



PSSAM
Public School Superintendents' Association
OF MARYLAND

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BILL: HB 343

TITLE: Education - Public School Athletics - Basketball Schedule

DATE: March 22, 2023

POSITION: Oppose

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment

CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four local school superintendents, **opposes** House Bill 343.

House Bill 343 would establish rules for public school athletic schedules for boys basketball, including the maximum number of games played per week and season, and the number of tournament games played each year. Additionally, the bill requires each county board of education to decide whether to authorize a team to play in a tournament or showcase game. The bill also prohibits a student from being disciplined for not participating in a game or practice that occurs outside of the school year.

In Maryland, high school sports are regulated by rules established by the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA). The MPSSAA receives its authority from the Master Agreement with PSSAM and each of the 24 local educational agencies (LEAs) is a signatory of that agreement. MPSSAA's governance provides for a well-balanced interscholastic program for the 100,000 public school participants, annually. Regulatory changes and proposals are derived from the LEA interscholastic athletics staff and ratified by the State Board of Education.

With regard to this legislation, the MPSSAA has already identified and resolved many of the issues and concerns as part of regulations adopted by the Maryland State Board in July, 2022. These LEA-requested regulations created provisions for high school teams to participate in events outside of the regular season. Most importantly, these regulations apply to all high school sports, not just boys basketball.

COMAR 13A.06.03.03A.(5) states, “Local school systems may approve the participation of member schools to participate and compete in sanctioned National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) and MPSSAA events outside the defined sport season.” These approved regulations created opportunities for all students in interscholastic athletics to participate safely in bon-a-fide sanctioned events, including events for the purpose of NCAA recruitment.

The purpose of these regulations was to allow LEA approval for the participation in NCAA evaluation periods as sanctioned by the NFHS and NCAA. In fact, under these new regulations, basketball events during the 2023 NCAA June Scholastic Period are *already approved* by the MPSSAA. Furthermore, the MPSSAA is submitting applications for the Maryland Basketball Coaches Association for NFHS approval to run a girls’ basketball NCAA evaluation event.

PSSAM has a longstanding policy of opposing curriculum mandates and administrative directives by the Legislature; we ask that our local governing partnership with MPSSAA continue without policies driven by the Maryland General Assembly. This partnership allows the MPSSAA to safely and equitably govern all high school sports programs, leaving policy making decisions in the hands of those who best know how to educate, coach, and mentor through education-based athletic programs.

For these reasons, PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 343 and requests an **unfavorable** report.