

THE ESSENTIALS INITIATIVE



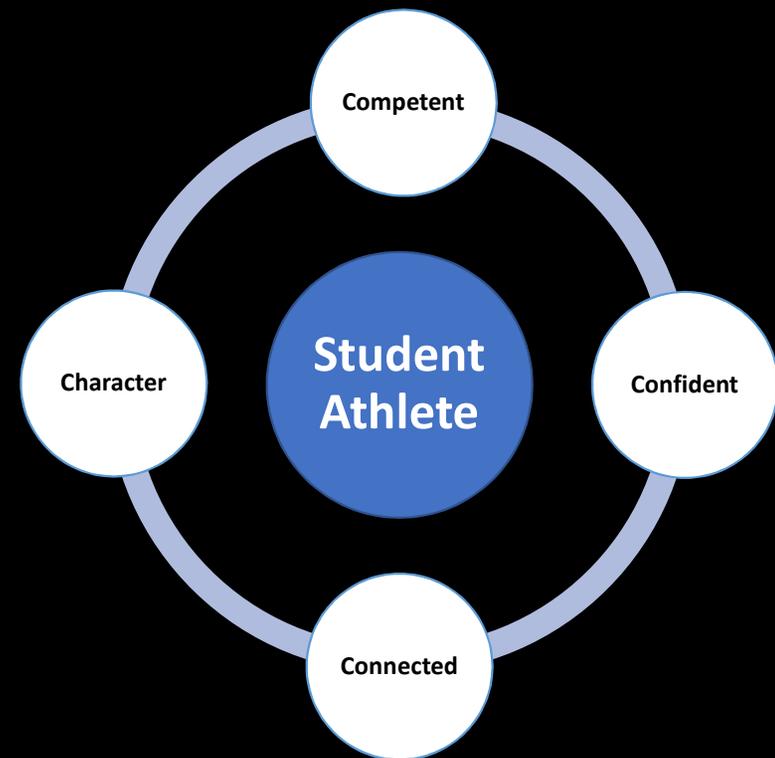
All students, regardless of skill level or future athletic potential, should be provided the opportunity to learn fundamental skills and play sports under a system of individualized, progressive development that makes the experience enjoyable and rewarding. Only about 5% of high school athletes compete at the NCAA Level, with only a small portion of those athletes receiving “full-ride” scholarships.

The Essentials and Key Action Measures are specific to each stakeholder group (athletes, coaches, parents, athletic administrators and state associations).

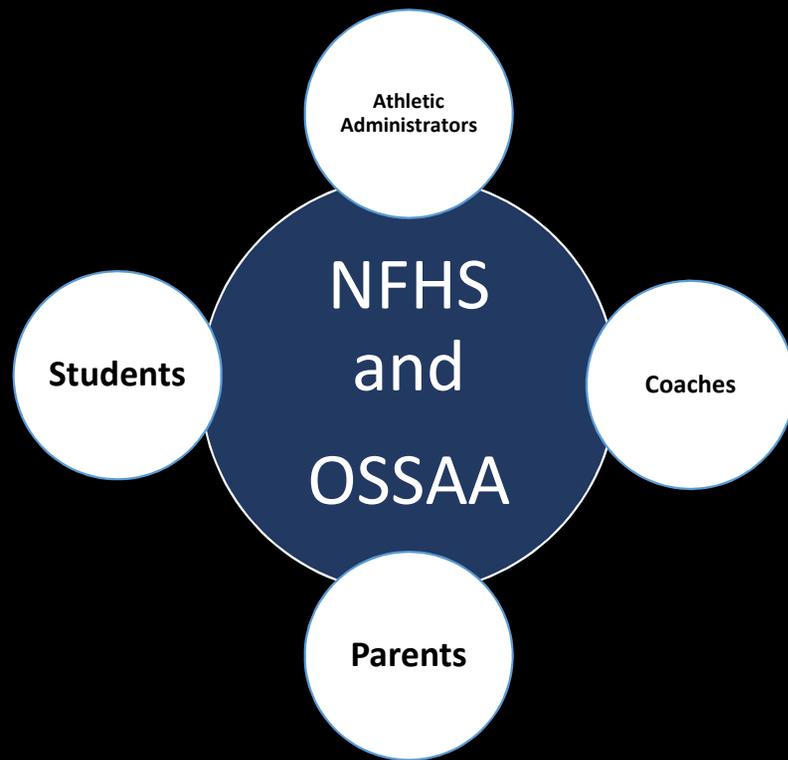
While the roles and perspectives of parents and coaches are integral to the student athletic experience, the development and participation process must always remain student-centered.

The Ultimate Goal

- Producing an individual who is competent, confident, connected to his or her peer group and community, and of high character. This essential principle is at the core of the scholastic athletic experience and is fundamental to the NFHS Mission.



A CALL TO ACTION



- The Essentials Initiative will only succeed with a concerted and widespread effort by the NFHS and its member state associations to deliver and continually reinforce all key components to athletic administrators, coaches, parents and students.

Essentials for Athletes

- The individual athlete is at the center of the scholastic sports experience and enjoys many privileges and bears much responsibility.
- Maturing athletes must begin to take control of their health and appreciate the importance of always getting proper amounts of sleep, and maintaining a nutritious, well-balanced diet with adequate energy intake.



Essentials for Coaches

Take advantage of coaching education programs

Recognize and embrace role as educator

Appreciate and accommodate concept of readiness

Prepare and implement plan effectively progress each athlete

Recognize and accommodate periods of vulnerability

Recognize signs of athletic overload, overuse, or apparent injury

Schedule practices and conditioning to allow for proper rest and recovery

Embrace and further develop relationships with school nurse and athletic director

Essentials for Parents

The **athlete is the focus of the scholastic sports experience** and the experience will be on an evolving and unpredictable continuum. **Parents must be patiently supportive**, accepting that athletic development, achievement and success unfold uniquely for each child, and an elite status is typically, if at all, revealed over time. Parents should also realize that success as measured by awards and scholarships is not guaranteed, and should not be viewed as the only, or even primary, outcome of a “successful” high school athletic career.

Read parent-oriented materials made available by NFHS.

Recognize signs of evolving athletic burnout, boredom, overload, overuse and acute injury.

Attend Parent Nights at school that focus on healthy athletic participation and injury prevention.

Embrace and act as a role model for behavior and accountability best practices adopted by coaches, athletic administrators and fellow parents.

Adapt behaviors to the needs and context of the child sport experience.

Essentials for Athletic Administrators

The athletic administrator plays a key role in championing the Essentials Initiative throughout the school community, as well as seeing that coaches and parents are properly focused on the student-centered developmental model.

Consider becoming a Certified Athletic Administrator (CAA) or Certified Master Athletic Administrator (CMAA) through professional development.

Deliver the Essentials Initiative message to entire coaching staff.

Hold Parent Nights at school that focus on healthy athletic participation and injury prevention.

Develop formal mentorship relationships

Require coaches to engage in educational programs on the Essentials Initiative.

Confirm that each athletic team and venue has an Emergency Action Plan.

Continually assess coaching staff, parents and athletes.

Continually assess the athletic needs of the school.

Essentials for State Associations

The state associations are in the unique position to drive the discussion of the Essentials Initiative throughout the state through discussions with athletic administrators, coaches and statewide stakeholders. At its very heart, the Essentials Initiative enhances what is unique and special about scholastic athletics.

Sell what you do on a daily basis!

