



House Bill 1185/ Public and Nonpublic Schools - Interscholastic Athletics Eligibility - Reclassification of Student Athletes  
Ways and Means Committee  
March 3, 2021

systems, grade promotion is triggered by the number of accumulated credits toward graduation. Upon passing a course and earning credit in the course, the earned credit contributes toward the number of credits needed for graduation. Upon completion of all graduation requirements, the student is graduated.

HB1185 could potentially have an effect on the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) academic eligibility and the amateurism certification of potential intercollegiate student-athletes. The NCAA Division I requires 16 core-course units to be completed within four years/eight semesters from the initial start of a student's ninth grade year. In addition, 10 of the required 16 units must be completed before starting the seventh semester (resulting in a max of six core units in grade 12). As a result, repeating a year could detrimentally impact a student's ability to meet Division I core-course requirements. Division II and III have similar academic requirements. The NCAA has developed a [NCAA Eligibility Center COVID-19 Response FAQ](#) information document related to these academic eligibility requirements for Divisions I, II, and III.

NCAA legislation permits students to participate one year after their expected high school graduation date (based on four years after the initial start of a student's ninth grade year) without impacting their NCAA eligibility. The only shorter timeframe is Division I tennis, which permits participation for six months after the expected graduation date. As a result, if students repeat a year of high school, they should be mindful of the potential impact on their amateurism certification for seasons of eligibility.

According to the NCAA recruiting fact sheet, only two percent of high school athletes receive a college sport scholarship with only seven percent of high school athletes participating in intercollegiate athletics. HB1185 allows for the reclassification of students as juniors, thus exponentially increasing the number of Spring 2023 graduates competing for limited collegiate participation sports, especially in sports with limited rosters such as basketball, baseball, and softball. In addition, increased collegiate opportunities in the Spring of 2022 as a result of the NCAA providing one additional year of eligibility in 2021-22, will be afforded to students who remain on track and graduate in Spring 2022.

HB1185 has the potential to have an effect on the juniors class seeking similar collegiate opportunities during the 2022-2023 academic year. During that year, senior classes will consist of double the amount of senior student-athletes, which will displace numerous junior student-athletes from participation opportunities on interscholastic athletic teams. Providing these accommodations for one class of students, escalates into multiple year challenges for student-athletes seeking collegiate participation opportunities.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate House Bill 1185. For further information, please contact Zachary Hands, at 410-767-0504, or [Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov](mailto:Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov).