

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Sponsor Statement

House Bill 369

"An Act relating to student participation in sports."

The National Federation of High School Sports reported in a study, The Case for High School Activities that "students who participate in scholastic sports programs tend to have higher grade-point averages, better attendance records, lower dropout rates and fewer discipline problems than students generally." The Federation's report added that "through participation in scholastic sports programs, students learn teamwork, sportsmanship, winning and losing, the rewards of hard work, self-discipline, build self-confidence, and develop skills to handle competitive situations."

House Bill 369 will refine state statutes and make participation in scholastic sports participation available to a larger number of students who otherwise are not eligible. The bill addresses the eligibility of alternative school student-athletes and student-athletes who have suffered concussion or brain trauma.

Last Year the Legislature passed HB15, which requires a student-athlete suspected of suffering a concussion or brain trauma be removed from practice or play, and not be allowed to return until cleared by a certified qualified individual. Since there is no organization in Alaska that "certifies" individuals in the evaluation and management of concussions, this bill eliminates the mandate for certification.

The second part of the legislation defines the eligibility rules for high school sports programs for student-athletes enrolled full time in an alternative education program, allowing them to participate in interscholastic sports programs offered through the public school system.

This bill clarifies the eligibility rules as they apply to student-athletes for participation in team sports, resulting in a better education for all Alaskan student-athletes.