Why did the FHSAA change the EL 7 form? Why are they asking for more information?
Several home school leaders and parents are asking those questions, and The Home Education Foundation (HEF) wants you to understand why this has occurred. There are two reasons for this change.

1. **The FHSAA is an enforcement/governing organization.** Its job is to create a “level playing field” for all high school athletes, so that every student has an opportunity to play high school sports in a fair and competitive environment. If there were no bylaws governing eligibility, recruiting would be rampant and there would be little opportunity for relatively good players to develop their skills on a high school athletic team. Schools that recruited those players were penalized and fined for breaking the by-laws.

The FHSAA bylaws and the enforcement of them protect home education students and their teams. Having a level playing field allows them to develop their talents and have the opportunity to compete for state championships. Enforcement is a difficult and unappreciated job, but is necessary to protect the integrity of high school athletics.

The FHSAA has been criticized by some for its attempts to address recruiting. For example, the FHSAA passed a bylaw in 2006 that would have restricted a student’s ability to transfer after 9th grade in order to more easily control recruiting. HEF, along with other parental choice advocates, felt that recruiting and transfers were totally different issues and that limiting a student’s rights to transfer to another school was in direct conflict with the state statute and parental choice. The Legislature agreed and created a Task Force to study recruiting.

As a result of the Task Force’s work, the bylaw was repealed in Jan. 2007, and the Task Force instructed the FHSAA to enforce the existing bylaws in order to control recruiting. This spring, the FHSAA began conducting compliance audits of member public and private schools. They have found numerous violations by member schools so far. The FHSAA has had the authority to review these records for a long time, but has never exercised it. Because a few have violated the rules and continue to do so, all schools and students have come under closer scrutiny.

2. **The FHSAA Commissioner of Compliance is trying to lessen the number of hours it takes to determine eligibility for each individual home education student.** Last year, HEF spent quite a bit of time trying to help the FHSAA determine the eligibility of individual home education student-athletes. In each case, the FHSAA and HEF had to make calls to the parent, the educational service provider, schools and school districts to ferret out the facts. Various factors go into the determination of eligibility. This year the FHSAA has asked for additional information to make those determinations easier. Some of the educational services or vendors which have been reviewed are listed in this document under question #7. It takes time to make these determinations on a fair and equitable basis. The revised EL 7 form is not designed to require additional information from home education students, rather to simply the process and obtain enough information to verify their compliance with state statute and the FHSAA bylaws.

**Participation in FHSAA athletics is a privilege, not a right, as determined by the courts.** Home education students are given the opportunity to participate, but they must meet the same eligibility requirements as other students in public and private schools. As an example, any public, private or home education student who does not have the required GPA is ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities. All students have to comply with the Florida Statutes and the FHSAA bylaws to be eligible to participate.
Guide for Completing the Revised FHSAA EL7 Form

(Home Education Student Athletic Registration Form)

Please read this information very carefully and in its entirety. This is very important and needs to be done correctly for your child to participate in any FHSAA sport program even if they are in a Home Education Cooperative. All forms must be completed and the packet submitted to your Athletic Director/Principal, who will send them to the FHSAA for approval before the first official competition date or your child will be ineligible to participate for that sport season. It is crucial that your forms are completely filled out and turned in by the due date.

It is highly recommended that the student begin participating on the first day of practice to be conditioned, trained and ready to play. The FHSAA must approve your child's eligibility before he/she can participate in practice. You can locate date of the first practice and first official date of competition on the FHSAA Calendar www.fhsaa.org/rules/calendar for each sport.

With more and more home education students participating in athletics in public, private, or in Home Education Cooperatives, it has become a real challenge for the FHSAA to verify compliance. It is essential that parent(s) comply with the requirements in this form to facilitate an accurate and expeditious ruling on your child’s eligibility.

Print out the EL 7 form at http://www.fhsaa.org/forms/pdf/EL07_home_reg.pdf. You will need one form for each child who is participating.

#1 - 2 Give correct information including your child’s current school grade. If you are registering at the beginning of a new school year, use the grade your student is entering. Refer to the Frequently Asked Questions document on the FHSAA web site: http://www.fhsaa.org/compliance/files/home_ed.pdf

#3 The school name or homeschool team name in which your child will be participating. List the sports that your child is interested in participating in this year.

#4 If your child was registered in a home education program last year, select the second choice and provide the number for the Home Education Contact in the Superintendent’s office in the county in which the child was registered.

If your child attended a public or private school last year, select the first choice and give the requested information.

#5 If your child is already in high school, enter the date he/she started 9th grade.

If a student is entering 9th grade, enter this year’s beginning date.

If student is a middle schooler, leave this blank.

A student has only 4 years of eligibility as a high schooler. The FHSAA by-laws do not allow a student to be retained for any reason after 6th grade. And since no student is eligible for high school athletics upon becoming 19 years 9 months of age, retention most certainly will jeopardize the student's eligibility at the end of his school career.

Answer ‘yes’ or ‘no’ about maintaining a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or above in all their subjects since entering 9th grade. If your student does not have a 2.0 or higher, he/she will be ineligible to participate.
Transcripts:

A transcript contains a list of courses taken at a specific school, at certain grades levels, and the grade the students earned in that course. Home education students do not have official transcripts, nor can they produce official transcripts. This requirement applies to students who come into home education for the first time after the 6th grade and have formal transcripts from their public or private school.

Florida Statute 1006.15(3)(a)(1) does require a 2.0 GPA for all high school students participating in extracurricular activities in grades 9 – 12 and is tied to the requirements for high school graduation in s. 1003.43(1) for public school students. A GPA is calculated by converting all grades to a numerical system. The grading scale is set by s.1003.437, F.S. and the FHSAA is required to follow that statute. There is a GPA calculator online at: http://www.back2college.com/gpa.htm. Honors courses and dual enrollment, as well as AP courses are weighted grades meaning that they count more than a regular course grade. For the purpose of this “transcript” the regular grading system for home schoolers will probably be sufficient. There is a sample “transcript” at the end of this document. Make it neat and easy to read. You may also want to refer to the NCAA website for information regarding home education student eligibility requirements for college athletics:
http://www1.ncaa.org/membership/membership_svcs/eligibility-recruiting/faqs/homeschooling

Generally, the parent will give a grade in the subjects taught in home education program, unless they use a curriculum or are taking classes through dual enrollment, a distant learning program or the FLVS, which provides grades. Most grading in traditional schools is subjective and comparative, except for math. To determine the standard for an “A,” the teacher generally has to read 5 to 10 papers or assignments. For an individual home educated student that is not possible. The parent usually knows whether the student is an A, B, or C student. If a student completes all assignments correctly and quickly, he is probably an “A” student. Students who get most of the assignment correct the first time are probably “B” students. If your child is struggling academically, perhaps he/she needs to spend their time on academics and not extracurricular activities. That is the legislative rationale behind requiring a 2.0 GPA for participation in high school athletics.

- If your child is already in high school, you will need to list the subjects for the 2007-2008 school year and where the courses are being taken in #6 on the EL7 form. You will need to attach their high school subjects, grades, and GPA for each grade level since the student entered the 9th grade as required in #5. A cumulative GPA of 2.0 is required for juniors and seniors s. 1006.15(3)(a)(3) F.S.

- If your child has been in home education and is just entering 9th grade, the FHSAA only needs verification that your child has made annual progress commensurate with his ability for grades 6-8. You may submit the annual evaluation if you choose to do so, but the completed signed FHSAA Home Education Student Verification Form from the district is sufficient. The parent should also provide a statement that the child has not been held back during those years.

- If your child is new to homeschooling, you will need to attach a copy of the report card or transcript from the public or private school your child attended in any grade 6, 7 or 8.

District documentation must match the institution providing the transcript, i.e. if courses were taken in a home education program, then the district documentation must confirm registration in a home education program for those grade levels. Report cards from a private or public school will document enrollment in those schools.

#6 List the subjects the student is or will be taking in the upcoming semester and where those courses will be taken.

#7 Here is the link to s. 1002.41 Florida Statute for your reference:
VERY IMPORTANT!!!!

If your child is taking 1/2 or more of their classes at a single school, public (except the Florida Virtual School) or private, or if your records are being kept by any school, umbrella school, etc., that has a Florida Private School number, then your child is not a home education student. The child is a student of that school and is not eligible to participate in any FHSAA activities as a home education student. It is not based on whether the school supplies curriculum, but on whether they are keeping your records for attendance, transcripts, diplomas, and have a Florida Private School Number.

Some families have made the decision to withdraw their students from programs that are “600, umbrella schools,” or schools that provide other services in order for their children to be able to continue in athletics.

If you are receiving Educational Services (not just curriculum) from any of the following programs, please answer ‘yes’ and provide the information requested for 7a.

- The Florida Virtual School as a registered home education student;
- A Beka Academy (a separate entity from their Florida private school, Pensacola Christian School);
- Any out-of-state correspondence schools (e.g., American School, Calvert, Alpha Omega Academy, Bob Jones Academy);
- Dual enrollment through a community college or state university

For all these schools, the answer to 7b would be ‘no’ and 7c will be ‘yes’, & 7d would be ‘yes’ if you will be receiving a diploma from them.

Notarized Signatures: Both student and parent/guardian must have their signatures on the EL7 form notarized. Read this section carefully. Notice that when you sign, you are swearing that the information you are providing is accurate. Please read and correctly fill out everything on this form.

Documentation from school district: The official FHSAA Verification of Student Registration with District Home Education Office form can be downloaded from the FHSAA website along with the EL 7 form. This form should be printed out by the parent and completed by the school district. Contact your District Home Education Contact to find out the quickest way to get this form completed (e.g., deliver it in person or fax it to them along with your request). However, you may need to send your request and the form by mail with a self-addressed stamped envelope for them to return the completed form to you. Be sure you get this form to them as soon as you know your child wants to participate in FHSAA athletics, so that you can meet the deadline for submission of the required forms.

Attachments:

- The information requested in number #5 on the EL 7
- FHSAA Verification of Student Registration with District Home Education Office form
- Pre-participation Physical Evaluation - EL 2
- Consent and Release from Liability Certificate - EL 3
### Sample

**High School Record**

Home Education Student’s full name: ____________________________  Date of Birth: mm/dd/yy

Street Address
City, State, Zip Code
Phone: ____________________________

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Signed: ____________________________
(Parent/Guardian signature)  Date: ________________

This Guide to the revised EL7 form was developed as a cooperative effort by Carla Scianimanico, South Florida HEAT; Brenda Dickinson, President of HEF with collaboration from the FHSAA Associate Commissioner of Compliance, and a school district home education contact, in an effort to guide parents through the documentation process required for FHSAA eligibility.