

# Should Homeschoolers Be Allowed to Play Public School Sports?

Years ago, I was privy to an instance where a young, middle school girl was encouraged to join the swim team at her local neighborhood school.

There was only one problem. The girl was homeschooled, a status which made her automatically ineligible to join the team and participate in the sport.

But times have changed, and [many states](#) now welcome homeschool students to their sports teams with open arms. Thus, I was a bit surprised to hear that Virginia governor Terry McAuliffe has vetoed a bill – for the [third year running](#) – that would allow homeschoolers to join public school sports teams.

The governor's reasoning for denying homeschoolers this access is [as follows](#):

*“Allowing home-schooled students to participate in interscholastic competitions would disrupt the level playing field Virginia’s public schools have developed over the past century. While the bill provides that home-schooled students must demonstrate evidence of progress in order to participate in interscholastic activities, the unique nature of their educational situation precludes conformity to the same standards.*

*Virginia’s public schools provide a complete package of scholastic offerings and access to extracurricular activities. Participation in athletic and academic competitions is a privilege for students who satisfy eligibility requirements.”*

McAuliffe's statement is a bit curious. First, it implies that Virginia schools have high standards that homeschoolers are unable to achieve. This, however, flies in the face of research which finds that homeschoolers far [outpace](#) their public school counterparts in everything from reading to science.

Secondly, McAuliffe's statement suggests that participation in sports is a privilege only for students eligible to be a part of the free public education system in Virginia. But isn't every child eligible to participate in public education? Why is it that homeschool parents, who pay taxes to support the public schools, aren't allowed to take advantage of some public school benefits when they're paying for all?

We live in an age where inclusivity and non-discriminatory practices are prized above all else, a fact evidenced by none other than the [Virginia Department of Education](#). Do we have a bit of a double standard when that commitment to inclusivity is denied to homeschool students?