

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2025 REGULAR SESSION

Committee Substitute

for

House Bill 2355

By Delegate Statler

[Reported on March 20, 2025 in the Committee on
Education]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §18-2-25 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to
2 forbidding the West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission from taking any
3 adverse action against middle or high school student athletes who participate in travel
4 sports; requiring student athletes to give notice to both coaches and to give deference to
5 public school program.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

**§18-2-25. Authority of county boards to regulate athletic and other extracurricular activities
of secondary schools; delegation of authority to West Virginia Secondary School
Activities Commission; authority of commission; approval of rules by state board;
incorporation; funds; participation by private and parochial schools and by home-
schooled students and participants in the Hope Scholarship Program or in a
Microschool or Learning Pod.**

1 (a) The county boards of education shall exercise the control, supervision, and regulation
2 of all interscholastic athletic events, and other extracurricular activities of the students in public
3 secondary schools, and of those schools of their respective counties. The county board of
4 education may delegate control, supervision, and regulation of interscholastic athletic events and
5 band activities to the West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission.

6 (b) The West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission is composed of the
7 principals, or their representatives, of those secondary schools whose county boards of education
8 have certified in writing to the State Superintendent of Schools that they have elected to delegate
9 the control, supervision, and regulation of their interscholastic athletic events and band activities of
10 the students in the public secondary schools in their respective counties to the commission. The
11 West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission may exercise the control, supervision, and
12 regulation of interscholastic athletic events and band activities of secondary schools, delegated to
13 it pursuant to this section. The rules of the West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission

shall contain a provision for a proper review procedure and review board and be promulgated in accordance with the provisions of chapter 29A of this code, but shall, in all instances, be subject to the prior approval of the state board. The West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission, may, with the consent of the State Board of Education, incorporate under the name of West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission, Inc., as a nonprofit, nonstock corporation under the provisions of chapter 31 of this code. County boards of education may expend moneys for and pay dues to the West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission, and all moneys paid to the commission, as well as moneys derived from any contest or other event sponsored by the commission, are quasi-public funds as defined in §18-5-1 *et seq.* of this code, and the funds of the commission are subject to an annual audit by the State Tax Commissioner.

(c) The West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission shall promulgate reasonable rules providing for the control, supervision, and regulation of the interscholastic athletic events and other extracurricular activities of private and parochial secondary schools as elect to delegate to the commission control, supervision, and regulation, upon the same terms and conditions, subject to the same rules and requirements and upon the payment of the same fees and charges as those provided for public secondary schools. Any such private or parochial secondary school shall receive any monetary or other benefits in the same manner and in the same proportion as any public secondary school.

(d) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, or the commission's rules, the commission shall consider eligible for participation in interscholastic athletic events and other extracurricular activities of secondary schools a student who is receiving home instruction pursuant to §18-8-1(c) of this code, is a participant in the Hope Scholarship Program, pursuant to §18-8-1(m) of this code and as provided for in §18-31-1, *et seq.* of this code, or participates in a microschool or learning pod, pursuant to §18-8-1(n) of this code, and who:

(1) Has demonstrated satisfactory evidence of academic progress for each year in compliance with the provisions of that subsection: *Provided*, That the student's average

test results are within or above the fourth stanine in all subject areas;

(2) Has not reached the age of 19 by August 1 of the current school year;

(3) Is an amateur who receives no compensation but participates solely for the educational, physical, mental and social benefits of the activity;

(4) Agrees to comply with all disciplinary rules of the West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission and the county board in which the student lives; and

(5) Agrees to obey all rules of the West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission governing awards, all-star games, parental consents, physical examinations, and vaccinations applicable to all high school athletes.

Eligibility is limited to participation in interscholastic athletic events and other extracurricular activities at the public secondary school serving the attendance zone in which the student lives: *Provided*, That students who leave a school during the school year are subject to the same transfer protocols that apply to member-to-member transfers. Reasonable fees may be charged to the student to cover the costs of participation in interscholastic athletic events and other extracurricular activities.

(e) Students enrolled in a private school shall be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities at the public secondary school serving the attendance zone in which the student lives if the extracurricular activity is not offered at the student's private school: *Provided*, The student meets the requirements of subsection (d)(4) and (d)(5) of this section.

(f) The West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission shall not take any adverse action, nor prohibit, any middle or high school student athletes who participate in travel sports, and shall not engage in any discriminatory actions against those students: *Provided*, That student athletes shall give notice to both the public school coach and the travel coach of their joint participation; *Provided further*, That the student athletes who participate in athletics at their school shall give that program deference if scheduling conflicts arise between the public school program and the travel sports program; *Provided further* that a public school coach shall also be permitted

66 to be a travel sports coach, if the coach so chooses.

67 ~~(f)~~ (g) The West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission shall recognize
68 preparatory athletic programs, whose participants attend a secondary school in West Virginia for
69 academic instruction, as nonparticipating members of the commission solely for the purpose of
70 competing on the national level: *Provided*, That the preparatory athletic program shall pay the
71 same fees as member schools. Such recognition does not entitle the preparatory athletic program
72 to compete against a member school during the regular season or in any commission state
73 championship events. The commission may promulgate an emergency rule pursuant to
74 subsection (b) of this section, if necessary, to carry out the intent of this subsection.