

# **Frequently Asked Questions about the Physical Education Graduation and Waiver Requirements**

**Fairfield Christian Academy School Board Adoption Date – May, 2017**

## **How much Physical Education is required?**

Students are required to complete one-half unit of Physical Education for graduation. Both elective and traditional Physical Education courses require a minimum of 120 hours of course instruction to earn one-half unit of credit

## **Can boards of education adopt policies to exempt students from Physical Education?**

The board of education of each school district and the governing authority of each chartered nonpublic school may adopt a policy to excuse from the high school physical education requirement each student who, during high school, has participated in interscholastic athletics, marching band or cheerleading for at least two full seasons or an approved Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) program for two years. If the board or authority adopts such a policy, the board or authority shall not require the student to complete any Physical Education course as a condition to graduate. However, the student shall be required to complete one-half unit, consisting of at least 60 hours of instruction, in another course of study.

## **If a student participates in interscholastic athletics, marching band, cheerleading or JROTC program before his or her district adopts the waiver policy, can those activities be applied?**

No. Districts are not permitted to implement a retroactive policy. The two full seasons, or years for JROTC, and the additional one-half unit of credit (60 hours of instruction) must begin after the implementation date of the policy. **For FCA that date is May, 2017.**

## **For Physical Education, may other activities (show choirs, non-school-sponsored athletics, etc.) which involve physical activity on the part of students be counted toward the two semesters of Physical Education?**

No. The statute specifically limits the participation to interscholastic athletics, marching band, cheerleading and JROTC. There is no authority granted to a board of education to include any additional participation.

## **Are there any other requirements students must meet beyond the two full seasons of participation in interscholastic athletics, marching band or cheerleading?**

Yes. Excused students also must complete one-half unit in another curricular area. While one-half unit of Physical Education requires a minimum of 120 hours of instruction, one-half unit in all other curricular areas requires a minimum of 60 hours of instruction. For students who use a JROTC program to qualify for the Physical Education exemption, the credit received for that participation may be used to satisfy the requirement to complete one-half unit in another course of study. This one-half unit in another curricular area keeps the minimum number of credits required for graduation at 20.

## **For Physical Education, what is the impact of being “cut” or quitting?**

The statute requires participation “for at least two full seasons.” The season during which a student was “cut” or quit the activity could not be used to meet the two-season requirement.

**Can a district policy require more than the two seasons of participation in order to excuse the one-half unit of Physical Education required for graduation?**

Yes. The language sets the minimum requirement for JROTC programs as “at least two years” while the other options must be “for at least two full seasons.” A board of education could require more than two full years or seasons. However, to meet the excuse from Physical Education, a board cannot require a student to complete an additional Physical Education course or require more than one-half unit in another course of study.

**If a student participates in only one full season of an approved activity, can the student be excused from .25 units of Physical Education and thus have to take only .25 units of Physical Education to complete his or her Physical Education requirement under the Ohio Core?**

No. The statute requires participation for at least two full seasons, or years for JROTC. There is no provision in the law that would permit any type of partial excuse.

**If a student takes advantage of the PE waiver offered by his or her district, does the waiver transfer with the student if he or she moves to a district without PE waivers?**

Students are subject to the graduation requirements of the district where they will graduate. In the case of a transfer student, the receiving district is not obligated to honor the PE waiver earned in the prior district. The district should count any non-PE credit the student earned as a condition for receiving the PE waiver while in the prior district, but the student will still need to earn the required PE credit as required by the new district. Districts may decide how non-PE credits apply to their graduation requirements.

**Can a local board of education add more requirements to its Physical Education waiver policy?**

Yes. The state establishes minimum curriculum requirements for graduation, but local boards of education may adopt additional requirements. Examples for the Physical Education waiver may include taking coursework from a specified list of courses or having a minimum grade point average to qualify. Regardless of the additional requirements a local board of education may impose, students must earn at least one-half credit (60 contact hours) in lieu of earning credit for Physical Education coursework under the policy.

**Our school district has eliminated all sports and extra-curricular activities due to budgetary constraints. Can those students who have completed one season count that toward the PE waiver and only be required to take a single semester of PE?**

No. The law is clear. Students must complete two full seasons or years to qualify for the waiver. If those activities are eliminated by the local district, students may be forced to schedule two years of Physical Education. They cannot mix and match to meet the requirement.

**Our school district eliminated all outside student activities due to budgetary constraints. Can our band students qualify for the PE waiver if we practice marching during the band class that is part of the school day?**

No. The waiver for marching band was based on the outside-of-class activities associated with marching band programs including but not limited to attending band camp, marching in parades, performing at school sponsored athletic events (pre-game, halftime, post-game shows, etc.), band contests and state-sponsored marching band competitions.