



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: House Bill 413 – Prince George's County – Elementary School Students – Daily Physical Activity (Student Health and Fitness Act)

SPONSOR: Delegate Walker

HEARING DATE: February 7, 2020

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means

CONTACT: Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 413**, which requires all Prince George's County's public elementary school students to be provided daily programs of physical activity totaling 150 minutes per week, including a minimum of 90 minutes per week of physical education. In addition, each elementary school must designate a physical activity leadership team to plan and coordinate opportunities for moderate to vigorous activity (including recess) to make up for any of the required minutes that are not spent in physical education.

This legislation bolsters decades of research and recommendations on strategies for preventing childhood obesity through physical activity. Students spend up to seven hours each school day in school.¹ Given the amount of time that students spend in classrooms, research has determined that maturing children need daily recess that is unstructured or semi-structured, child-initiated play in order to develop healthily.² Physical education provides sequential instruction to enhance the development of motor skills, movement concepts, and physical fitness, while recess provides unstructured play opportunities that allow children to engage in physical activity.³ Furthermore, it is recommended that students spend a "*minimum* of 30 minutes of

¹ Institute of Medicine, *Educating the Student Body: Taking Physical Activity and Physical Education to School*, at 21, Washington, DC: The National Academies Press (2013), https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK201500/pdf/Bookshelf_NBK201500.pdf.

² See, e.g., *id.* at 141. See also HealthyPeople.gov, "Physical Activity," <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/physical-activity> (last visited Jan. 28, 2020) ("Regular physical activity can improve the health and quality of life of Americans of all ages, regardless of the presence of a chronic disease or disability.").

³ See Institute of Medicine, *supra* note 1.

developmentally appropriate daily physical activity, through recess, active classroom lessons, in-class physical activity breaks, and physical education.”⁴

In Prince George’s County, students are provided a minimum of 40 minutes of physical activity, which falls below the standards in other jurisdictions and is only slightly above the recommended minimum. This Administration endeavors to make Prince George’s County an innovative, nationally recognized leader in improving children’s health and wellness. House Bill 413 directly advances that priority and is supported by evidence-based recommendations.

For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Prince George’s County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 413** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.

⁴ Let’s Go!, *5-2-1-0 Goes to School Wellness Policy Guide*, at 14, https://www.phipps.conservatory.org/assets/documents/Wellness_Policy_Guide.pdf (emphasis added).