



**Legislative Alert: Coaches, Athletic Directors and Friends of Athletics
We Need Your Help!**

**Important Information That Needs Your Attention:
Equal Credits for Athletics Put on Hold by State Board of Education**

A decision to put athletics on equal footing with regard to state credits for electives has been put on hold by the SBOE until their January 22 & 23 meeting.

It is very important for coaches, athletic directors and friends of athletics to express your feelings towards the issue of amending the approved list of elective credits for graduation, to include athletics. It is important that you contact your SBOE Representative prior to the January meeting to voice your support: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/sboe/members.html>

Board Chairman Don McLeroy, Rep-Bryan, initially voted for the proposal but persuaded colleagues on Friday to postpone final action pending board review early next year of the state's entire high school graduation requirements.

With the new 4x4 requirements establishing twenty-six credits to graduate starting with the class of 2011, students who participate in athletics but only receive two credits will be placed in a difficult situation if they have a goal of graduating in the "Distinguished Plan." Athletes do not have enough room in their schedules to be in athletics for all four years of high school and take dual credit classes during their junior and senior years. This generates a problem. Not receiving credit for athletics in their junior or senior years will prohibit them from having enough credits to graduate. Athletics is the only elective that receives only two credits for four years of participation. Prior to the new 4x4 requirements, enough room existed in an athlete's schedule to participate in athletics all four years and only receive two Physical Education credits. Now, the extra room is gone.

The two groups of student-athletes who will be most affected if the current system is not changed will be the upper-level students who have to manipulate their schedules to take dual-credit classes and the at-risk students who sometimes have to repeat classes because of failing grades.

The current system of only awarding two physical education credits for four years of participation in athletics is not fair and equitable; especially when you consider all the other electives, (including JROTC, Dance and Band) receive four credits for four years.

We believe that all of our electives are very important, but the current system is unfair to athletics and needs to be changed.

IMPORTANT POINTS REGARDING THE NEW 4 X 4 GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS AS IT PERTAINS TO ATHLETICS

- Compared with the other electives, high school Athletics is the only elective that receives just two credits for four years of participation. All other electives including Band, Dance, and JROTC, receive four credits for four years.
- Athletes do not receive elective credit for their junior and senior years in Athletics.
- The proposal to equalize the number of athletic credits would only allow for additional elective options for athletics. In no way will the proposal take away from the academic rigor of the new “4x4” requirements or weaken the core 4x4 curriculum.
- If a freshman has a goal to graduate on the Distinguished Plan and participates in Athletics, he will have problems. He does not have enough room in his schedule to be in Athletics all four years of high school and take dual credit classes during his junior and senior years. Why does this generate a problem? Not receiving credit for Athletics in his junior and senior years will prohibit him from having enough credits to graduate. Athletics is the only elective that does not receive four years of credit for four years of participation. Prior to the new 4x4 requirements, enough room existed in the athlete’s schedule to participate in Athletics all four years and only receive two credits. Now the extra room is gone.
- With the new 4x4 requirements, which require 26 credits to graduate starting with the graduating class of 2011, students who participate in Athletics and only receive two credits will be placed in a difficult situation that none of the other students will face. For example, four years of participation in Athletics equals two Physical Education credits, but Band, JROTC, and even Dance, four years of participation equals four credits.
- Band can receive 1 - 4 credits in all three graduation programs, (two Physical Education credits and two Fine Arts credits); JROTC can receive 1 - 4 credits in all three graduation programs; Dance I-IV can receive up to two Physical Education credits and two Fine Arts credits. These are all state not local credits.
- The two groups of athletes who will be most adversely affected if the current system is not changed will be the Upper Level students who have to manipulate their schedules to take dual credit classes and the At-Risk students who sometimes have to retake classes because of failing grades.
- The current system of only awarding two Physical Education credits for four years of participation in Athletics is not fair and equitable, especially when compared with the other electives. All electives are very important to the educational process, but the current system is punitive to only one group (Athletics) in our school setting.