

During the 89th Legislative Session, [SB 401](#) was passed into law related to homeschool students participating in UIL activities. This law creates two main changes to the current status of homeschool participation in UIL activities as outlined below:

2024-25 School Year	SB 401 Change for 2025-26 School Year
ISDs can OPT IN to allow homeschool participation	ISDs shall provide homeschool participation unless the school board votes to OPT OUT of allowing homeschool participation
Homeschool students may participate in UIL activities at the school that the student would be eligible to attend based on the student's residential address if the school has OPTED IN to allow homeschool participation.	Homeschool students may participate in UIL activities at the school closest to the student's residential address that does allow homeschool participation, if the school to which they are zoned OPTS OUT of homeschool participation.

School District Option

The bill contains the following language related to an ISD's option:

“(c-2) Not later than the date specified under league rule, the board of trustees of a school district or the governing body of an open-enrollment charter school may adopt a policy declining to grant non-enrolled students the opportunity to participate in league activities.”

This means a school is required to allow homeschool participation unless the school board adopts a policy to opt out of allowing it.

In the 2024-25 school year, UIL required schools to opt in to allow homeschool participation by August 1st for those homeschool students to be eligible for varsity participation. Under this new law, homeschool students are eligible to participate at your ISD unless your school board opts out.

To accommodate this new law, UIL is setting the date for opting out as September 1, 2025. In subsequent years, that date will be August 1st for any change in status a school board votes to take. For example, if your school does not opt out for this coming school year, and wishes later to do so for 2026-2027, that change must be made by August 1, 2026.

To review, ISDs must opt out of allowing homeschool participation by September 1, 2025 or homeschool students are able to participate in UIL activities, as written in law.

Options for Homeschool Students

This bill also provides additional opportunities for homeschool students to participate in UIL activities. If the school where the student resides adopts a policy that does not allow participation, the student may participate at the school closest to the student's home address that does allow homeschool participation:

“(e-1) If the school that a non-enrolled student would be eligible to attend under Subsection (e) is subject to a policy adopted under Subsection (c-2), the student may participate in a league

activity for the closest school, based on geographic proximity to the student's residential address, that is not subject to a policy adopted under Subsection (c-2)."

Schools that allow homeschool participation are not required to allow homeschool students from outside of their school district to participate in UIL activities for their schools. The law allows it, but does not require it.

The bill also contains language that indicates schools should "provide a non-enrolled student, who otherwise meets league eligibility standards to represent that school in a league activity, with the opportunity to participate in the activity on behalf of the school in the same manner that the school provides the opportunity to participate to students enrolled in the school."

UIL staff is continuing to develop rules for implementing this section regarding the "in the same manner" as enrolled students language included in the law. We will share information about this as soon as it is available.

Summary

Additional rules and information for implementing this law will be shared as soon as they are available. It is important for schools to note the change in law from an opt in to an opt out. Under this new law, schools must provide opportunities for homeschool students to participate in UIL activities UNLESS the school district board of trustees adopts a policy declining to grant non-enrolled students this opportunity. School districts must adopt such a policy by September 1, 2025 to opt out.

Until, and if, a school board adopts a policy to opt out of allowing homeschool student participation, this new law states homeschool students are eligible to participate in UIL activities for that school. UIL activities for the 2025-2026 school year start prior to September 1, 2025. However, the deadline for adopting this policy is September 1, 2025 to give schools time to contemplate and make a decision.