MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Preparing World-Class Students

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TO: Members of the Maryland State Board of Education

FROM: Bernard J. Sadusky, Ed. D.

DATE: December 6, 2011

SUBJECT: Recommended Academic Eligibility Standards – Interscholastic Athletics

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PURPOSE:

To provide recommendations to the General Assembly, in compliance with statute, regarding the minimum academic standards that students must meet in order to be eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

HB 364 *Student Participation in High School Sports-Minimum Academic Requirements-Proposed Standards* was passed in the 2011 Session of the Maryland General Assembly and signed into law by Governor O'Malley. As approved, the law requires that "on or before December 31, 2011, the State Board of Education, in consultation with the county boards of education, shall report, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, to the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee and the House Committee on Ways and Means, regarding the minimum academic performance standards that students in public high schools in the State should meet in order to participate in athletic competitions sanctioned by a county board of education. The report shall include recommendations regarding the curriculum content, minimum grade point average, and grade progress that public high school students should satisfy to be eligible to participate in athletic competition sanctioned by the county board."

Currently, the regulations for Interscholastic Athletics in the State require:
"Each local school system shall establish standards of participation which assure that students involved in interscholastic athletics are making satisfactory progress toward graduation" (COMAR 13A.06.03.02 B).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) established an advisory committee in August to assist the State Board in developing the required recommendations. That committee was comprised of superintendents, principals, athletic supervisors, athletic directors, and coaches. The committee reviewed the eligibility requirements for participation in interscholastic athletics of the twenty four local school systems in Maryland as well as the requirements of all states.

Representatives of that committee appeared before the Board in October and reported the following:

Realizing the benefits derived from participating in interscholastic athletics and with respect to the intricacies of each local school system's grading policy and in order to maintain interscholastic athletics as an integral part of the total educational process, the State Board of Education recommends that Local School Systems enact academic eligibility standards that reflect the following:

- *The curriculum content for high school students participating in interscholastic athletics is in accordance with the minimum Maryland high school state requirements for graduation.*

- *High school students participating in interscholastic athletics shall demonstrate a minimum high school grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or equivalent according to each local school system's grading criteria.*

- *The grade progress of high school students participating in interscholastic athletics reflects satisfactory credits earned towards the fulfillment of the Maryland high school state requirements for graduation.*

ACTION:

I am recommending that that State Board of Education incorporate the eligibility standards recommended by the Advisory Committee in its recommendation to the General Assembly.