

**GENERAL ACTIVITIES
INFORMATION
HANDBOOK
2025-2026**

**South Dakota
High School Activities Association**

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Table of Contents

SDHSAA MISSION STATEMENT	4
THE IMPORTANCE OF ACTIVITIES	4
RULES AND THEIR ENFORCEMENT	4
GENERAL INFORMATION & POLICIES FOR ALL ACTIVITIES	5
Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Eligibility	5
Annual Eligibility Reports.....	5
SDHSAA Constitution & By-Laws Regulations.....	5
Eligibility of Students in an Approved CSIET International Exchange Program	6
U.S. Government Regulations Regarding International Youth Exchange.....	6
Legal Requirements for Foreign Students in Public School	6

MISSION STATEMENT

The South Dakota High School Activities Association will serve member schools by providing leadership in the development, supervision and conduct of interscholastic activities, which enrich the educational experiences of high school students. The SDHSAA is committed to the ideals that will provide equitable participation opportunities and positive recognition to students, while working cooperatively with all schools to enhance the achievement of desired educational goals.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ACTIVITIES

A strong activities program can and should complement a school's academic program. Activities are an integral part of the total curriculum of South Dakota schools. A well-balanced activities program provides the opportunity for physical, social and emotional development complementing intellectual growth.

Participation in school activities encompasses all students without regard to sex, race, or creed and teaches that it is a privilege and an honor to represent one's school. Interscholastic activities constitute a part of the right kind of "growing up" experiences for students. Participants learn to accept success and failures, gain poise and confidence, achieve tolerance and understanding of others, and gain the self-satisfaction of accomplishing goals. Under a well-administered school program, students and spectators become better citizens through participation and observation of activities conducted under established rules.

It is the duty of the member schools, through their Activities Association, to maintain the appropriate balance between the academic and activities program offered.

RULES AND THEIR ENFORCEMENT

From the Executive Director

I believe it is fair to say that there is general agreement that interschool activities can have positive educational values for students, member schools of the South Dakota High School Activities Association and your respective communities when properly planned, administered and supervised.

Toward these goals and to ensure that individuals compete in a consistent and fair atmosphere, a set of rules and regulations has been developed for the activities governed by the SDHSAA. These rules and regulations can be found in the Association Constitution and Bylaws, the Handbook, approved Rulings of the Board of Directors and in the established game rules governing the various sports.

The SDHSAA has long demonstrated pride in its democratic system whereby the member schools, through their representatives, create these rules. They are not decrees of any one person or the executive staff in the SDHSAA office. Each of the activities covered by the SDHSAA and the sections in the Constitution and Bylaws was voted into effect by the membership.

In essence, all SDHSAA rules are adopted by every school belonging to the Association as its own rules when the time comes for participation in SDHSAA activities. When an SDHSAA rule is violated by a school, coach, or individual, in effect, your rules are being violated. Oftentimes, when a violation occurs, there are charges that the rule is unfair. Naturally, most any penalty for a rule infraction often is labeled too severe, especially when an entire school or team receives a penalty when just one person or a few people were responsible for the infraction. I am sure that most of you are aware of the fact that the penalty for most infractions is not finitely spelled out in the Constitution and Bylaws. For the most part, determining the appropriate penalty for infractions is left up to the discretion of the Board of Directors. You must understand that penalties serve two purposes: (1) A deterrent to a violation, and (2) a means to rectify an inequity. The penalties established in the SDHSAA Constitution and Bylaws as well as the penalties established by Rulings of the Board of Directors are made to fulfill these purposes and to be consistent with the purpose of the Association. If the penalties are considered too severe or if the wrong parties are being penalized, then the penalty should, of course, be changed or corrected through the Association's amendment process or by rulings of the Board of Directors.

Last but not least, the administrative staff at the SDHSAA office wishes to thank all superintendents, principals, activity directors, athletic directors, coaches, vocal and instrumental music directors, speech and drama directors, journalism directors, and student council supervisors for all the wonderful cooperation we have received in the past. It is impossible to express our sincere appreciation to all of you individually, just as it would be impossible to have a successful activities program in all of our member schools without your dedication and cooperation. We especially want to thank those of you who serve as supervisors of tests as well as those of you who serve as directors of our state events. We also thank those schools for the use of their facilities for our various sub-state and state programs. We would also like to take this opportunity to encourage every school to plan for and carry out special programs during NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES MONTH scheduled for the month of October. Best wishes for a most joyous, exciting, rewarding and successful school year.

Dr. Daniel Swartos

Executive Director, SDHSAA

GENERAL INFORMATION & POLICIES FOR ALL ACTIVITIES

1. RULES AND REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO ELIGIBILITY

A. ANNUAL ELIGIBILITY REPORTS

Member schools are expected to submit the following reports to the SDHSAA office:

- 1) Submit the Annual Athletic Eligibility Report Form by May 1 of each school year.
\$50.00 FINE IF NOT SUBMITTED BY DUE DATE.
- 2) Submit the Annual Activities Eligibility Report Form by May 1 of each school year.
\$50.00 FINE IF NOT SUBMITTED BY DUE DATE.

The two Annual Reports must include an unduplicated count of each and every participating student involved with athletic activities and/or fine arts activities respectfully.

B. SDHSAA CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS: CHAPTER II, PART II, SECTION 6

- 1) Prior to the start of any sport or activity, the high school principal or his/her designee shall verify to the coaching staff in each sport respectively and to the director of each activity respectively, that the students participating in those activities meet all the eligibility requirements set forth in Chapter I, Part IV and Chapter II, Part I of the By-Laws.
- 2) In the event an ineligible student is allowed to participate in an interscholastic contest, forfeiture will be automatic. Additionally, the Board of Directors shall determine other penalties as deemed appropriate.
- 3) On or before May 1, each high school principal or his/her designee shall submit to the Executive Director the Annual Athletic Eligibility Report Form listing the names and other pertinent data of all students who participated in interscholastic athletics for the school year just completed.
- 4) On or before May 1, each high school principal or his/her designee shall submit to the Executive Director the Annual Activities Eligibility Report Form listing the names and other pertinent data of all students who participated in interscholastic activities for the school year just completed.
- 5) In the event a student becomes ineligible at any time during the school year, it shall be the duty of the high school principal or his/her designee to so inform the athletic coach or activity director at which time the student will be immediately withdrawn from all interscholastic competition.

C. COMPUTERIZED VERSION/PRINTOUTS

Member schools have the option of reporting the data required by completing the SDHSAA Forms as collated into this section of the Handbook or they may attach a computerized printout provided all of the data is included as set forth on the SDHSAA Forms. If the computerized printout is submitted, each member school should attach it to the appropriate athletic form and activities form with all dates, signatures, etc. completed as required.

D. DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY PRIOR TO COMPETITION

It shall be the duty of the high school principal or his/her designee to verify to the coaching staff of each athletic sport as well as the instructors of each activity that each student meets all of the eligibility requirements of the SDHSAA. This must be done prior to any student participating in any interscholastic contest. The elimination of Master Eligibility Lists did not negate the need to monitor eligibility status of each and every participating student.

E. LOSS OF ELIGIBILITY DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR.

In the event a student should lose his/her eligibility during the course of a school year, it shall be the duty of the high school principal or his/her designee to immediately notify the student, the coaching staff and/or instructor of the ineligibility and thus avoid penalties.

F. PENALTIES FOR INELIGIBLE COMPETING IN CONTESTS

- 1) In the event an ineligible student is allowed to participate in an interscholastic contest, forfeiture will be automatic.
- 2) Additionally, the Board of Directors shall determine other penalties as deemed appropriate.

2. ELIGIBILITY OF STUDENTS IN AN APPROVED CSIET INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM

A student who is enrolled in an approved CSIET International Exchange Program is eligible for one year from the date of enrollment provided the following criteria are met:

- The student satisfies all SDHSAA eligibility requirements as per Chapter I, Part IV, Section 1, page 8 of the SDHSAA Bylaws.
- The student shall not have graduated from high school or received a high school diploma in his/her foreign country.
- The student has not previously attended a high school in the United States.
- Neither the school the student attends, nor any person associated with the school, has had any input in the selection of the student.
- The student has not been terminated from the CSIET program.

The APPROVED LIST for the current school year, as determined by the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel, can be found on the CSIET Web-site (www.csiet.org). If there are further questions, contact the SDHSAA office.

A. U.S. GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS REGARDING INTERNATIONAL YOUTH EXCHANGE

Further information regarding international youth exchange programs may be found on the CSIET website. On the CSIET home page, click on Advisory List, on the Advisory List page, click on Visa Information. In this section, you will find information on various visa categories and programs, responsibilities of sponsors and students, and other valuable information relative to international youth exchange programs and opportunities.

B. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Public Law 104-208, section 625 USC 1184 (m) (1) places the following restrictions on foreign students in F-1 nonimmigrant status:

- Prohibits their attendance in public elementary schools (grades K through 8) or publicly-funded adult education programs;
- Limits their attendance in public secondary schools (grades 9 through 12) to a maximum of (12) months; and
- Requires them to reimburse public secondary schools for the full, unsubsidized per capita cost of education for the intended period of study. There is no provision in the law that would permit a public school to waive the tuition fee or make any contribution toward the full cost of that fee.