

By: Zaffirini

S.B. No. 1954

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT

2 relating to the creation of an adaptive sports program by the
3 University Interscholastic League to provide students with
4 disabilities access to team sports.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

6 SECTION 1. Subchapter D, Chapter 33, Education Code, is
7 amended by adding Section 33.097 to read as follows:

8 Sec. 33.097. ADAPTIVE SPORTS PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS WITH
9 DISABILITIES. (a) The University Interscholastic League shall
10 ensure students with disabilities have an opportunity to
11 participate in team athletic activities by establishing an adaptive
12 sports program. In establishing the adaptive sports program, the
13 league shall consider and incorporate as appropriate:

14 (1) federal guidance regarding providing access to
15 extracurricular athletics for students with disabilities;

16 (2) guidance available from nationally recognized
17 organizations that provide or promote adaptive athletics;

18 (3) information regarding adaptive sports programs
19 that have been successfully implemented in other states or by
20 nonprofit organizations; and

21 (4) input from school districts and the agency.

22 (b) In establishing the adaptive sports program, the
23 University Interscholastic League shall, to the greatest extent
24 possible, require:

1 (1) students who participate in the program to be
2 subject to the same rules and requirements as students who
3 participate in other athletic programs offered by the league,
4 including:

5 (A) grade and disciplinary requirements under
6 Section 33.081(c); and

7 (B) requirements related to student safety in
8 athletic activities under this chapter and Chapter 38; and

9 (2) team sports provided through the program to be
10 organized similarly to other athletic programs offered by the
11 league, including with respect to team practices, seasonal play,
12 and local and statewide competitions.

13 (c) In addition to using funds appropriated for the purpose,
14 the University Interscholastic League may seek and accept gifts,
15 grants, or donations of money from public and private sources for
16 the purpose of establishing or expanding the adaptive sports
17 program.

18 (d) The University Interscholastic League shall adopt rules
19 as necessary to establish, maintain, and expand the adaptive sports
20 program. The rules must:

21 (1) require that team sports offered through the
22 program be available to students at public middle schools, junior
23 high schools, and high schools in the state;

24 (2) establish eligibility requirements for
25 participation in each team sport offered through the program; and

26 (3) identify best practices for school districts to
27 incorporate adaptive sports.

1 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.