

HF2591 Overview and Frequently Asked Questions for DCSD Coaches As of 7/2/26

NOTE: see additional overview and frequently asked questions on the parent communication that was included with your email

- Continued communication between coaches and AD's will be essential throughout this process and especially when determining if any 8th graders will make a high school team
- DCSD 8th graders will have the opportunity to try-out for **ALL** high school interscholastic athletics beginning August 1, 2026
 - This does NOT include dance, cheer or other programs not sanctioned by the IHSA and IGHSAA
- 8th graders will have the ability to pursue in-district transfers similarly to what is currently in place for incoming 9th graders
 - Students are not able to take part in official practices or competitions at their “non-boundary” high school until open enrollment has been approved
- 8th graders would need to adhere to academic, good conduct and attendance similar to what's in place for 9-12 graders
- If an 8th grader makes the high school team, it will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide transportation for high school practices, competitions, etc.
- Determining factors to if or how many 8th graders can make a high school team:
 - For programs where “cuts” are already in place the 8th graders will be subject to that same process
 - For programs where “cuts” are not in place, we will work with varsity coaches to determine an acceptable number of athletes that can be part of the team and still have a **reasonable opportunity to participate**
 - We will follow the same framework (ie. levels of competition) that is already in place at each high school
 - We will not add teams or coaches from what is already in place
 - We will not increase out-of-town buses from what is already in place
- 8th graders could play sports at both the high school and middle school (ie. volleyball at middle school and girls' basketball at high school)
 - Students cannot play the same sport (ie. volleyball) at both the middle school and high school level during the same academic year
 - Students cannot play one sport at middle school (ie. cross country) and a different sport at high school (ie. girls swimming & diving) during the same season

Frequently Asked Questions...

1. Who decides if a current 8th grader makes a team?
 - The coach and AD will discuss whether any 8th graders who try out will make a team. Prior to being placed on a team, a participation agreement will need to be completed.
2. Can high school coaches (paid or volunteer) continue to coach same sport/gender youth programs during the school year where current 8th graders are participating?
 - NO. The non-contact rule that has always applied to students in grades 9-12 also now includes 8th graders.
 - NOTE: This may be a big one for some of our coaches, so please make sure you're working with your building AD
3. Can an 8th grader from a non-DCSD school participate in high school interscholastic athletics at one of our high schools?
 - NO.
 - The only potential exception would be a current 8th grade student that resides in a district where we have a cooperative sharing agreement with (ie. swimming) **AND** that district is allowing 8th graders to participate in high school athletics in their home district. In this event, we would also apply the same expectations for a DCSD student prior to making any determination.
4. Will 7th grade students now participate in high school interscholastic baseball or softball following their 7th grade year?
 - NO.
5. Will 6th grade students now be permitted to participate in middle school athletics?
 - NO.
6. What if a student participates at one high school as an 8th grader and then wants to in-district transfer to the other high school prior to 9th grade?
 - They would be ineligible for varsity level competitions for 140 calendar days.
7. Will 8th grade students be counted in the Basic Educational Survey (BEDS) for the purposes of classification?
 - NO.
8. Can an 8th grade student start the year at the middle school level and then be "brought up" to the high school team later in the season or could they start the year at the high school level and then return to the middle school level if not a good fit?
 - NO to both scenarios. Once a student starts at one level they forfeit the ability to move from middle school to high school or visa versa for the same sport.