



STATE OF IOWA

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
RYAN M. WISE, DIRECTOR

TO: Bureau of School Improvement
Bureau of Standards and Curriculum
CC: Nicole Proesch
FR: Thomas A. Mayes
DA: March 16, 2016
RE: Organized & Supervised Athletic Program Excusals in Districts Where Physical Education is not Year-Long

Some Iowa school districts have a general accreditation standards waiver from the Iowa Department of Education that allow them to provide physical education to their students for less than a full school year. Under one such waiver, students take physical education daily for one trimester each year (The time spent in physical education daily during the trimester of enrollment meets the legal requirement for being equivalent to one-eighth unit.). For the remaining two trimesters, students do not have physical education.

In this district, some students who participate in organized and supervised athletic programs of the district have asked to be excused for that reason from physical education during their trimester of enrollment. This presents an interpretive problem because the physical education excusals for organized and supervised athletic programs are premised on physical education being a year-long course offering. Iowa Admin. Code r. 281—12.5(5)“f”. For ninth grade through eleventh grade students in this district, a physical education excusal for the trimester in which they are enrolled excuses them from a year’s worth of physical education instruction.

To harmonize the requirements in the physical education excusals for participation in “organized and supervised athletic program” with the latitude afforded to school districts that have waivers to offer physical education daily but for less than a full school year, the following directives apply:

- I. For twelfth grade students, students may be excused from physical education because of participation in an organized and supervised athletic program or programs that requires as much weekly participation as one-eighth unit of physical education, with a yearly total of 1800 minutes of participation. Note that if a student does not meet the grounds for this excusal (e.g., the student drops out of the athletic program), the student would be required to enroll in physical education.
- II. For ninth through eleventh grade students who would qualify for this excusal ground, those students may be either
 - A. Not excused from physical education at all based on this excusal ground, or
 - B. Only excused for one-half of the physical education course, based on this excusal ground, with the requirement that the student participates in a total of 900 minutes of the athletic program.

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