

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1528
Ways and Means

(Delegate Ross, *et al.*)

Education - Homeschool Students - Extracurricular Activities

This bill authorizes a public school in the State to allow a homeschool student to participate in extracurricular activities sponsored by the school (regardless of the student’s residency or eligibility to attend the school) to the same extent that a student who is enrolled in the public school may participate. “Extracurricular activity” means athletics, interscholastic athletics, or another activity (1) in which a student may participate outside of regular school hours and (2) for which a student does not earn academic credit. A public school may allow a homeschool student’s participation in athletics, including interscholastic athletics, if approved by the local school system. A public high school must give placement priority to a student enrolled in the school if there are a limited number of spaces available for students in a given extracurricular activity. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) can develop any regulations using existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None. Authorizing, but not requiring, a public school to allow homeschooled students to participate in extracurricular activities does not affect local school expenditures. It is assumed that under the bill the total number of students participating in public school interscholastic athletic activities is not expanded.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: State regulations under MSDE govern 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), which includes all 24 school systems. 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 State regulations, to be eligible for participation in high school level interscholastic athletics, students must be officially registered and attending the MPSSAA member school they are authorized to attend under regulations of the local school system. They may represent only the school in which they are registered and at which it is anticipated they will complete their graduation requirements. Each local school system must establish standards of participation that assure that students involved in interscholastic athletics are making satisfactory progress toward graduation.

Failure to comply with regulations constitutes a violation that results in specified penalties against the MPSSAA member school and either the student or the coach or both. Depending upon the severity of the violation, more than one penalty may be imposed against the MPSSAA member school, student, coach, or all of the above.

Chapter 804 of 2023 requires, to the extent practicable, a virtual school to provide each enrolled student access to participation in organized athletics and on athletic teams at the public school the student would otherwise be required to attend in person, notwithstanding any other law or regulation and subject to a participation agreement between the public school and the student's parent.

MSDE advises that there are approximately 42,000 homeschool students in the State, ranging from fewer than 150 in Kent County to more than 5,500 in Baltimore County during the 2024-2025 school year.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 1185 of 2025.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Frederick County Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; Prince George's County Public Schools; St. Mary's County Public Schools; Wicomico County Public Schools; Maryland State Department of Education; Department of Legislative Services

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