

# McAllen Independent School District High School Cheer Program Handbook

Approved by MISD School Board: October 20, 2003

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to define membership, establish eligibility, outline tryout procedures, and other general rules for high school cheer programs within the McAllen Independent School District. In addition to this handbook, each campus shall publish rules and regulations regarding matters not covered in the district handbook.

## 2. Purpose of the program - Cheer team is an athletic organization with the following purposes:

- a. Promote school spirit
- b. Support interscholastic activities
- c. Promote the academic goals of the school
- d. Maintain a comprehensive safety program
- e. Engage successfully in cheerleading gymnastics and competition (when applicable)
- f. Uphold, reflect, and project the ideals of school and community

## 3. Membership

Each high school's cheer program shall consist of a maximum of forty-four students (not including mascots) selected from the spring semester's 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade classes unless approval of the principal is obtained by the cheer coach for raising the number of students permitted.

- a. The Freshman team shall consist of a maximum of fourteen members selected from the previous spring's 8<sup>th</sup> grade class.
- b. The Junior Varsity team shall consist of a maximum of fourteen members selected from the previous spring's 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade classes.
- c. The Varsity team shall consist of a maximum of sixteen members selected from the previous spring's 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade classes.

**Prior to tryouts, all Varsity/Junior Varsity candidates will declare their intention in writing as their choice of team (Varsity only or Varsity/Junior Varsity). Candidates who declare to be only on the Varsity team will waive the privilege to participate on the Junior Varsity team; therefore, their scores will not be considered in determining the members of the Junior Varsity team. See statement of intent at the end of this document.**

- d. Additionally, the number of candidates who participate in the tryout process will affect the total number of members selected for each team. The following tables apply to all team level tryouts involving thirteen or more candidates:

| Table 1.0 – Freshman | <u>No. of Candidates</u> | <u>Maximum No. Accepted</u> * |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                      | 13                       | 10                            |
|                      | 14                       | 11                            |
|                      | 15                       | 12                            |
|                      | 16                       | 13                            |
|                      | 17 +                     | 14                            |

| Table 1.1 – Junior Varsity | <u>No. of Candidates</u> | <u>Maximum No. Accepted</u> * |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                            | 13                       | 10                            |
|                            | 14                       | 11                            |
|                            | 15                       | 12                            |
|                            | 16                       | 13                            |
|                            | 17 +                     | 14                            |

| Table 1.2 – Varsity | <u>No. of Candidates</u> | <u>Maximum No. Accepted</u> * |
|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                     | 13                       | 10                            |
|                     | 14                       | 11                            |
|                     | 15                       | 12                            |
|                     | 16                       | 13                            |
|                     | 17                       | 14                            |
|                     | 18                       | 15                            |
|                     | 19 +                     | 16                            |

If the candidates for any team are twelve or less, the district cheer coordinator will be notified and the decision as to the maximum number of team members selected will be made jointly by the cheer coach and principal prior to the tryout day. The decision of the coach and principal is final and will be announced to candidates prior to tryouts.

Vacancies that occur in the Varsity, Junior Varsity, or Freshman teams after the selection process will not be filled during the school year.

\* **NOTE:** Regardless of the number of candidates or maximum number of members designated for each team, an inadvertent error in any part of the tryout process may also impact the number of team members selected. In such cases, after consultation with the cheer coach, the principal will determine the maximum number of team members. The decision of the principal is final and, thus, may not be appealed.

- e. All candidates, regardless of number of years of experience, will be required to tryout.
- f. The selection process for the competition team will be determined by each campus through a process developed by the coach. All candidates must be members of the current cheer program.

A sub-Varsity competition team may also be selected. This team is permitted to compete only at local, district, and/or regional levels.

**NOTE:** The selection of mascots is the responsibility of each campus. Mascot candidates must also meet UIL eligibility requirements.

#### **4. Eligibility for Tryouts:**

- a. A candidate who fails and/or loses credit in more than one fall semester course is ineligible to tryout.
- b. A candidate who fails three or more classes from the beginning of the school year through the fourth-six weeks is ineligible to tryout (i.e. – a student that failed one class the first six weeks and one class the fourth six weeks would still be eligible, however, someone who failed three classes the first six weeks would be ineligible). Waivers for honors classes will apply as per MISD Board Policy FM( H) Student Activities.
- c. A candidate must not have more than nine absences (excused or unexcused) during the fall semester for any one class. During the spring semester, a candidate must not have more than four absences (excused or unexcused) for any one class prior to tryouts. Exceptions will be considered only if caused by circumstances clearly beyond the control of the candidate. All exceptions must be approved by the coach and the principal.
- d. A candidate who has served or has been assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program (i.e. - I & G, Campus AEP, STAR, JJAEP regardless of the School District or location of the AEP or JJAEP) is ineligible for tryouts if such assignment or placement occurred during the current school year. This does not include ISS.
- e. The candidate must clear any outstanding financial cheer program debt two weeks prior to the tryout date. This provision also includes any 8<sup>th</sup> grader who has not cleared cheer program debts incurred at the middle school. This applies only to school activity accounts and does NOT include Booster Club debts.
- f. Each candidate must present a statement (Medical History and Physical Examination form provided by the cheer coach) from a medical doctor possessing a current Texas medical license verifying that the candidate is in good physical condition and is able to engage in vigorous physical activity. Furthermore, a candidate with a medical condition that may limit cheer activities or with a prior injury must submit a written doctor's release/approval for participation.
- g. Each candidate must submit the medical form, the report card, attendance history report, residency form, transfer form, statement of intent, and the parent permission form to the coach two weeks prior to the tryout date. Failure to comply with this timeline shall bar the candidate from participation in the tryout process. Parent(s) must sign the parent permission form stating that they have read the handbook (both district and campus components) and agree to give their child permission to participate in the tryout process.
- h. A candidate not residing within the high school's attendance zone prior to tryouts must receive written approval from the McAllen ISD Student Intake Center to attend the school outside the attendance zone. If selected, the member must submit written certification of residence or approval documentation prior to the first day of class. Refer to Section 440 of the UIL Rules on Eligibility.
- i. An in-district or out-of-district transfer student, selected at a prior school for the next year's team, shall not be accepted into McAllen ISD cheer programs.

## **5. Tryout Procedures**

Tryouts shall be held during the 5th Six Weeks. The coach is responsible for organizing the tryout.

- a. The coach shall specify the appropriate dress code for tryouts (see individual campus handbooks for specific dress).
- b. Candidates will be identified by letters drawn at random immediately prior to tryouts.
- c. A panel consisting of three impartial individuals selected by the cheer coach and approved by the principal will judge tryouts. Judges cannot be affiliated with the school district, the school, or the candidates. Affiliated is defined as having a financial relationship, (i.e. – an instructor at a local gym where one of the candidates pays tuition to practice at that gym), or a judge is a relative of a candidate. One-week summer camps and/or clinics do not apply.
- d. During the tryout process, the tryout area shall be restricted to candidates, judges, tabulators, principal or principal's designee, and any other school personnel whom the coach or principal/principal's designee deem essential to properly administer the tryout.
- e. Video taping tryouts is prohibited.
- f. In the event of a tie in the final rank, the judges will recall candidates to perform the tryout requirements.
- g. At least two tabulators shall tabulate the judges' scores. One of the tabulators will be the principal or principal's designee. Results shall be posted as soon as possible, but not until the tabulators determine to the best of their ability that they are error-free. The judges' decision is final except in the case of a mechanical error in the tally. All results must be posted no later than 24 hours after the tryouts are finished.
- h. The principal or principal's designee shall give the results to the coach for posting.
- i. Candidates may not tryout at more than one school within the McAllen ISD.

## **6. Scoring Procedures**

The three impartial judges will score each individual candidate's performance based on the district's designated categories. Yell Leader (male) candidates will be judged on partner stunts in lieu of dancing. Both dance and partner stunts, which will be listed as one category, will have the same point value.

**Seven categories as follows:**

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| <b>Introduction</b>                                      | <b>5 Points</b>  |
| <b>Cheer</b>   | <b>25 Points</b> |
| <b>Tumbling</b>  | <b>20 Points</b> |
| <b>Standing Back Handspring</b>                          | <b>10 Points</b> |
| <b>Jump</b>  | <b>10 Points</b> |
| <b>Appearance</b>  | <b>5 Points</b>  |
| <b>Dance for Females or<br/>Partner Stunts for Males</b> | <b>25 Points</b> |

**100 Points Total**

Descriptions for each of seven categories on score sheets - Tryout sheet attached.

All judges' scores will be added together and candidates ranked by highest total score (possible 100). Judges' scores will be secured for a period of six (6) months after the trials.

Candidates will have a maximum of one week to appeal computing errors. Judges scores are final. All appeals will be addressed by the campus principal. Decisions by the principal, after a review of the documentation are final.

**7. Selection of Co-Captains:**

- a. Two co-captains will be selected for each Freshman, Junior Varsity, and Varsity team. If a team's composition is less than half of the maximum number designated, only one captain per team will be selected.
- b. The scoring process will consist of tryout rank (?), an interview committee selected by cheer coach (?), and team vote (?).
- c. Candidates will be ranked in order for each of the three categories. First place will equal 1 point; second place 2 points, etc. Points from all three categories will be added for each student. Candidates with the lowest score will receive the highest rank. Ties will be broken by going back to the highest score in the tryout rank.
- d. Varsity candidates must have one year of Varsity team experience. If there are no candidates with the required experience, candidates will be limited to upperclassmen (seniors and juniors).

Junior Varsity candidates must have one year of cheerleading team experience. If there are no candidates with such required experience, selection will be open to all members of the Junior Varsity team.

Freshman candidates do not need one year of cheerleading team experience.

- e. Candidates must state their intention for the position in writing by completing the required form by

the designated deadline. The Statement of Intent Form is available from the head cheer sponsor and must be submitted one day prior to the tryouts.

- f. Results will be announced no later than the end of the regular school year in preparation for summer camp.
- g. If a current co-captain is dismissed from the program or is academically ineligible for more than one six weeks during the fall semester, a new co-captain shall be selected based on a new cheer coach's interview committee (1/2) and a new team vote (1/2).

## **8. Loss of Membership:**

- a. A member that is academically ineligible due to lack of credits for promotion at conclusion of the previous school year will be declared ineligible for the 1<sup>st</sup> Six Weeks of the fall semester.
- b. A member who is academically ineligible three times (a combined total of nine weeks as per the UIL calendar guidelines) in the fall semester will be dismissed from the program at the conclusion of the fall semester.
- c. A member will be removed once the maximum number of demerits established in the school's local handbook is exceeded. In addition, the member is ineligible for next year's tryouts.
- d. A member who resigned from the program is ineligible for next year's tryouts unless extenuating circumstances existed that were beyond the student's control. All exceptions must be approved by the cheer coach and the principal.
- e. A member will be immediately removed from the program if the member is placed or assigned to any of the Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (i.e. I & G, Campus AEP, STAR, JJAEP). In addition, the member shall be ineligible for next school year. This does not include ISS.

## **9. Insurance**

McAllen ISD provides student insurance coverage for bodily injuries sustained only on a school campus by students while engaging in school sponsored and supervised activities. This is secondary coverage that pays for covered expenses, subject to the terms and provisions of the policy, after any other insurance on the student.

Parents/guardians also have the opportunity and are encouraged to purchase Full Time 24-Hour Accident Coverage or School Time Accident Coverage on a voluntary basis. Enrollment information is available from campus administration.

The parents/guardians are responsible for the balance of any unpaid claims not covered by these student insurance policies.

**NOTE: A cheerleader with a medical condition or experiencing an injury that may limit cheer activities must submit a written doctor's release allowing for full participation.**

## **10. Coaching Staff:**

- a. Each high school is authorized a head cheer coach and two assistant coaches, appointed by the principal.
- b. Coaches shall be awarded supplement pay at rates adopted by the District.

## **11. Booster Club**

Parents/guardians are encouraged to offer support by participating in the cheer program booster club. Boosters play a vital role in the life of the program by providing supplemental financing and aid in communication between parents, coaches, and members. Booster club expectations and procedures are outlined in the UIL Booster Club Guidelines (<http://www.uil.utexas.edu/admin/booster.html>).

Booster clubs do not have authority to direct the duties of a school district employee. The schedule of contests, rules for participation, methods of earning letters and all other criteria dealing with inter-school programs are under the jurisdiction of the local school administration. Any individual concerns, issues, or complaints must be addressed through a pre-scheduled conference with the coach and/or administrator, as appropriate.

- a. Upon selection of the new teams, coaches shall work with booster club officers to formulate a budget.
- b. The selection of the booster club officers will be determined by each individual campus club. All meetings will operate with parliamentary procedures using Robert's Rules of Order.

Meetings are not a forum for personal concerns with the sponsor. The purpose of meetings is to address business concerns of the cheerleading program.

- c. Coaches are ex-officio members of the booster club. A coach or designee must be present at all meetings. All booster meetings must be held on the home campus.
- d. The booster club is encouraged to work closely with coaches.

***The McAllen ISD Cheer Teams do not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, or disability in providing educational services. Peggy Fiveash has been designated to coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972, as amended. Dr. Martha Cantu has been designated to coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.***

***MISD does not discriminate on the basis of disability by denying access to the benefits of District services, programs, or activities. To request information about the applicability of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), interested persons should contact Dr. Martha Cantu.***

Attachments:

Statement of Intent  
Judges Scoring Form

McAllen ISD High School Cheerleaders

TRYOUTS

JUDGE'S SCORING FORM      Candidate's Letter \_\_\_\_\_

| CATEGORY   | POINTS     | JUDGE'S SCORE |
|--|------------|---------------|
| <b>Introduction</b><br>(voice, projection, spirit)   | 5          | _____         |
| <b>Cheer</b><br>(precision, grace, enthusiasm)   | 25         | _____         |
| <b>Tumbling</b><br>(precision, form, flexibility)  | 20         | _____         |
| <b>Standing Back Handspring</b><br>(precision, form, flexibility)                          | 10         | _____         |
| <b>Jump</b><br>(height, flexibility, form)   | 10         | _____         |
| <b>Appearance</b><br>(presentation, smile, correct attire, grooming)                       | 5          | _____         |
| <b>Dance for Females or<br/>Partner Stunts for Males</b><br>(precision, form, flexibility) | 25         | _____         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>100</b> | _____         |

Judge #1 #2 #3

Verified by \_\_\_\_\_ Tabulator \_\_\_\_\_

Judges must use pen. Cross out and initial any changes.

