



PMEA Supports Alternative Credit for Marching Band Participation



The **Pennsylvania General Assembly** should pass legislation allowing students that participate in high school marching band to receive an alternative course credit. Other states ([Alabama](#), [Florida](#), [Illinois](#), [Louisiana](#), [Mississippi](#), [Nevada](#), [Ohio](#), [Tennessee](#), and [Texas](#)) have policies in place that allow for at least some credit for student participation in marching band (in these states the credit counts toward physical education requirements). Local boards of education would determine if their local education agency would offer such a credit.

Context:

Students participating in curricular based high school marching band programs are physically active and learn valuable life lessons through participation. These programs typically last at least one semester (if not two), yet some students are unable to participate or can only participate during a regularly scheduled music class for a limited time because of scheduling issues and other school-based requirements.

As Pennsylvania has standards in all subject areas, any legislation should require the adherence to them for any marching band credit to be awarded. Local education agencies would have the option to decide if they would offer this credit in their schools. This credit would be in addition to course credit the student receives for participate in a curricular based music class that includes marching band as a component. A blanket state mandate is not our goal, rather we hope the General Assembly would give schools the option to decide to implement this credit program as they see fit.

One goal of this proposal is to ease the burden on music students who are often forced to make a choice between music courses and other areas of study because there is a limited amount of course time during the school day. By allowing marching band students the option to receive some additional course credit for another subject (while fulfilling the requirements of that subject through marching band participation), the students will have more opportunities to study other courses offered in their school.

Implementing an alternative credit option would work best if all educators involved can work together to ensure education acquired through marching band are used as an activity reflecting other required standards.

Examples from Other States

Here are examples of policies from other states allowing for physical education credit for marching band participation. While each state offers a different approach, we would like Pennsylvania to allow local education agencies to adopt their own policies allowing for marching band participation to count for physical education credit.

Alabama Administrative Code 290-3-1- .02 Regulations Governing Public Schools.

Any Alabama public school system that has adequate certified physical education teachers in Grades K-8 may request of the State Superintendent of Education that the exemptions of the one credit of physical education in Grades 9-12 be applied as listed below:

1. May substitute physical activity-based subjects (e.g., marching band, and athletics) and other subject areas under exceptional circumstances for physical education under the following conditions:
 - (i) A detailed plan (except JROTC) which reflects collaboration with the physical education teacher at the school must be developed and submitted to the State Superintendent of Education to ensure that students will master the required content Standard and benchmarks as outlined in the Alabama Course of Study: Physical Education.
 - (ii) The Alabama Physical Fitness Assessment must be administered to Grade 2-12 students, including students who receive exemptions from the State Superintendent of Education. Fitness data must be reported to the State Department of Education (SDE).
 - (iii) Such other conditions as prescribed by local boards of education. This subsection (c) becomes effective with the class entering the ninth grade in the fall of 2006.

Florida Statutes 1003.4282 Requirements for a standard high school diploma.

(3) STANDARD HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA; COURSE AND ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS.—

- (f) *One credit in physical education.*—...Completion of one semester with a grade of “C” or better in a marching band class, in a physical activity class that requires participation in marching band activities as an extracurricular activity, or in a dance class shall satisfy one-half credit in physical education or one-half credit in performing arts.

Illinois Compiled Statutes 105-5-27-6 Courses in physical education required; special activities.

(b) A school board is authorized to excuse pupils enrolled in grades 11 and 12 from engaging in physical education courses if those pupils request to be excused for any of the following reasons: (1) for ongoing participation in an interscholastic athletic program; (2) to enroll in academic classes which are required for admission to an institution of higher learning, provided that failure to take such classes will result in the pupil being denied admission to the institution of his or her choice; or (3) to enroll in academic classes which are required for graduation from high school, provided that failure to take such classes will result in the pupil being unable to graduate. A school board may also excuse pupils in grades 9 through 12 enrolled in a marching band program for credit from engaging in physical education courses if those pupils request to be excused for ongoing participation in such marching band program. A school board may also, on a case-by-case basis, excuse pupils in grades 7 through 12 who participate in an interscholastic or extracurricular athletic program from engaging in physical education courses.

Louisiana Administrative Code 28 CXV 2357. Physical Education

One and one-half units of physical education shall be required for graduation. They may include:

1. physical education I and II;
2. adapted physical education I and II for eligible special education students;
3. JROTC I, II, III, or IV; or
4. physical education I (1 unit) and one-half unit of marching band, extracurricular sports, cheering, or dance team

Mississippi Administrative Code 7-3-38.12.1 Appendix

11. Waivers/Exemptions b. In grades 7-12 extracurricular activities sanctioned by the MHSAA and JROTC can be substituted for physical education if:
 - i. attendance is kept; and
 - ii. instruction is based on at least one competency from the Mississippi Physical Education Framework; and
 - iii. Staff licensed by Mississippi Department of Education supervises practices and games.

Nevada Administrative Code 389.488 Exemption from physical education.

3. A school district shall exempt a pupil from not more than one credit in physical education if the pupil participates in interscholastic athletics, on a drill team, in a marching band, in a dance group or on a cheerleading squad if:
 - (a) The activity is sponsored by the school; and
 - (b) The pupil actively participates in the activity for at least 120 hours.

Ohio Revised Code Requirements for high school graduation; workforce or college preparatory units.

(L) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this section, 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 in the junior reserve officer training corps for at least two full school 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 sixty hours of instruction, in another course of study. In the case of a student who has participated in the junior reserve officer training corps for at least two full school years, credit received for that participation may be used to satisfy the requirement to complete one-half unit in another course of study.

Tennessee Administrative Rules and Regulations 0520-01-03-.06 Graduation Requirements

Students must complete one-half (½) credit in physical education. This requirement may be met by substituting a documented and equivalent time of physical activity in marching band, JROTC, cheerleading, interscholastic athletics, school sponsored intramural athletics, and other areas approved by the local board of education.

Texas Administrative Code Title 19 RULE §231.93 Athletics; Cheerleading; Drill Team; Marching Band

(b) Athletics, Cheerleading, Drill Team, and Marching Band may be used for Physical Education substitution credit.