

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 1429

(Delegate Mosby)

Ways and Means

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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Education – Public School Athletics – Basketball Schedule

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This bill establishes in statute requirements for public school athletic schedules for basketball. A basketball team may not play more than 2 games per week, but a team may elect to play 3 games per week twice during the season. The basketball season must consist of 22 regular season games, or 20 regular season games for a team that elects to play in a tournament. Each county board of education must decide whether to authorize a team to play in a tournament or showcase game. Authorization may be given to play in an already scheduled tournament or showcase game or one scheduled by the county. Subject to this authorization, a team may play in up to 4 tournament games and a number of showcase games determined by the county board per year, including during a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Evaluation Period. A tournament or showcase may be scheduled outside the normal basketball season. A team in the State may play in a tournament or showcase game against a team from outside the State if the out-of-state team has equivalent qualifications to those required of the in-state team. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2020.**

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** Minimal. In counties where the county board of education authorizes out-of-season basketball tournament or showcase play, certain school system expenditures increase. However, the bill does not require county boards to authorize participation in tournaments or showcases outside of the regular basketball season. Therefore, the bill does not require a substantial increase in local government expenditures.

**Small Business Effect:** Small businesses that profit from basketball tournaments and showcases may be effected by any change in the number of these types of games played each year.

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## Analysis

**Current Law:** Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), as established by the State Superintendent of Schools, governs the athletic program for all high school students in Maryland public secondary schools that are members of the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA.) Local school systems may adopt rules governing their athletic programs that are more restrictive than those of MPSSAA; less restrictive rules may not be adopted.

Per COMAR, basketball is limited to a 20-game regular season or 22 games with designated optional tournament play. Not more than 2 games per week are allowed, but 3 games in one week may be scheduled twice during the season. A team may elect to play in one designated optional 2- or 3-game tournament. If a team elects to play in a designated optional 3-game tournament, only 19 regular season games may be scheduled. A member MPSSAA school or school system may decide whether or not to participate in a tournament. School athletic teams may not participate in any contests representing their school before or after the defined sports season and must conform practices to seasonal limitations.

**Background:** Basketball is designated as a winter sport by MPSSAA. According to the schedule for the 2020-2021 season, practice will begin November 14; the regular season will cover the period from December 4 to February 25; and regional and State quarterfinals, semifinals, and finals will take place from February 26 to March 13.

According to the NCAA, during an NCAA evaluation period a college coach may watch college-bound student athletes compete, visit their high schools, and write or telephone student athletes or their parents. However, a college coach may not have face-to-face contact with college-bound student athletes or their parents off the college's campus during an evaluation period. According to the [NCAA website](#), the recruiting calendar, including evaluation periods varies for men's versus women's, as well as Division I, II, and III programs. Evaluation periods take place both during and outside of the MPSSAA winter basketball season.

MPSSAA advises that it has been working with the Maryland High School Basketball Coaches Association regarding NCAA June evaluation periods to provide a framework of participation opportunities for basketball student athletes that would not violate the regulations agreed upon by the 24 local educational agencies. The anticipated framework, according to MPSSAA, would be similar to other sports such as baseball and lacrosse that have showcase events for individual participants.

**Local Fiscal Effect:** The bill authorizes each public school team to make decisions as to whether to participate in tournament or showcase games outside of the winter sports

season, subject to county board of education approval. The bill otherwise closely conforms to standards for the number of contests in a season. According to the Maryland State Department of Education and MPSSAA, school systems that choose to allow participation in tournaments or showcases outside of the regular season timeframe will incur increased expenditures to cover additional coaching stipends, general supervision and oversight, building security, transportation, and potentially increased liability for play outside of the winter sports season.

Baltimore City Public Schools was unable to provide a fiscal estimate but notes that there may be costs related to tournaments outside of the regular season, including costs related to pay for coaches, transportation, and liability for students' injuries taking place outside of the season. Baltimore County Public Schools advises that it may incur additional travel and other costs associated with tournament participation outside of the winter season. Montgomery County Public Schools advises that its annual costs would increase by approximately \$75,000, including \$50,000 for coaches' stipends and \$25,000 for increased athletic director supervision time. However, because the bill does not require county boards to authorize participation in tournaments or showcases outside of the regular basketball season, and the bill does not substantially alter the number of games in a season, it is assumed that the bill does not require a substantial increase in local government expenditures.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education; Baltimore City Public Schools; Baltimore County Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association; National Collegiate Athletic Association; Department of Legislative Services

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