

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

House Bill 935  
Ways and Means

(Delegate Roberts, *et al.*)

---

Public Schools - Venue-Specific Emergency Action Plans - High School Football Games

---

This bill requires that only for high school football programs, the venue-specific emergency action plan that a public high school must develop must include the presence of either (1) a licensed athletic trainer or (2) an ambulance staffed with the appropriate emergency medical services personnel. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.**

---

Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** None. The bill pertains only to local school systems.

**Local Effect:** Expenditures in some local school systems increase to continue to hold public high school football games. **This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.**

**Small Business Effect:** None.

---

Analysis

**Current Law:** Each public middle school and high school must develop a venue-specific emergency action plan for all athletic facilities. A venue-specific action plan includes (1) the operation and use of automatic external defibrillators; (2) heat acclimatization; (3) coordination of care for other emergent injuries, as specified; and (4) a specified cardiac emergency response plan.

All high school coaches are required to have completed a one-credit course in the prevention and care of athletic injuries. The Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic

Association advises that it reviews and updates relevant content to ensure coaches are trained to handle emergency situations until appropriate medical responders arrive.

**Local Fiscal Effect:** To the extent local school systems do not presently provide for the presence of a licensed athletic trainer and/or staffed ambulance at high school football games, local school system costs increase substantially to avoid cancellation of high school football games.

Baltimore City Public Schools, Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Prince George's County Public Schools, and Wicomico County Public Schools all advise that their school systems currently staff high school football games with athletic trainers and, therefore, are not likely to incur increased costs under the bill. St. Mary's County Public Schools advises that its contractor has been unable to supply an athletic trainer at every football game. However, the school system has arranged for a staffed ambulance to be at every game; if the ambulance must leave a given football game in response to an emergency elsewhere, the game would have to be suspended under the bill.

Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) advises that it lacks staffing to meet the bill's requirements because it has not been successful in finding a contractor who can guarantee the availability of an athletic trainer at every game. Therefore, FCPS must hire athletic trainers, at an approximate cost of \$175,000 per position to cover salaries and benefits. While FCPS anticipates the need for one position for each high school in the school system, it is assumed that half that many may be sufficient (assuming schools in the county play each other and/or play some away games outside of the county).

**Additional Comment:** The Maryland State Department of Education notes that the presence of a licensed physician at a football game (which some school systems use) does not satisfy the conditions of the bill, even though certified athletic trainers must work under the scope of practice of a physician.

---

### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Baltimore City Public Schools; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Frederick County Public Schools; Prince George's County Public Schools; St. Mary's County Public Schools; Wicomico County Public Schools; Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems; Maryland Department of Health; Maryland

Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association; Maryland State Department of Education;  
Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 20, 2025  
rh/mcr

---

Analysis by: Scott P. Gates

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510