletics at the school at issue. Within 10 days of hearing the position of the parents and student, the Committee will notify the parents and student in writing of their determination about eligibility unless additional time is needed to investigate information presented to the Committee.

### **Student and/or Team Consequences**

If it is determined that an ineligible student under the **GPA, Summer School or "Base School"** sections of this policy has been allowed to participate or play in an athletic practice or contest, the student will immediately be removed from the team and the team will be required to deduct from the team score any individual points earned and/or forfeit any contests in which the student participated. Dressing for a contest, traveling on the team bus or practicing with a team is considered participation.

If it is determined that an ineligible student under the school suspension provisions of the **Student Conduct** section of this policy has been allowed to participate in an athletic practice or contest, the student will be required to sit out practices and/or games immediately following, whichever is appropriate. The student will be required to sit out

twice the number of contests or practices. (If he/she participated in two games then he/she will be required to sit out the next four games). Additionally, the team will be

required to deduct from the team score any individual points earned and/or forfeit any contests in which the student participated. Dressing for a contest, practicing with the team and traveling with the team is considered participation.

### **Attendance Requirement**

In order to be eligible for athletic participation, students must have been in daily attendance 85% of the previous semester. For the purposes of this requirement, all absences count, whether excused or unexcused. In a typical 90 day semester, a student can have up to 13 daily absences. In regards to athletic eligibility, daily absences cannot be made up under any circumstances, even if the student attends Saturday classes, extra help sessions, summer school, and/or any other means to make up academic work. Students who do not meet the 85% requirement from the previous semester are not eligible for athletic participation. Attendance must be verified upon the conclusion of the semester and students who do not meet the 85% requirement must be removed from participation immediately.

### **Eligibility Waiver Procedure for Hardships**

All students must meet the academic and attendance eligibility standards to participate in interscholastic activities or apply for and be granted a waiver of those requirements prior to participation. In the event that a student becomes ineligible, the school administration may request a hardship exception to the requirements consistent with policy JI. Hardship waivers by GCS are only applicable to eligibility in the areas of promotion, attendance and grade point average. If the waiver request is generated by students or their parents to the school administration, all supporting documentation should be provided to School Administration to include in the waiver request. The school administration may request additional information, and the student or parent shall provide the requested information in a timely manner. Once the supporting documentation is received, the school administration shall determine whether to support the request for a hardship exception and, if the school supports the request, the school administration shall forward the hardship exception request on to the district athletic director for consideration. The district athletic director ("Director") will approve the request or take the request to the district athletic eligibility committee ("DAEC") for additional review and a final decision. Ordinary cases of ineligibility do not fall in the hardship category. The decision of the DAEC is the final decision of the administration, which may be appealed to a panel of the Board of Education within 10 business days of the date of receipt of the notice that the hardship request has been denied.

In the event that the school does not support a request for a hardship waiver, the principal shall write a written response to the request to the student and parents explaining the reasons that the school did not support the request. The parent may forward to the Director a Request for Reconsideration of Waiver of Athletic Eligibility for consideration by the DAEC within five business days of receipt of the decision of the principal. The DAEC will consider the request and issue a written decision. The

decision of the DAEC is the final decision of the administration, which may be appealed to a panel of the Board of Education within 10 business days of the date of receipt of the notice that the hardship request has been denied.

**Appeals to the Board of Education**

The Director shall administer the appeal of the final administrative decision and arrange for a hearing before a panel of the Board of Education. The hearing shall be scheduled no later than 15 business days from the date of receipt of the request. Director shall be responsible for presenting the position of the administration and for preparing all documents submitted by the parties for consideration by the Board panel. The Board panel will deliver its written decision to the school and the parent/student within five business days from the hearing. The decision of the Board panel is final.