

Thank you for your inquiry to UIL rules.

Cheerleading squad or spirit team members that support UIL activities are currently identified as a participant in an extracurricular activity.

The UIL Legislative Council has not currently received a proposal to include cheerleading programs as a sanctioned activity nor has there been consideration for new policy defining cheerleading or spirit programs in the UIL Constitution and Contest rules under Athletics in Subchapter C.

The UIL has approached cheerleading carefully with initial focus on education and program safety. Increased interest and support of the activity has prompted the organization to provide a UIL Spirit State Championship.

The UIL objectives pertaining to spirit and cheerleading programs:

1. Ensure coaches have best training and safety education available and that participants follow safety guidelines
2. Cheerleaders have the opportunity for recognition for their role in leadership activities in school

According to section 1208 (y) of the UIL Constitution and Contest Rules:

CHEERLEADERS; SPIRIT GROUPS. All cheer and spirit performances at any UIL activity shall be in accordance with safety standards as prescribed by the National Federation High School Spirit Handbook. You can contact the Federation at www.nfhs.org for more information.

As an extracurricular activity, cheerleading participants must comply with state regulations regarding safety, prevention and instruction of concussions. Additionally, coaches and sponsors are required to complete training related to safety guidelines for cheer and other training programs designed to minimize risks associated with participation in the activity.

Cheerleading participants are subject to all state laws including No Pass No Play, the eight-hour practice limitation, athletic periods, one contest during the school week and extracurricular absences are applicable. UIL does not set tryout procedures for cheerleading or any extracurricular activity. The information is available on the UIL website in the TEA-UIL Side by Side manual.

The UIL Legislative Council approved a pilot program for a spirit competition, which will include a UIL Spirit State Championship that will occur during the 2015-2016 school year. The UIL Spirit State Championship is to provide an opportunity for recognition and to showcase skills for all UIL member school cheerleading programs in the "UIL Game Day" format. Schools will not be required to place limitations or restrictions on competitive cheerleading teams and it will remain a local district administrative decision to allow school representation and participation in other non-school sponsored local, regional or national competitions.

If you have other questions or need additional information, please contact me.