



# Lago Vista Viking Special Olympics

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## **Athlete Advancement to Chapter Games (State Level Games)**

Lago Vista ISD is proud to send a delegation of athletes to the Special Olympics Texas Chapter (state) Games each year. SOTx currently offers the Chapter Fall Classic, Chapter Winter Games and Chapter Summer Games as Chapter events.

Chapter Summer Games is unique from Winter Games and Fall Classic in that the team travels together in school transportation and stays together as a team in a hotel or University dorm with coaches and chaperones. This experience requires an athlete to possess skill readiness of the sport, independent daily living skills, and demonstrate the ability to follow directions successfully and consistently maintain self control.

Eligible athletes with more significant impairments or physical challenges can be considered as day campers. Please review item 8 regarding Day Campers.

The following information covers the process for advancement as determined by Special Olympics Texas, and more specifically, criteria Lago Vista ISD considers for advancement to a Chapter Summer Games each year.

### ***Special Olympics Texas Criteria for Advancement:***

Advancement to a Chapter Games is contingent upon an athlete having competed in his/her sport at local competitions/scrimmages, and in the sanctioned Area 13 competition in that sport. The athlete must have a current SOTx medical release form on file. Athletes are not required to place third or better at area competitions in order to qualify for participation in the Chapter (state) Games. However, it is highly recommended that competition place finishes be one of the selecting criteria utilized by teams when making delegation decisions. Athletes may only participate in one sport at the Chapter Games.

An allocation system (**quota system**) exists in Texas, depending upon the sport, due to logistical and scheduling considerations. Currently an allocation system exists with Basketball and Athletics (track and field). The Head of Delegation (Emily Peña) and the LVISD coaching staff are responsible for selecting athletes for Chapter sport participation when affected by the allocation system.

### **Lago Vista ISD Criteria of Advancement:**

#### **1. AGE AND ACTIVE EXPERIENCE:**

The Lago Vista ISD staff prioritizes the selection of athletes based on age (high school and older), years of experience in the program, and readiness for overnight hotel status at a state level event. Athletes who are in high school or the 18+ program are considered for Chapter events. Athletes must be active in Lago Vista Special Olympics for a minimum of 1 year before becoming eligible for participation at a Chapter level competition.

#### **2. ADULT LIVING SKILLS:**

Independent skills are critical and necessary for any Chapter Games for out of town trips when the team stays at a hotel or dormitory under the supervision of the coaching staff. The athlete must be able to demonstrate functional independence in the area of adult living. This includes maintaining and handling all personal hygiene tasks, with verbal prompting from staff, as needed. Personal hygiene includes all personal care related to bathroom care, showering, dressing, and grooming. Athletes who do not exhibit functional independence in daily living skills may be considered as a Day Camper. Families take full responsibility for the athlete's personal hygiene task with a Day Camper, and the athlete would stay with the family overnight while at an out of town Chapter Games. Please refer to item 8, Day Campers.

#### **3. ATHLETE READINESS:**

Medically fragile athletes or athletes with high levels of personal needs can be compromised by the long and difficult schedule of a Chapter Games. The safety of the athletes will always be the first priority in the decisions surrounding Chapter competitions that involve overnight stay. For out of town trips the athlete must be able to endure a schedule that typically begins at 6:00 am and continues until 10:00 pm. Athletes with health and/or physical limitations, including seizure disorders or who require highly structured, daily routines will be considered, but in careful collaboration with LVISD staff and the family. Please refer to item 8, Day Campers.

#### **4. ALLOCATION (QUOTA) RESTRICTIONS:**

Once the allocation (quota) is given to the Head of Delegation by Special Olympics Texas, the coaching staff creates the list of eligible athletes who competed in the sports within the allotted quota and budget constraints.

#### **5. BUDGET:**

Participation in Chapter Games events is costly (athlete registration, hotel fees, meal fees, staff costs and transportation costs). Budget constraints drive decisions as to the number of athletes that are able to attend. As operating costs continue to increase, the need for families to provide supplemental financial support to help offset costs is needed, though typically nominal. Financial assistance is available for qualifying families.

#### 6. BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT:

Attending a Chapter (state) Games is a privilege and an honor. Exemplary behavior is expected, not requested. An athlete's ability to maintain self control throughout the event is paramount. Athletes should pose no threat to oneself or to others while on the trip. The athlete must be able to effectively follow directions and maintain respectful attitudes toward coaches, volunteers, and athletes while on the trip. Any inappropriate or unwanted physical or verbal advances on others or refusals to comply with rules and expectations would result in removal from the trip.

#### 7. SELECTION PROCESS:

The coaching staff reviews the list of active athletes who are eligible in the sport season for a Chapter Games competition. Once an initial list of athletes has been created, families are contacted. Families have the option to accept or remove his/her athlete from consideration prior to Chapter entry deadline. Determination of an athlete attending as a Day Camper or full time camper would be discussed. No substitution of athletes is allowed once entries are submitted to Special Olympics Texas. Consideration begins with the oldest and most experienced athletes. Only high school and 18+ program athletes are considered.

#### 8. DAY CAMPERS:

Athletes with more significant personal or health needs as described earlier can be considered as Day Campers when the Chapter Games is held in another city, such as Summer Games in Arlington, TX. A Day Camper is an athlete who attends Chapter Games, but the family of the Day Camper commits to attending the Chapter Games at their personal expense. The family directly assists in the personal needs of their child, while supporting the LVISD staff as needed with their athlete during the Chapter Games and all activities associated with the event. In most cases the athlete will stay with the family in personal accommodations chosen by the family. In some cases the athlete will stay in overnight lodging with the team delegation, depending upon the unique situation. This decision is made between the Head of Delegation and the family of the athlete.

For additional information, please contact Emily Peña, Head of Delegation.  
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