



MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential

850 Hungerford Drive ♦ Room 123 ♦ Rockville, Maryland 20850

BILL: HB1185
TITLE: Public and Nonpublic Schools - Interscholastic Athletics Eligibility -
Reclassification of Student Athletes
DATE: 3/3/2021
POSITION: Oppose
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
CONTACT: Danielle M. Susskind, Coordinator, Legislative Affairs
Danielle_M_Susskind@mcpsmd.org

The Montgomery County Board of Education (Board) **opposes** HB1185.

- The bill would have a negative impact on a significant number of student-athletes and raise equity concerns.
- The “Why” of education-based athletics is in question - our goal is for students to achieve graduation standards and move on with college, career, etc. Students should be encouraged to use their experiences and move on with the next phase of life. This bill negatively impacts the approximately 90-95% of students who will not be continuing their athletic experiences at the collegiate level.
- The NCAA has made accommodations to the recruiting calendar and operations to account for COVID-19.
- The bill would create the opportunity for 5th year seniors and students who would be 19+, which would prohibit Maryland schools from competing against schools from surrounding states and most private schools. Schools and states have eligibility rules prohibiting teams and students from competing against schools that allow 5th year seniors and older students.
- “Reclassified” students would potentially take roster spots and opportunities away from underclass students, including other students who are pursuing opportunities at the college level.
- Instead of moving on and having a similar impact on all students, the class of 2022 would have an additional year of participation - under this rationale, would this also apply to subsequent classes? The rationale is unfounded.
- There are potential liability and insurance issues - allowing older students to compete against younger students - a safety concern.
- Existing rules and regulations for MCPS and the MPSSAA would be compromised, including the expectation that local school systems are ensuring that students are academically excelling towards graduation, in MCPS the expectation is four years.

For these reasons, the Board **opposes** this legislation and urges a **unfavorable** report.