

State of Arkansas
95th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2025

A Bill

SENATE BILL 634

By: Senators M. Johnson, B. Johnson, A. Clark

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO CREATE THE DIVISION OF INTERSCHOLASTIC
ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND
SECONDARY EDUCATION; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO CREATE THE DIVISION OF
INTERSCHOLASTIC ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE
DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 18, Subchapter 1, is amended to add an additional section to read as follows:

6-18-116. Division of Interscholastic Activities – Definitions – Creation – Duties.

(a) To promote the value of student participation in interscholastic activities and to provide fair and impartial oversight of interscholastic activities at schools in the State of Arkansas, the General Assembly finds that a Division of Interscholastic Activities should be established under the direct operational control of the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.

(b) As used in this section:

(1) "Interscholastic activity" means a school activity not included in a regular curriculum, including without limitation sports and special interest clubs or groups, in which students in grades six through twelve (6-12) participate and compete; and



(2) "School" means:

- (A) A public school;
- (B) An open-enrollment public charter school; or
- (C) A private school.

(c) There is created a Division of Interscholastic Activities within the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education.

(d)(1) The Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education shall select an individual to serve as the Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Interscholastic Activities, who shall serve at the pleasure of the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.

(2) The Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education may reassign as necessary Division of Elementary and Secondary Education staff to the Division of Interscholastic Activities sufficient to fulfill the Division of Interscholastic Activities's monitoring and reporting obligations.

(e)(1) The person selected as Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Interscholastic Activities shall:

- (A) Be a person of good moral character and qualified technically and by experience to direct the work of the Division of Interscholastic Activities;
- (B) Hold a master's degree or an equivalent degree from an accredited institution; and
- (C) Have at least ten (10) years of experience in an administrative, supervisory, or management position.

(2) No person who is related within the fourth degree of consanguinity or affinity to a member of the State Board of Education or to the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education shall be eligible to serve as the Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Interscholastic Activities.

(f) With guidance and approval from the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Interscholastic Activities shall be responsible for hiring all employees of the Division of Interscholastic Activities.

(g) The Division of Interscholastic Activities shall have the following responsibilities:

(1) To monitor schools for compliance with the following as it relates to interscholastic activities:

(A) State rules and federal regulations;

(B) Legislative acts; and

(C) All rules as established by the state board;

(2) To promote the educational values inherent in interscholastic activities that contribute to the accepted aims of education while avoiding interference with the educational goals of a school;

(3) To ensure that interscholastic activities remain an integral part of an education program;

(4) To promote an understanding that participation in interscholastic activities is a privilege for students who meet certain criteria established by the state board;

(5) To foster a cooperative spirit of good sportsmanship on the part of school representatives, school patrons, and students;

(6) To support opportunities for students to experience the benefits that are derived from teamwork, developing a sense of fair play, and accomplishment;

(7) To promote an understanding and appreciation that rules, consistently applied, create order and discipline;

(8) To provide standard and consistent interpretations of the rules as adopted by the state board;

(9) To conduct championship events according to the procedures adopted by the state board in a thorough and impartial manner;

(10) To prevent exploitation of youth by special interest groups;

(11) To develop standards of officiating and adjudicating interscholastic activities in order to ensure greater statewide consistency and quality; and

(12) To consider the distances required for traveling when scheduling competitions between schools.

(h)(1) Each public school and open-enrollment public charter school shall be subject to the oversight of interscholastic activities by the Division of Interscholastic Activities.

(2) A private school may choose to be subject to the oversight of its interscholastic activities by the Division of Interscholastic Activities.

(i) The Division of Interscholastic Activities shall not discriminate

against an individual on the basis of gender, national origin, race, ethnicity, religion, or disability.

(j) By June 1 of each year, the Division of Interscholastic Activities shall provide an annual report on its regulation of interscholastic activities for the previous school year to the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education.

(k) The state board shall promulgate rules to administer this section.