

<b>Harrisburg School District</b>	<b>NEPN Code: JJI</b>
<b>Policy Manual</b>	

## **ELIGIBILITY PETITION REQUEST FOR 7<sup>TH</sup> OR 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE STUDENT-ATHLETE TO COMPETE AT HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL**

### **PHILOSOPHY**

The Harrisburg School District believes that our athletic programs are integral to the educational process and strive to provide challenging, meaningful, and competitive experiences for student-athletes. We seek to enhance life skills and develop values that foster teamwork, sportsmanship, and leadership, as well as develop our students' talents to the highest degree possible. In acknowledging this belief, occasionally, a young athlete may be so skilled that their needs are better met by participating up to the highest level (varsity) of competition. While it is important to acknowledge the skills of a student, it is also important to carefully consider the ramifications of promoting a student. This policy only supports promotion of a student to the highest level of competition (varsity). The student must dress at the varsity level and may also play at the junior varsity level.

In making a recommendation for promotion of an athlete, there are many variables that should be considered including: chronological, physical, and emotional maturity. This policy presents a procedure that considers the needs of the young athlete while not unnecessarily displacing high school athletes. This process should not be initiated to enhance the quality of the team, but rather to meet the needs of an exceptional student-athlete.

While many athletes are very skilled, few are at the level for advancement to be considered. In making this recommendation, one must keep in mind the importance of keeping students in their peer group. We remind all individuals involved in the assessment that the young athlete may appear very strong within their chronological level of competition but may not perform well when they advance to the highest level.

### **CRITERIA**

In considering a student for promotion, several criteria should be considered. This list is not meant to be exhaustive but represents the intent of the policy. The following paragraphs refer specifically to middle school students who wish to participate in athletics at the high school level:

1. In the event a Harrisburg District SDHSAA sanctioned athletic program exists that allows for individual athlete participation without opportunity for 7th and 8th grade students to participate in a like program at the middle school level, the 7th and 8th grade students shall have the opportunity to practice with the high school team. 7th and 8th grade students in such a program determined to have high ability may compete on the junior varsity or varsity high school team at the discretion of the coach.
2. Each individual petition up case for advancement is considered on its own merit.
3. The student is athletically, academically, socially, and emotionally ready for advancement.
4. The student demonstrates appropriate behavior in school and community.
5. The student's skill level, as documented on the petition form and as determined by all designated individuals on the petition form, is advanced enough to merit varsity

competition and compete at the Junior Varsity level at a minimum. \* (with the Exception of Football)

6. Transportation to and from practice and team departure for competitions is the responsibility of the parent/guardian in cases where District transportation is not provided.

7. The scope of this policy is for students in grades 7th and 8th, determined to have an advanced skill set in a South Dakota High School Activities Association sanctioned in the following athletic programs: Basketball; Cross-Country; Football; Track & Field; Volleyball; and Wrestling (Boys).

8. Athletes advancing under this policy to high school teams are required to participate in all try out sessions afforded the high school level athletes who are attempting to become a member of the team in question. If the middle school athlete fails to make the high school team they will be returned to participation in middle school level sports.

9. Athletes advancing under this policy will have the following mandatory guidelines applied without exception:

a. Advanced athlete will be a significant contributor and will participate at a level that includes the majority of the event at the level advanced to unless physically unable to participate or due to disciplinary reasons.

b. Advanced athlete would not be excluded from any post-season events their team would qualify for participation unless physically unable to participate or due to disciplinary reasons.

10. If a student is approved through this process and it is determined at a later date that they no longer meet the requirements above the student will be moved back into the middle school program. This determination will be made by the administration in conjunction with the coaching staff.

## **PROCEDURE**

The process for completing the petition is important. The welfare of the student is the first concern. Therefore, it is necessary for all involved to be sure that this process is strictly followed to prevent unnecessary emotional stress on the student.

The process should be initiated by the parent of the student athlete. The parent must first contact the middle school athletic coordinator to start the process. Once the middle school athletic coordinator is notified, they will be responsible for overseeing that the procedure outlined below is followed in a timely manner.

Adopted: June 26, 2023