

Guidance on “Scholarship Rule,” 36.15(2)

Side by side comparison of 36.15(2)

CURRENT (in effect until 7/1/06)	NEW (Adopted 3/2/06; Effective 7/1/06)
A student must take at least 4 subjects at all times.	A student must receive credit in at least 4 subjects at all times.
Pass 4 to remain eligible.	Pass all and make adequate progress toward graduation to remain eligible.
<p>If not passing 4 at end of previous semester, student is ineligible for entire next semester.</p> <p>If the previous semester is the final semester for the school year, student is ineligible for entire summer and entire next fall semester.</p> <p>If not passing 4 at any point during current semester, student is ineligible until school re-checks grades and determines that student is now passing 4.</p>	<p>If not passing all at end of a grading period, student is ineligible for first period of 20 consecutive school days in the interscholastic athletic event in which the student is a bona fide contestant.</p> <p>If not passing all at end of final grading period of the school year and student is a contestant in baseball or softball, student is ineligible for next four weeks of that sport but has eligibility in the fall.</p> <p>If not passing all at any check point (if school checks at any time other than the end of a grading period), period of ineligibility and conditions of reinstatement are left to the school.</p>
Each school determines how often it checks grades.	Schools must check grades at the end of each grading period; otherwise, a school determines if and how often it checks grades.
No requirement to report interventions on CSIP.	Requirement that member schools report interventions on CSIP.
“Special education students” are judged based on the progress they make toward their IEP goals.	A “student with a disability” and an IEP is judged based on progress made toward IEP goals. (Not a substantive change; verbiage is changed to align with IDEA.)
Students allowed to use summer school or other means to make up failing grades to regain eligibility.	Ability to use summer school or other means to make up failing grades for eligibility purposes stricken

Language of new rule

(New language is in *italics*)

36.15(2) Scholarship rules.

- a. All contestants must be enrolled and in good standing in a school that is a member or associate member in good standing of the organization sponsoring the event.
- b. All contestants must be under 20 years of age.
- c. All contestants shall be enrolled students of the school in good standing. *They shall receive credit in at least four subjects, each of one period or “hour” or the equivalent thereof, at all times.*

To qualify under this rule, a “subject” must meet the requirements of 281—Chapter 12.

Coursework taken under the provisions of Iowa Code chapter 261C, postsecondary *enrollment* options, for which a school district or accredited nonpublic school grants academic credit toward

high school graduation shall be used in determining eligibility. *No student shall be denied eligibility if the student's school program deviates from the traditional two-semester school year.*

(1) *Each contestant shall be passing all coursework for which credit is given and shall be making adequate progress toward graduation requirements at the end of each grading period. Grading period, graduation requirements, and any interim periods of ineligibility are determined by local policy. For purposes of this sub-rule, "grading period" shall mean the period of time at the end of which a student in grades 9 through 12 receives a final grade and course credit is awarded for passing grades.*

(2) *Subject to the provision below regarding contestants in interscholastic baseball or softball, if at the end of any grading period a contestant is given a failing grade in any course for which credit is awarded, the contestant is ineligible to dress for and compete in the next occurring interscholastic athletic contests and competitions in which the contestant is a bona fide contestant for 20 consecutive school days. For purposes of this sub-rule, a "bona fide contestant" means a student who presently is or previously has competed in the interscholastic athletic activity to which the student's period of ineligibility herein applies. This definition shall not apply to a student in the ninth grade.*

(3) *At the end of a grading period that is the final grading period in a school year, a bona fide contestant in interscholastic baseball or softball who receives a failing grade in any course for which credit is awarded is ineligible to dress for and compete in interscholastic baseball or softball for the four consecutive weeks following the end of the final grading period.*

d. *A student with a disability who has an individualized education program shall not be denied eligibility on the basis of scholarship if the student is making adequate progress, as determined by school officials, towards the goals and objectives on the student's individualized education program.*

e. *A student who meets all other qualifications may be eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics for a maximum of eight consecutive semesters upon entering the ninth grade for the first time. However, a student who engages in athletics during the summer following eighth grade is also eligible to compete during the summer following twelfth grade. Extenuating circumstances, such as health, may be the basis for an appeal to the executive board which may extend the eligibility of a student when *the executive board* finds that the interests of the student and interscholastic athletics will be benefited.*

f. *All member schools shall provide appropriate interventions and necessary academic supports for students who fail or who are at risk to fail, and shall report to the department regarding those interventions on the comprehensive school improvement plan.*

g. *A student is academically eligible upon entering the ninth grade. No student shall be eligible to participate in any given interscholastic athletic sport if the student has engaged in that sport professionally.*

h. *No student who has been a member of a college squad or who has trained with a college squad or participated in a college contest shall be eligible for any athletic contest.*

i. *A student who is eligible at the close of a semester is academically eligible until the beginning of the subsequent semester.*

j. *The local superintendent of schools, with the approval of the local board of education, may give permission to a dropout student to participate in athletics upon return to school if the student is otherwise eligible under these rules.*

Frequently Asked Questions

Definitions

What is passing?

There is no statewide definition of passing; this is a locally controlled decision. In the absence of a local rule to address this, passing means any grade that is other than “F.”

How about Incompletes? Withdrawals?

Again, this is left to local control. But, LOCAL CONTROL means taking affirmative action to clarify for students just what an “I” or “W” means. In the absence of a local rule to address this, an “I” or “W” will be considered failure.

May an Incomplete be changed to a passing grade?

Depends on local policy. If a school has a policy that an “I” is failure, the “I” may not be changed to a passing grade for purposes of avoiding ineligibility.

What is a grading period?

A “grading period” is the period of time at the end of which a student receives a final grade and course credit is awarded for passing grades. Each school determines its own grading periods.

What is a final grade?

A final grade is that grade that goes on the student’s transcript. If a school offers block scheduling, a final grade might occur at the end of nine weeks if the grade is recorded on the student’s transcript. A final grade is NOT the grade on the progress report that goes to students and their families.

What is credit coursework or a credit subject?

If the student’s transcript includes a letter grade (other than “F,” “I,” or “W”) for the subject or course, this is credit coursework. The most typical example of *non-credit coursework* is Driver Education. It is a local decision (to be made about the course as a whole, and not to be made on an individual student basis) whether a certain subject or course is one for which credit is awarded.

What is a bona fide contestant?

This is a student who presently is or previously has competed in an interscholastic athletic activity. Absent injury, illness, or similar circumstances outside of the student’s control, a student must be participating in the activity to be considered a bona fide contestant in that activity.

Because 9th graders may not have had interscholastic athletic activities available to them, this definition does not apply to them.

A student who participates in a sport for the first time as a 10th – 12th grader is not a bona fide contestant in that sport.

A student who drops out or is dismissed from a sport before the end of the season is not a bona fide contestant.

Example: A student who competes in volleyball as a freshman for the entire season, does not go out for volleyball as a sophomore, is ineligible because of an “F” on her second semester sophomore report card may she go out for volleyball again for the 20 days of ineligibility because she is a bona fide contestant in volleyball because she completed the season as a freshman. The fact that she did not compete as a sophomore does not change the fact that she is a bona fide contestant in volleyball under this rule.

What days are included in the “20 consecutive school days?”

A day of school is defined in 281—Iowa Administrative Code rule 12.1(8) as a “day during which school is in session and students are under the guidance and instruction of the instructional professional staff,” and includes parent-teacher conferences and field trips. This is the definition used in the scholarship rule also. Therefore, the ineligibility period includes any day included in a school’s 180 instructional days. If a day counts as one of the 180 instructional days, it counts as one of the 20 days for the purposes of this rule. NOTE: Ineligibility applied under this rule also includes non-school days (e.g., Saturday, Sunday, holidays) occurring during the 20 school day period of ineligibility. These non-school days are not deducted from the period of ineligibility.

Example 1: Carol did not pass all of her first semester classes. Grades were issued Friday, January 7. She may play basketball on Saturday, January 8, but is ineligible Monday, January 10 to and including Friday, February 4. If school is not held on any of the weekdays because of bad weather, the period of ineligibility is extended accordingly.

Example 2: Carol’s school has to cancel school and all activities, including basketball contests, on Tuesday, February 1. Her ineligibility now extends through Monday, February 7.

9TH Graders

1. Is an incoming 9th grader affected by the rule if s/he did not pass all credit coursework on his/her final 8th grade report card?

Not under the state rule. Unless the local policy states otherwise, all incoming 9th graders have immediate eligibility, at least under the scholarship rule.

2. What is the result for a 9th grader who did not play softball/baseball and does not pass all after the first grading period?

The student is ineligible for the first 20 school days of competition of the first sport s/he competes in.

3. What is the result for a 9th grader who did not play softball/baseball and does not pass all after the final grading period of 9th grade?

The student is ineligible for the first 20 school days of competition of the first sport s/he competes in.

4. What is the result for a 9th grader who played softball/baseball immediately after 8th grade and does not pass all after the first grading period?

The student is ineligible for the first 20 school days of competition of the first sport s/he competes in. If the student is participating in basketball at the time, s/he sits out the next 20 school days of basketball. If the student is not in basketball, but goes out for track, the 20 days applies to track. If the student competes solely in softball or baseball, that is the season

affected, but instead of 20 school days, the period of ineligibility is four weeks (because school is out).

5. What is the result for a 9th grader who played softball/baseball immediately after 8th grade and does not pass all after the final grading period of 9th grade?

The student is ineligible for the first 20 school days of competition of the first sport s/he competes in. If the student decides not to participate in softball or baseball after 9th grade, the period of ineligibility applies to the very next sport s/he competes in.

10TH - 12TH Grade Students

6. What is the result for a student who is competing in basketball and does not pass all after the first grading period?

The student is ineligible for the next 20 school days of competition in basketball after those grades are made available.

7. Same as above, but the student has a hunch that she failed a course, so she never picks up her report card.

The student cannot postpone her ineligibility. She is out for the next 20 school days of competition in basketball after those grades are made available, whether or not she receives the report card. The same is true for report cards that get lost in the mail or are eaten by the dog. Grades are considered "issued" on the day they are made available, not when the student chooses to retrieve them.

8. What is the result for a student whose only sport is wrestling and he does not pass all after the first grading period?

The student is ineligible for the next 20 school days of competition in wrestling after those grades are made available.

9. What is the result for a student whose only sport is wrestling (or any fall or winter sport) and he does not pass all after the final grading period (e.g., second semester)?

The student is ineligible for the first 20 school days of competition in wrestling the next year. This is true even if the student goes out for cross country for the first time the next year. The student's period of ineligibility will be applied to wrestling.

10. What is the result for a student whose only sport is football (or any fall sport) and he does not pass all on his first semester report card but gets all "A"s on the second semester report card?

The student is ineligible for the first 20 school days of competition in football the next year.

11. What is the result for a student who competes in wrestling or boys swimming and he does not pass all on his first semester report card?

The student is ineligible for the next 20 school days of competition in his sport (wrestling or swimming). If the season ends before 20 school days expire, the extra days carry over to the next sport in which the student is a bona fide competitor.

Example 1: Grades from first semester are issued January 20, a Friday. Rick, a wrestler, has an "F" as a final grade. His ineligibility starts on January 23, a Monday. Wrestling season

ends February 18, the final Saturday of the state tournament. All of Rick's 20 school days of ineligibility are used up during the wrestling season.

Example 2: Same as above, except Rick is a swimmer. Swim season ends February 11 with the state meet. There are 15 school days from January 23 to February 11, so Rick has five more days of ineligibility to serve. Those days shall be applied to the first five school days of competition of the next sport in which Rick is a bona fide competitor.

12. What is the result for a student who competes in spring golf and does not pass all on the second semester report card?

The student is ineligible for the next 20 school days of competition in her sport (golf), and any "unexpired" days of ineligibility carry over to the next sport in which the student is a bona fide competitor.

Example: Grades from second semester are issued May 31, which is the same day as the final day of golf season. Carol, a golfer and swimmer, does not pass all. She has been planning to play in the state coed golf meet on June 6. She is ineligible to participate in the coed meet. The remaining 19 days of her ineligibility shall apply to the first 19 days of competition of the fall swim season.

13. What is the result for a senior whose only sport is volleyball (or any fall sport that concludes before end of first semester) and she does not pass all on her first semester report card?

Because the student has only been a bona fide competitor in volleyball, there is no "penalty." Absent a local rule to the contrary, she may compete in any sport the rest of her senior year without any period of ineligibility. There is nothing in the state rule that prevents a local rule that would impose some period of ineligibility in this instance.

14. If a student competes in two sports simultaneously (cross country and volleyball; golf and track; etc.) and becomes ineligible during or for the season, is the student ineligible for 20 school days for both sports?

Yes. The student is ineligible for all sports during the 20 school day period of ineligibility.

15. If a student competed solely in track as a 9th grader, did not pass all coursework at the end of second semester, and decides not to compete in track again but to go out for golf, is the student eligible for golf?

Yes. The student is only a bona fide competitor in track, so the student could compete in golf. If the student goes out for track again, the period of ineligibility will then apply to track.

16. If a ninth grader does not go out for any sports and does not pass all at the end of the grading period freshman year, what is the period of ineligibility if that student wants to go out for one or more sports sophomore (or subsequent) year?

The intent of the rule is that the student is ineligible for the first 20 school days of the first sport s/he goes out for. The "bona fide contestant" is meant to ensure that a student who has established herself or himself as a "wrestler" or "volleyball player" exclusive is ineligible during that season. In this question, the student has not done so, and will therefore be ineligible for the first 20 school days of the first sport s/he goes out for.

College Coursework

17. If a student takes a dual credit course under PSEO (postsecondary enrollment option), does this coursework count under rule 36.15(2)?

Yes it does. *This is not a change.* The rule has always provided that PSEO coursework shall be used to determine eligibility. Students are not allowed to audit PSEO coursework, by the way.

If a student fails a PSEO course, the course cannot be counted as one of the four subjects that must be credited to the student for eligibility. Whether the “F” goes on the student’s transcript is left to local control.

Example 1: Rick uses PSEO to take Advanced Astronomy at ISU. He also takes four other courses at his high school, all for credit. The stars are not his friends; he fails the PSEO course. His school’s policy is to NOT put an “F” from a PSEO course on their students’ transcripts. Rick passes the other four courses. He maintains his eligibility.

Example 2: Rick uses PSEO to take Advanced Astronomy at ISU. He also takes four other courses at his high school, all for credit. He fails the PSEO course. His school’s policy is to record whatever grade is received from a PSEO course on their students’ transcripts, including “F”s. Rick passes the other four courses, he is ineligible because he did not pass all credit coursework.

18. If a student takes a dual credit course from a community college (contract course or supplementary weighting course), does this coursework count under rule 36.15(2)?

The rule does not address this; it may be determined locally.

19. If a student takes a college credit course on her own and will receive no secondary credit for the course, does this coursework count under rule 36.15(2)?

No. It counts neither for nor against the student.

Example 1: Carol enrolls in a culinary course at DMACC and attends the course at night. She receives only postsecondary credit for the course, no secondary credit. Carol gets an A. This course does not count as one of the four credited subjects she must take to be eligible under 36.15(2). So if she is enrolled in only three credit courses at her high school, she is not eligible.

Example 2: Carol enrolls in a culinary course at DMACC and attends the course at night. She receives only postsecondary credit for the course, no secondary credit. Carol gets an F in the DMACC course. She also takes and gets passing grades in four credit courses at her high school. She remains eligible.

Summer School/Summer Sports

20. How is ineligibility imposed for students whose only sport is softball or baseball?

The period of ineligibility is four weeks (because there are no “school days”), starting immediately upon release of the second semester (third trimester) report cards.

Example: Troy competes in baseball, but gets an “F” on his final report card for the year. The report card is issued on June 2. His ineligibility starts June 3 and ends July 1, four weeks later.

21. May a student who received an “F” on his second semester report card re-take that class over the summer to change the grade?

Not for purposes of changing his eligibility. Students should always be encouraged to remediate subjects they did not master the first time around. If the school has a policy that it will change the student’s grade on his transcript if this occurs, that does not change the fact that the student is ineligible under rule 36.15(2).

22. May a student who does not pass all coursework at the end of the 2005-06 school year use summer school in 2006 to make up an “F”?

Yes. The effective date of July 1, 2006 does not preclude using 2006 summer courses (even if the courses are held in July and/or August) to make up failures in a grading period that concluded before July 1, 2006.

23. When is the ineligibility period for a student who participate in football and baseball and who does not pass all coursework at the end of first semester but passes all at the end of second semester?

If the student goes out for baseball, this is the sport to which his ineligibility will apply.

Miscellaneous

24. After the student has sat out her 20 school days of ineligibility is there a requirement that her grades be re-checked before she may compete?

No. Absent local policy to the contrary, students are immediately eligible again after serving their full period of ineligibility.

25. The old rule just requires students to take at least four subjects. What does the change to “receive credit” in at least four subjects mean?

Example 1: Troy is enrolled in only four subjects. One is physical education and his school does not award credit for P.E. Troy is not eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics until he is enrolled in and receives credit for four subjects.

Example 2: Troy is enrolled in only four subjects. All are courses for which credit is given, but Troy must pass all to remain eligible.

26. If a student audits a course (doesn’t receive a grade), how is the student affected by the rule?

This student is only affected if s/he otherwise does not receive credit in four other courses.

Example: Carol audits brain surgery and is enrolled in four other subjects. She gets no credit for brain surgery. To maintain eligibility, she must pass the other four subjects.

27. If a high school has a local policy that it will check grades every two weeks and impose five days’ ineligibility for not passing all courses at any checkpoint, if a student still has an “F” on the report card may the five days be subtracted from the 20?

No. Local policy may make the state rule more stringent. This would make the state rule less stringent.

Ideally, if a school checks grades often and provides appropriate interventions (and if the parents cooperate with the school), a student's exposure to failing at the end of a grading period should be greatly reduced.

28. Does the scholarship rule just apply to varsity sports?

It applies to students who compete at any level.

29. Does the scholarship rule just apply to sports? What about speech, music, drill team, etc.?

The State Board of Education, which adopts all the rules in chapter 36, only has authority from the Iowa Legislature to adopt eligibility rules for students who compete in interscholastic athletics. (See Iowa Code section 280.13.) The IHSSA (speech) and IHSMA (music) set their own rules.

Competitive dance, drill teams, cheer squads, etc., are not "sports" sanctioned by either the IHSAA or the IGHSAA; therefore, local policy alone dictates the eligibility requirements of participants in those activities.

30. How does the new scholarship rule affect a student with an IEP?

A student with an IEP (Individualized Education Program) is not subject to "pass all." There is no change to the current rule that a student with a disability is eligible as long as s/he is making "adequate progress, as determined by school officials, toward the goals and objectives on the student's IEP."

31. What does the effective date of July 1, 2006 mean?

The new "pass all" standard goes into effect after the first grading period of the 2006-07 school year. For the 2005-06 school year, students are governed by the current "pass four" state rule or by local rule if more stringent.

32. When does the ineligibility period of 20 school days start?

The period of ineligibility starts with the first day on which competition is allowed, not practice. If the grading period is in the middle of an affected student's season, the period of ineligibility starts with the first school day after final grades are issued.

Example 1: Troy is a wrestler who does not pass all coursework at the end of first semester. Grades are issued January 10, a Friday. His period of ineligibility starts Monday, January 13. He may wrestle on Saturday, January 11.

The period of ineligibility includes any interscholastic scrimmage, but not an intra-squad scrimmage.

Example 2: Rick is a football player who does not pass all coursework at the end of second semester. The first day on which football competition is allowed is August 28. Rick's football team starts practice on August 10, has its "soap game" (intra-squad meet) on August 20, and has an interscholastic scrimmage with a neighboring school on August 31. Rick's period of ineligibility starts August 28. He may play in the soap game per the state rule (local policy could dictate otherwise).

Softball and baseball players, because the bulk of their sports are contested after classes have ended, have an ineligibility period of 4 consecutive weeks.

Example 3: Carol plays softball. Softball practice started May 15; first day on which competition was allowed was May 29. She does not pass all coursework at the end of second semester. Second semester grades are issued on June 3, a Saturday. Carol is ineligible for all days from June 5 through and including Saturday, July 1. She may resume competition on Monday, July 3.

33. If a fall sport student does not pass all coursework in the first grading period of a school year, but does not compete in any sports the rest of that school year and all next school year – and passes all coursework in all other grading periods – will the student be ineligible in his or her fall sport two years (or more later)?

No. The guidance here is that a student who has had two or more successful (no “F”s) grading periods after the grading period in which the student did not pass all coursework is eligible. The “look back” period is one full academic year only.

Example 1: Rick, a cross-country runner who competes in nothing else, fails a course first semester. He passes all his courses second semester. If he goes out for cross country again the next year, he is ineligible for the first 20 consecutive school days of competition in cross country.

Example 2: Rick, a cross-country runner who competes in nothing else, fails a course first semester. He passes all of his courses second semester. He does not go out for any sports the next year, and he continues to pass all of his courses. If he goes out for cross country after taking a year off from the sport, he is immediately eligible.

34. What is the penalty if a school allows an ineligible contestant to compete?

There is no change to this rule, which is 36.14(7). If a school permits or allows participation in any event by a person in violation of the eligibility rules, the sanctions may include, but are not limited to, the following: forfeiture of contests or events or both, involving any ineligible student(s); adjustment or relinquishment of conference/district/tournament standings; and return of team awards or individual awards or both. Again, this rule has not changed.

35. If my school has a requirement that a student must have a 2.0 GPA, could this override or supersede the state rule?

Under the old “pass 4” rule, a local school could have a more stringent rule that would supersede the state rule. A 2.0 GPA rule may not be more stringent in all cases, however. For instance, a 2.0 GPA could include 4 Bs and 1 F, which is not as stringent. But, 5 Ds is eligible under the state rule, but not under a 2.0 rule. Therefore, a local 2.0 requirement would have to work in combination with the state rule of “pass all.” **A student must meet the more strict of the two rules to be eligible.**