



School Choice

The Impact on State Associations

2025 NFHS Summer Conference

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Reminder

If you figured it all out today, what would be the point of tomorrow?

ENJOY the process of being a work in progress.



FLORIDA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

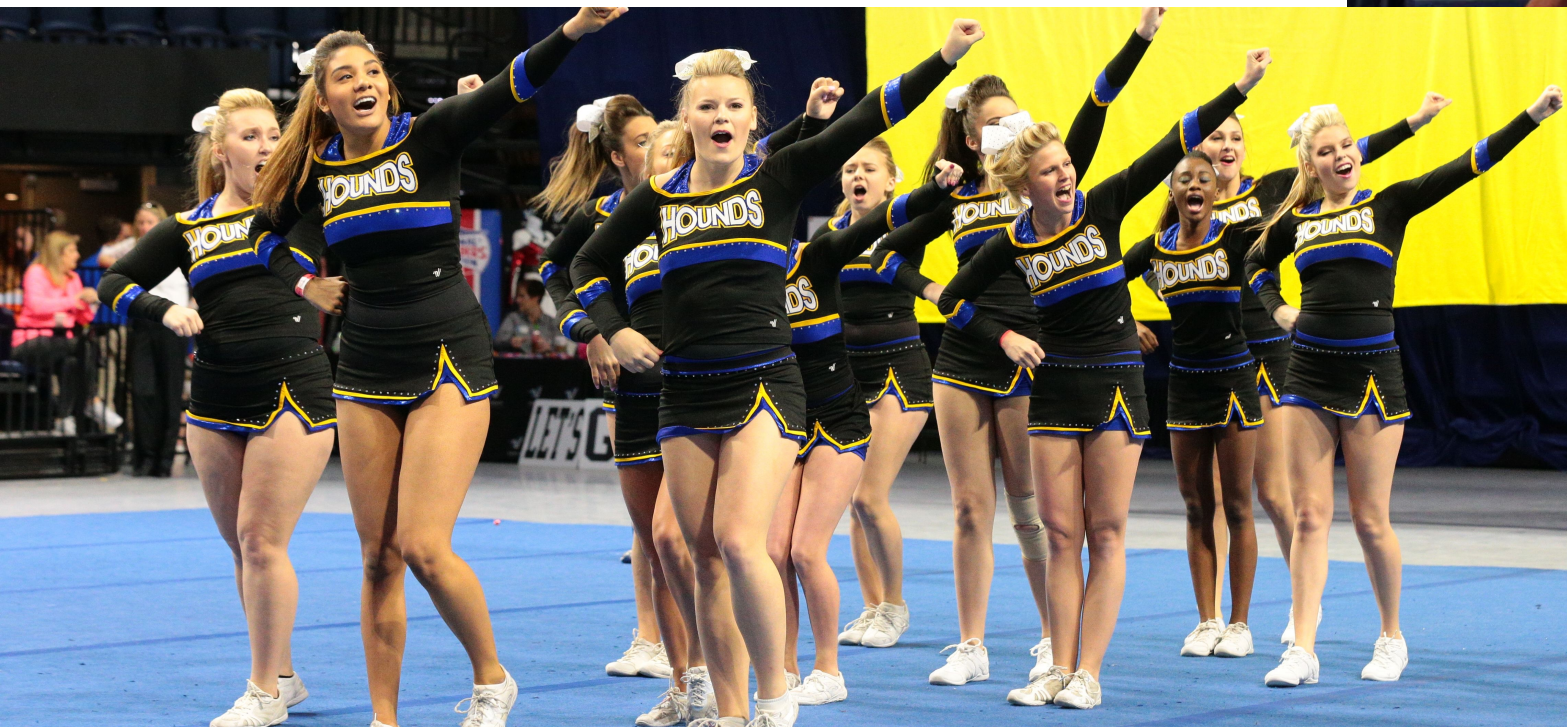
Agenda

- Brief History
- HB7029 – School Choice/Open Enrollment
- Impact on FHSAA
- Pro-active Approach



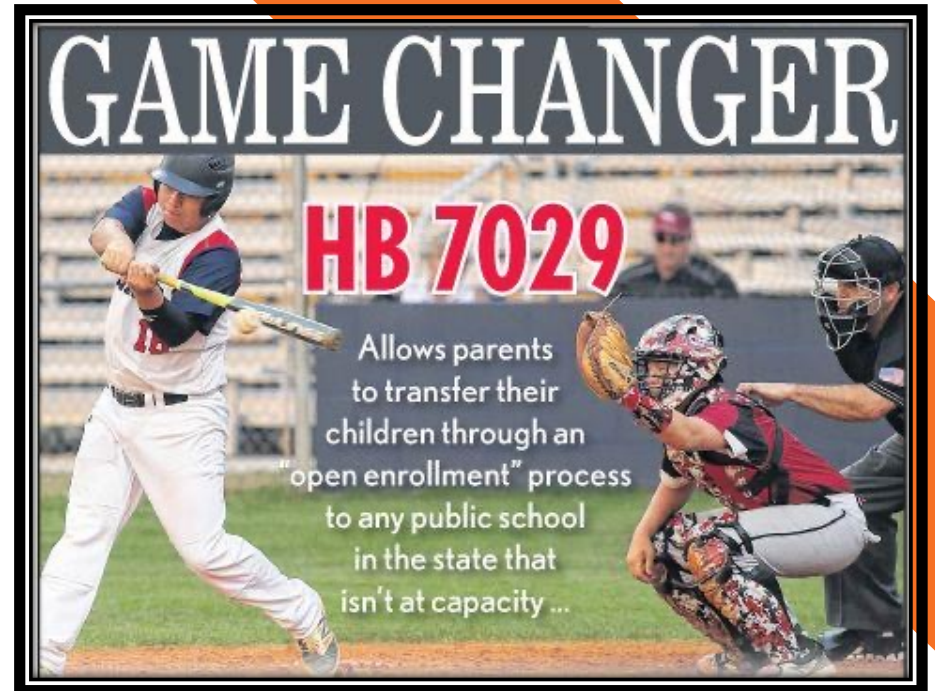
History

- 1920 – Founded by 29 principals
- **1997 – Named in Florida Statute as governing body of high school sports**
- 1997 – 2013 – Allowances for non-traditional student participation
- **2016 – Passing of HB7029 for 2017-18 SY**



The Law Behind the Shift

- HB7029 introduced open enrollment and school choice in Florida
- Impacts eligibility and transfer rules in high school athletics
- Legislation prioritizes parental choice over district boundaries



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School Choice



- As part of a school district or charter school's controlled open enrollment process, each school board or charter school SHALL allow a parent from any school district to enroll and transport their child in any public school (including charter schools) that has not reached capacity in the district.
- Each district or charter school's capacity must be current and identified on their respective websites.
- Each school district must provide preferential treatment to the following:
 - Dependent children of active-duty military personnel whose move resulted from military orders.
 - Children who have been relocated due to foster care placement in a different school zone.
 - Children who move due to a court-ordered change in custody due to separation or divorce, serious illness or death of a custodial parent.



Opportunities Created by School Choice

- Empowerment of families to choose best-fit schools
- Access to specialized academic and athletic programs
- Potential for innovation and competition among schools





Athletics vs Academics

- Concerns that athletic motivations drive school transfers
- Need for balance between academic integrity and athletic opportunity
- Clarify eligibility rules to prevent misuse





Impact on FHSAA

- Elimination of **ALL** FHSAA transfer regulations
 - Transfer without a move
 - Follow the coach
 - Prior participation on non-school team/activities
 - Due process through FHSAA





Impact on FHSAA

- Emergence of elite teams
- Increase in recruiting allegations
- Challenge to distinguish recruiting from school choice
- Need to educate the membership on statute changes





**It is not the strongest of the species that
survive,
nor the most intelligent,
but the one most responsive to CHANGE.
Charles Darwin**



Pro-active Approach



- Foster relationships
 - Department of Education
 - Legislators
 - Constituents
- Develop transparent eligibility guidelines
- Communicate



Looking Ahead

- Control what you can control
- Customize rules to reflect the evolving educational landscape
- Use data to guide policy changes and classification systems
- Leverage technology to monitor transfers and student eligibility
- Collaborate with stakeholders to ensure fairness





Summary and Call to Action

- School choice reshapes high school athletics
- Balance opportunity with integrity and fairness
- Engage in dialogue and proactive policy-making



Questions

