

Testimony in Support of SB 21.pdf

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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of SB 21 –Public High School Stadiums– Fund

A high school stadium is more than a place where students fulfill their physical education requirements; it's a place for community gathering, the public face of the school on game days, and a place where students challenge themselves for next-level achievements. When athletic facilities fall into disrepair or can't fulfill one or more of their multiple functions, this can affect the school significantly and impact the safety of athletes, spectators, as well as anyone else who uses these community spaces.

Research on student participation in interscholastic athletics and activities shows the undeniable enhancement they bring to the academic mission of schools. Athletics serve as an inherent educational extension to the classroom, which keeps students more engaged in academics and fosters post-graduate success. For example, a 2019 nationwide study found that students participating in athletics have a GPA that is .15 points higher than those who do not participate. Research has also shown that interscholastic athletics and activities promote the health and well-being of students mentally, emotionally, and physically creating positive psychological and academic outcomes.

Here in the State of Maryland, we have a long, storied history of athletes graduating from our public schools and going on to achieve greatness at the college and professional level – but right now, the playing field is not level. There are dozens of high schools here in Maryland who have not had significant athletic stadium renovations in over a decade. This limits opportunities for our students and does not help us achieve the stated goal of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future – to provide a world class educational experience for every student.

To help address this longstanding problem, I am proposing SB 21, which will create a Public School Stadium Construction Fund with a \$60 million allocation beginning in FY2026. The Department of Legislative Services estimates that each stadium will cost around \$2-5 million to construct, so this fund will go a long way towards addressing the needs of schools that have been neglected the longest.

We must do more to support our great student athletes here in Maryland, who already commit so much time and energy to their academic and athletic goals. As legislators, it is our duty to help them achieve those goals.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable committee report on SB 21.

Position Statement_SB 21 Public School Stadium Gra

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POSITION STATEMENT

Bill: SB 0021 Education - Public School Stadium Grant Program and Study – Establishment

Position: Informational

Date: January 17, 2024

Contact: Debra Borden, General Counsel

Jordan Baucum Colbert, Government Affairs Liaison

Dear Chair Guy Guzzone and Vice Chair Jim Rosapepe:

The Prince George’s County Planning Board (the “Board”) has not voted on an official position yet, however, based on the subject matter of the bill, staff has prepared an informational statement for the bill in its current form. The Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (“the Commission” or M-NCPPC) respectfully requests that the Budget and Taxation Committee consider this information and include it in the record.

What this Bill Does. This bill seeks to invest in student athletics in Prince George’s County. This bill in its current form establishes a Public-School Stadium Grant Program which would require the Interagency Commission on School Construction to implement and administer such a program. This bill requires the Interagency Commission on School Construction to conduct a comprehensive study analyzing the current condition of public high school athletic and physical education facilities in the State. This bill also requires Prince George’s County Board of Education and the Commission, on or before a certain date, to meet to discuss potential partnerships to upgrade public high school athletic and physical education facilities.

Background. The Department of Parks and Recreation manages close to 400 parks on more than 28,000 acres of parkland. The Park & Planning and Development Division works closely with the community and elected officials to assess needs and determine priorities for parks and recreation facilities in Prince George’s County. Throughout the years, the Commission has earned national accreditation for its innovative parks and recreation programs and strong management from the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies. Accreditation was earned in 2004, 2009, and 2014. M-NCPPC is one of a select few accredited parks and recreation agencies in the United States.

Commitment to Investing in Youth Athletes. The Department of Parks and Recreation are Committed to investing in student athletes and ensuring they have a space to grow, develop leadership skills, and will succeed in college and beyond. The Department of Parks & Recreation in Prince George's County have worked together with Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) for years utilizing Administrative Procedure 1330 for use of PGCPS indoor space (gyms) for various youth and adult sports and recreation programs on weekends and holidays.

In 2015 the Commission and PGCPS entered into a Joint Use Agreement where the artificial turf fields at Gwynn Park, Oxon Hill and Wise High Schools are available to the community through the Commission. This agreement allows for the Commission to utilize the space for recreation programming. In HB101 2019, additional state funds were set aside for PGCPS athletic facilities and required an MOU between PGCPS and the Commission to further enhance permitting and public use of school fields.

Committee to Review and Revamp Administrative Procedure 1330. Recently, representatives from the County Executive's Office, the Commission and PGCPS have formed a committee to review and revamp the existing 1330 procedure as well as discuss the possibility of the permitting of certain PGCPS athletic spaces to be coordinated by a single entity to make the process more efficient and streamlined for the public. This committee is currently discussing and reviewing various options, creating models for which this would function and researching other jurisdictions procedures. The goal of the committee is to expand the current number of outdoor diamond and rectangle fields at PGCPS properties that are a part of the shared use agreement. This will allow for increased availability of space throughout the county for athletic programming and community use. The increased number of fields and a more centralized/user friendly permitting process is the goal.

Continued Commitment to Improving Access. The maintenance of PGCPS Athletic Fields is the responsibility of PGCPS, except for Sasscer Fields (PGCPS property) where an MOU with Commission is in place pertaining to use and maintenance. This agreement was signed by both agencies in 2021. The Commission continues to demonstrate its commitment to improving access, shared use and permitting procedures.

For additional information, please contact the Commission via Jordan Baucum Colbert, Jordan.BaucumColbert@mncppc.org.

SB 0021 Statement of Information 1.16.24.pdf

Uploaded by: Laura Vykol-Gray

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Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET
AND MANAGEMENT

WES MOORE
Governor

ARUNA MILLER
Lieutenant Governor

HELENE GRADY
Secretary

MARC L. NICOLE
Deputy Secretary

SENATE BILL 21 Budget and Taxation – Education – Public School Stadium Grant Program and Study – Established

STATEMENT OF INFORMATION

DATE: January 15, 2024

COMMITTEE: Senate Budget and Taxation

SUMMARY OF BILL: This bill establishes the Public School Stadium Grant Program to provide grants to local school boards for the major renovation or replacement of stadiums for public high schools. The Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC) would administer the program, which would not be subject to established State-local cost share formulas. The Governor would have to include \$60.0 million in the operating or capital budget each year beginning in FY 2026. Funding for the grant program is intended to be supplemental and not replace funding that would otherwise be appropriated for public school construction. In addition, the IAC would conduct a study analyzing the condition of public school athletic and physical education facilities and submit a report to the General Assembly by December 1, 2024. The bill would take effect June 1, 2024.

EXPLANATION: The FY 2025 – 2029 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) includes \$2.9 billion for school construction programs, including \$2.2 billion in General Obligation (GO) bonds. This amount comprises nearly one-third of all GO bonds in the five-year CIP to renovate, replace, expand, and improve school facilities. These funds are critically needed to upgrade or replace deteriorated buildings, modernize teaching and learning spaces, and address overcrowding. In addition, appropriately sized stadiums are eligible for funding from the Public School Construction Program if they are included in the renovation, replacement, or new construction of high school facilities. Therefore, select stadium projects will be addressed through this existing program.

Of note, these existing investments through the Public School Construction Program are subject to a State-local cost share formula. This cost share formula leverages State funds with local funds, maximizing the outcome of State investments and ensuring local governments are incentivized to construct and maintain their facilities effectively and efficiently.

Importantly, the \$60 million annual funding mandate set forth by SB 21 will cost \$240 million through the FY 2025-2029 CIP. This mandate would likely require a reduction in funding to existing school construction programs or other critical programs and projects already planned in the CIP.

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Finally, implementing and administering this new program would likely require additional IAC positions and operational funds at a time when the State is facing economic challenges, including a structural deficit.

**For additional information, contact Laura Vykol-Gray at
(410) 260-6371 or laura.vykol@maryland.gov**