



**Independent School District 709
Exceptional Middle School Student Athlete Acceleration Policy
PARTICIPATION OF 7TH AND 8TH GRADE MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS
IN INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS**

One of the goals of the Duluth Public Schools is to provide an appropriate challenge for students in all endeavors, academic and co-curricular. The needs of the student and concern for his/her physical, mental, social, emotional and educational well-being are of prime importance.

If in the judgment of the varsity coach there is an advanced 7th or 8th grade athlete who could compete at the high school junior varsity or varsity level, this individual may be eligible under the following conditions:

1. The student must possess skills to successfully participate and play competitively at the junior varsity and varsity level.
2. Parents, coaches, and the activities director of the 7th or 8th grade athlete must carefully consider the student's physical, mental, emotional, social, and educational well-being before permitting him/her to try out and participate on a varsity team with older students.

Note: The MSHSL defines participation as grades 7-12.

Procedures

1. All 7th or 8th grade athletes shall undergo a tryout period in which the varsity coach evaluates the athlete's physical, mental, social, emotional and educational readiness for competition at junior varsity and varsity level. At the conclusion of the tryout, the varsity coach will meet with the student-athlete and discuss the anticipated role of the young student-athlete for the season.
2. The activities director will communicate with the head high school varsity coach to share all pertinent information. A meeting with parent(s) and/or student athlete may be scheduled.
3. The activities director and coach will be responsible for the final decision. The 7th or 8th grade athlete must complete and signed all the necessary forms will they will be retained in the high school activities office.

Considerations

During the analysis portion of the request for a 7th or 8th grade student athlete to try out and compete at the junior varsity and varsity level, the following considerations will be carefully reviewed:

1. The anticipated degree of contribution by the 7th or 8th grade athlete at junior varsity and varsity level competition; the athlete being moved to junior varsity/varsity level must be a significant contributor in playing time.
2. This procedure is not intended to deplete numbers in the middle school programs merely to ensure adequate numbers of participants to maintain senior high teams. Any program may choose to only allow students in grades 9-12 to tryout.
4. No middle school student shall get out of school early for practice. The only time a middle school student is to get out of school early is in the case of a game or competition.
5. Responsibility for integrating the student into the team should be shared between the coaches, activities director, student and parents. The number of eligible middle school students who participate on high school athletic teams will be determined by tryouts and coaches decision.
6. The student must be achieving appropriate academic progress, adhering to school rules, and have regular attendance. It is a privilege, not a right to participate in ISD 709 Athletic Programs.

Grade 6 Students

Grade 6 students are not eligible for interscholastic athletics per Minnesota State High School League Bylaw 105.00.