

Union School District Overview of Eligibility

The Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) establishes eligibility criteria for student athletes to maintain the integrity of student athletics. They enforce residency, attendance, and curricular standards. Local school districts, however, may exceed the minimums established by the state to suit their particular needs and goals.

Here is a side-by-side comparison of the PIAA and USD academic/curricular eligibility requirements:

PIAA

Article X, Section 1. To be eligible for interscholastic athletic competition, a student must pursue a curriculum defined and approved by the Principal as full-time curriculum. [Definition of full-time curriculum] The student must be passing at least four full-credit subjects, or the equivalent. Eligibility is cumulative from the beginning of a grading period, and must be reported on a weekly basis, and must be filed in the Principal's office. Where a student's cumulative work from the beginning of the grading period does not as of any Friday meet the standards provided for in this Section, the student is ineligible from the immediately following Sunday through the Saturday immediately following the next Friday as of which the student's cumulative work from the beginning of the grading period meets the standards provided for in this Section.

Section 2. To be eligible for interscholastic athletics, a student must have passed at least four full-credit subjects, or the equivalent, during the previous grading period, except as provided in Section 5. [Use of final grades for subsequent school years]

Section 3. In cases where a student's work in any preceding grading period does not meet the standards provided for in Section 2, said student is ineligible to participate in interscholastic athletics for at least fifteen (15) school days of the next grading period where the school has four (4) grading periods per school year, or for at least ten (10) school days of the next grading period where the school has six (6) grading periods per school year, beginning on the first day report cards are issued, except as provided in Section 5.

USD

2013-2014 Student Handbook, p 28, "Eligibility". 1. All extracurricular groups and activities will now be held to eligibility standards. 2. If a student is failing the same subject for 2 consecutive weeks they would become ineligible for the following week or 2 subjects in the same week.

"Failure List (High School and Elementary): If you fail more than one course in any 9-week grading period, you will be denied the privilege of participating in or attending all extra-curricular activities and assemblies for the following 9-week grading period unless you can demonstrate immediate improvement in your grades by carrying "grade-check sheets" at three-week intervals. Also, during each 9-week grading period, your grades will be assessed at the mid-point and, if earned, restrictions will be imposed on you for the remainder of that grading period. If you are placed on the two-subject failure list the the mid-point of any 9-week grading period, you will not be permitted to attend dances, participate in extracurricular activities, attend extracurricular activities, etc. for a minimum of 15 school days. This ban—imposed as a reminder to you that grades are your first priority—will apply to sports, dances, the Prom, Student Council, and other non-curricular activities. In addition, the principal and the guidance counselor have the obligation to impose this same ban on you if your grades, while not necessarily "failing", are so low that your continued participation in or attendance at extracurricular activities would detract from study time. NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE. All students can carry grade check sheets after the fifteenth day of suspension to be removed from the two-subject failure list. All grades need to be recorded on the sheet by classroom teachers.

Page 50. "Eligibility of Athletes – According to the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Manual". In order to participate in any sport, other extracurricular activity, the student must meet the grade eligibility and attendance requirements determined by the Union School District in conjunction with the PIAA rules governing participation.

Page 51. Teachers are required to enter weekly grades on the weekly eligibility sheets and return them to the Athletic Director by 7:45 on the last day of the school each week. Ineligibility will be determined by any student failing two subjects regardless of credits each class is worth. Students who are declared ineligible will not be permitted to play from the Sunday of the week they are declared ineligible to the following Sunday.

Union School District Evaluation of Eligibility

Three standards must apply regarding an eligibility policy: Compliant; Constructive; Efficient.

- **Compliant.** The USD policy satisfies the PIAA requirements regarding athletic participation. It, like most schools, takes the “reverse” approach in pass/fail criteria. Rather than base eligibility on “passing four”, it bases eligibility on “not failing two”. With an eight period instructional day, a Union student could be failing four classes yet still meet the PIAA requirement. It exceeds the mandate by expanding eligibility to all extra-curricular activities.
- **Constructive.** The USD policy fails to provide any educational value to ineligibility. It is purely punitive, rather than constructive or corrective. It addresses only one component of a multi-faceted district mission. It offers no mechanism by which students develop those skills necessary in a society which expects multiple demands placed simultaneously on its members. It lacks collaboration between the classroom and the playing field.
- **Efficient.** The USD policy, in a legitimate effort to maintain high standards, muddles the original intent of PIAA ineligibility; that is, policy governing participation in athletic contests. It can become a “catch-all” in which multiple issues get dumped for solutions. It creates a scenario—because of the one subject failure list—which disallows for a student to have a bad test without serious jeopardy. It places too much of the accountability on staff without engaging the primary stakeholder. It is confusing. It is not uniformly applied.

The Union School District needs to revise its eligibility requirements.

Union School District A Proposal for Eligibility

Full Eligibility. Students will be eligible to participate in PIAA sanctioned *contests* and *practices* based on academic performance on two separate types of grade checks:

1. A weekly grade check shows the student to be passing all but two (2) full-credit (or combined average of partial credit) courses—two, or more, failures equals one week of ineligibility; and
2. A nine-week grade (report cards) check shows the student to be passing all but two (2) full-credit (or combined average of partial credit) courses—two, or more, failures equals fifteen (15) days of ineligibility for the next marking period.

Conditional Eligibility. Students may be eligible for conditional eligibility in two cases.

1. Students failing to meet the Full Eligibility standard may opt to participate in *practices* conditioned on their attendance at after-school study session/tutoring on the day of the practice.
2. Students scoring “Below Basic” on any state mandated test may opt to participate in PIAA sanctioned *contests* and *practices* conditioned on their attendance at after-school study session/tutoring held on the day of the contest or practice.

Students choosing to participate based on Conditional Eligibility may be subject to team rules governing late or missed practices. They take responsibility for completing the Conditional Eligibility Attendance Record and Work Report. Students failing to abide by the guidelines of attendance and work performance prior to participation forfeit eligibility. Coaches failing to comply with the expectations of Conditional Eligibility face individual, player, and team reprimands.

**Conditional Eligibility
Attendance Record and Work Report**

Student Name _____ **For Week Ending** _____

For 2 Course Failures. Describe the content specific work completed during the day’s study session.

	Work Completed	Faculty Signature	Coach Signature
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thu			
Fri			

For “Below Basic Scores”. Describe the content specific work completed or document on-line tutorial progress (Study Island, Khan Academy etc.) during the day’s study session

	Work Completed	Faculty Signature	Coach Signature
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thu			
Fri			

District administrators may check the form at any time during the week to monitor compliance. This form must be completed and returned to the school office at the end of the week, prior to homeroom on Monday of a new week. Students failing to abide by attendance and work completion requirements will forfeit eligibility to participate.