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|   | **THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT** / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234 |

 December, 2014

**Competitive Cheerleading - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

1. **When will competitive cheerleading be recognized as a sport?**

In April 2014, the Board of Regents recognized competitive cheerleading as an interscholastic sport by directing Department staff to revise the Extra Class Athletic Activities Guidelines, established pursuant to §135.4 of the Commissioner’s regulations, to recognize competitive cheerleading as an interscholastic sport, effective beginning with the 2014-15 winter season.

1. **How is competitive cheerleading defined?**

Competitive cheerleading is defined as cheerleading teams who perform various athletic activities, including stunts, pyramids and/or tosses, jumps and tumbling. Under the **direct** supervision of a properly certified coach, competitive cheerleading squads may perform during school functions, as well as in properly sanctioned school, section, state, and/or national events during a specified season.

**3. Must a competitive cheerleading coach obtain certification?**

Yes.Beginning with the 2014-15 winter season, competitive cheerleading coaches must meet all existing certification requirements in the Commissioner’s regulation §135.4(c)(7)(i)(c) and §135.5. For more information on the process of becoming certified to coach, see the Guidelines for Coaching Requirements: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/pe/toolkitdocs/coaching-guidelinesRev5_14.pdf>.

1. **When may a school participate in interscholastic competitive cheerleading?**

A school may offer competitive cheerleading in both the fall and winter seasons.

Currently each sport is assigned a specific starting and finishing date for member schools. Any necessary changes in such dates due to local school, league or section problems must be approved by the executive officers of the associations. The length of a season, including all skill testing, conditioning, practice and contests, shall not exceed 15 weeks for Fall Competitive Cheerleading and 22 weeks for Winter Competitive Cheerleading.

1. **Will the selection classification process apply to competitive cheerleading?**

As with all interscholastic sports, the selection process applies. The intent of selection classification is to provide a mechanism for students in grade 7 through 12 allowing them to participate safely at an appropriate level of competition based upon readiness rather than age and grade. For purposes of competitive cheerleading, the existing gymnastics standards of the selection classification process will be used to selectively classify 7th and 8th graders to the high school level pursuant to Commissioner’s regulation §135.4(c)(7)(ii)(a)(4). For more information on the selection classification process see: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/pe/documents/scrivised2005.pdf>.

6. **Will mixed competition apply to competitive cheerleading?**

Yes. All schools offering competitive cheerleading must comply with the existing regulations surrounding mixed competition for participation in interscholastic sports pursuant to Commissioner’s regulation §135.4(c)(7)(ii)(c). For more information on the Mixed Competition process see:

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/pe/documents/mixed_competition.pdf>.

For further clarification on the New York State Education Department Commissioner’s Regulations for Physical Education and Athletics please contact the Office of Curriculum and Instruction at (518) 474-5922. For inquiries specific to competition governance you may wish to contact the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) at (518) 690-0771 and/or toll free at (866) 598-2816.