

Proposed Resolution Supporting allowing Home School Students to participate in Public School Sport Programs

Whereas the families in Tennessee who have chosen to educate their children at home have proven their effectiveness and illustrated the value of parental involvement in the education process and

Whereas their willingness to absorb the cost of providing the time and resources to make this education experience possible has provided a substantial savings to the State of Tennessee at a time when cutbacks and economies are necessary and

Whereas these Home School Students net work to provide support and quality instruction they are limited in their opportunity to participate in sanctioned sport activities organized in their communities by Public Schools and Athletic Associations and

Whereas these students and parents have chosen to accept the sacrifices needed to provide this education opportunity while contributing to the funding of public education, they should not be isolated from participating with other students in their community in team sports but should be allowed to participate and

Whereas the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA) adopted a policy on December 8, 2010, to allow participation of home school athletes in grade 9 and up public school sports (see <http://www.tssaa.org/LegislativeCouncil/actions/lcminutes20101208.htm>)

Therefore the State Executive Committee of the TN GOP requests the members of the 107th General Assembly to offer and support Legislation allowing their inclusion.

A home schooled student wishing to participate in extracurricular athletics at a member school shall be eligible if the following qualifications are met:

1. The student shall be enrolled in a home school study program in compliance with Section 49-6-3050(b)(1) and be registered with the local director of schools (or head of school, if a private school) by August 15 of the current school year.
2. The participating student must have a legal residence within the school district where he/she is registered, if registering with a public school. If registering with a private school, the student must have a legal residence within 20 miles of the private school and meet all tuition and financial aid requirements.
3. By August 15 of the school year, the parent or guardian must make application to the principal of the member school in which the home school athlete wishes to participate.
4. The home school athlete shall meet the same academic standards required of a member school student athlete to participate in the athletic program; however, the Director of Schools for public schools (or the head of school for private schools) in which a home school athlete wishes to participate shall work with the parent or guardian to ensure that the home school athlete is academically eligible. If a home school student's course of study does not include five (5) academic subjects, then the Director of Schools (or head of school, if a private school) and the parent shall develop an alternative measure of academic progress and submit the same to the TSSAA for approval. Proof of academic eligibility shall be provided by the member school to the TSSAA each semester.
5. The home school student must provide proof of basic medical insurance coverage and both independently secured catastrophic insurance coverage and liability insurance coverage which names the TSSAA as an insured party in the event the school's insurance provider does not extend coverage to students enrolled in home school programs. The insurance must be in place before the home school student practices or participates.
6. The LEA may impose a participation fee for each athletic sport in which a home school athlete wishes to participate. Such participation fee shall not exceed three hundred dollars annually for each sport and shall be paid in full prior to the first regular season contest. A home school student participating at a private school must pay full tuition and abide by all financial aid rules.
7. The home school student must meet all other TSSAA eligibility requirements.
8. All eligibility issues may be appealed in accordance with the Bylaws of the TSSAA.
9. The home school athlete must adhere to the same standards of behavior, responsibility, performance, and code of conduct as other participants of the team.
10. This rule gives a home school athlete the opportunity to try out for a member school's athletic team. Ultimate decisions on the roster are left to the member schools and are not governed by the TSSAA. No student is guaranteed participation, but only the opportunity to try out for a position on the team, subject to the other provisions of this rule.