



2023 Referendum Issue 1B- Create New Exception to Bylaw 4-3-1
(PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS PLAYING FOR NEIGHBORING DISTRICT IF MEMBER SCHOOL DOESN'T OFFER SPORT)
Frequently Asked Questions

This proposed new exception, which failed by a close margin by the membership during the 2022 voting cycle (13 votes), would permit a student enrolled at a member public high school that does not sponsor a team sport in which the student desires to participate to petition to play that sport at a public school located in a bordering public school district but only if 1) the bordering district's Board of Education adopts a resolution permitting such participation, and 2) if the Superintendent of the school the student attends agrees to allow the participation. The following are *Frequently Asked Questions* the Executive Director's Office has received about this Issue at the various Athletic Discussion Meetings.

Q: Can you explain what the application and review process would look like?

A:

- Step 1 will require each respective District's Board of Education to give full consideration to the pros and cons of permitting a participation opportunity to non-enrolled students from bordering public school districts which do not offer a certain sport.
- If it is decided the pros outweigh the cons, that District will have to use the standard OHSAA resolution form and adopt the resolution by June 30 of the ensuing school year. The Resolution would be applicable to all sports and every neighboring district. A school cannot limit the participation to only some districts and/or for some sports.
- Near the beginning of the fall, winter and spring seasons, respectively, a District which did adopt a Resolution may receive inquiries from students within the neighboring district which do not offer a team sport in which a student desires to participate.
- Once that notification is made, the school where the student is desiring to participate would need to contact the Superintendent of the school of attendance. If the Superintendent does not agree to permit the participation at a neighboring district, that concludes the request and the student will NOT be permitted to play at the neighboring school. If the Superintendent does agree to permit the participation at a neighboring district, the school at which the student is petitioning to play would have to submit the applicable OHSAA form to the Executive Director's Office BEFORE the student is permitted to begin participation in practice.

Q: Can a sending school that does not offer a sport approve one student to play elsewhere and deny another? Or does the Superintendent have to approve all students or no students?

A: Under the proposed language, a Superintendent is permitted to grant an approval for one student but deny it for another student on a case-by-case basis (i.e. code of conduct concerns, GPA concerns, logistical travel concerns to certain schools, to protect other "home school" sports teams, etc.)

Q: Can a neighboring district opt to adopt the resolution one year but then not adopt it next year?

A: Yes. This decision and subsequent resolution will need to be made on an annual basis, and the decision can vary from school year to school year.

Q: If our school votes yes on this referendum issue, do we have to adopt the resolution permitting non-enrolled public school students to play sports at our school?

A: No. If this issue passes each respective District's Board of Education will need to give full consideration to the pros and cons of permitting a participation opportunity to non-enrolled students from bordering public school districts which do not offer a certain sport.

Q: Student attends School A which doesn't offer soccer so participates in soccer at School B freshman year. Wants to participate in soccer at School C their sophomore year. Is this allowed?

A: A Superintendent would have the ability to prevent this jumping around from one school to another from happening simply by denying a student's request. However, if this student would petition to play the same sport at different neighboring school during a different school year and be approved by the Superintendent, then that student could play for a different school ("School C") and would **NOT** be subject to the transfer consequence. This is the correct interpretation under the current proposed language but is something the OHSAA Office would monitor over the first few years for potential changes in the future.

Q: If a student lives in School District A and open enrolls to School District B, are they allowed to play for School District C (which touches B) if School District A does not touch C?

A: Yes. This exception would be solely based on the student's school of attendance, not based on their residential district.

Q: What if no district which borders a school offers the sport in which the student desires a participation opportunity? Can they petition to play the sport at the next closest school that does?

A: No. This exception will only be available to use between schools who are geographically bordering one another, regardless of sports offered. As such, if the student's school does not offer the sport, and no bordering district offers the sport, the student simply would not have a participation opportunity in the sport.

Q: What happens if a student is approved to play a sport at a neighboring school district under this exception, but their school of attendance ends up offering the sport the next school year? Can this student be grandfathered in and allowed to continue playing that sport at the neighboring school at which they previously played?

A: No. The application of this exception is reviewed on an annual basis and is always based on the sports offered at the school of attendance. Therefore, the student would be required to participate at their school of attendance.

Q: Can this exception be applied to our 7/8 grade school(s) but not our high school(s), or vice versa?

A: Yes, the required Board Resolution template will include an option to have the exception apply for every school in the district, only high schools or only 7/8 grade schools.

Q: For a multi-HS district, can we have this option only apply to students within our district and not for students who attend a school outside our district?

A: Yes. A multi-HS district will need to potentially complete two resolutions. They need to decide if they want to extend this exception for schools only within their district, for schools only outside of their district, or for both. If the district wants to extend the opportunity for both sets of students, it will need to complete two separate resolutions.

Q: Why does this exception only apply to certain sports?

A: As often as possible, we want to encourage students to play sports for and represent the school they physically attend. In many individual sports (gymnastics, S&D, wrestling, etc.), this can be accomplished by having one coach train athletes from multiple schools. This same dual-coaching arrangement is not feasible for

most team sports. Therefore, this exception will only apply to the following sports: baseball, boys basketball, girls basketball, field hockey, football, ice hockey, boys lacrosse, girls lacrosse, boys soccer, girls soccer, softball, boys tennis, girls tennis, boys volleyball and/or girls volleyball. Tennis has been included in this list due to the scheduling similarities this sport has to traditional team sports.

Q: What happens if a school is only offering JV basketball, but a senior wants to play varsity basketball at a neighboring school district?

A: The senior would NOT be allowed to play basketball at a different school. If a school offers a sport at ANY level, regardless of whether that team is the desired participation level of a respective student, then that sport offering removes a student's ability to utilize this exception and play that sport at a neighboring district.

Q: What if a school sponsors 8-man football but a student wants to play 11-man at a neighboring school?

A: 8-man football is considered "football" for application of OHSAA sport regulations, catastrophic insurance coverage and other related issues. As such, if a school offers 8-man football then students attending that school are not permitted to petition to play 11-man football at a different school.

Q: Why was "neighboring school districts" selected as "available options" under this exception, as opposed to using the next closest school or basing the participation opportunity on the student's residence?

A: Because of the significant change this exception would represent to the traditional enrollment & attendance regulations, the ease of application was a primary focus in deciding how the language would be crafted. Bordering districts are clearly defined on the Ohio Department of Education's school district map (<https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Data/Ohio-Educational-Directory-System-OEDS/2016-School-District-Map.pdf>) and do not rely on any third-party assessment (Google Maps, etc.).

Additional questions? Please contact Kristin Ronai (kronai@ohsaa.org) or Ronald Sayers (rsayers@ohsaa.org).