

**BILL:** House Bill 343  
**TITLE:** Education - Public School Athletics - Basketball Schedule  
**POSITION:** OPPOSE  
**DATE:** March 22, 2023  
**COMMITTEE:** Education, Energy, and the Environment  
**CONTACT:** John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes House Bill 343, in favor of maintaining the balance of state and locally controlled system of interscholastic athletics governed by the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) and regulations adopted by the Maryland State Board of Education.

Interscholastic sports programs in Maryland's public schools are conducted in accordance with the standards developed by the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) and the regulations adopted by the State Board of Education. Since 1991, interscholastic sports in Maryland have operated in accordance with the "Master Agreement Outlining the Interscholastic Structure for Public Schools in Maryland," which establishes the responsibilities of MPSSAA, MSDE, and local school systems. Local boards of education believe that this system of regulations and oversight is working well.

MABE shares concerns and objections raised by local school systems and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to this legislation, which was also introduced and deliberated in the 2020 legislative session. Since 2020, the State Board of Education has approved revised regulations governing interscholastic sports in response to the concerns raised in this bill. In this context, MABE opposes stand-alone legislation regarding the scheduling of regular season and tournament games played by Maryland high school teams.

COMAR 13A.03.06 limits interscholastic athletic participation on behalf of the public schools to a defined sports season. House Bill 1429 provides an exception for the sport of basketball to participate in four tournament contests outside the defined sport season whereas, all other sports and school programs would be still regulated by out-of-season interscholastic athletic contest participation (COMAR 13A.06.03C(3)), out-of-season practice regulations (COMAR 13A.06.03.04E), and sanctioning regulations (COMAR 13A.06.03.09). House Bill 343, regarding participation in tournaments outside of the normal basketball season, would not address health and safety factors of practice and gradual assimilation to play. Local school systems will be affected by participation outside the defined sport season with increased liability of school sponsored programs, parental oversight of student participation during out-of-season tournaments, record-keeping, eligibility compliance, transportation requirements, and supervision of students. When this bill was considered in 2020, MSDE estimated that local school systems would have increased expenditures to cover the costs of out-of-season basketball coaching stipends, school security, transportation, building services, and general supervision and oversight.

Again, state regulations have already been amended to address a concern that athletes have additional opportunities to participate in NCAA June Scholastic events for more visibility. MSDE adopted at their July 26, 2022 meeting proposed amendments by the MPSSAA interscholastic athletic regulations under COMAR 13A.06.03. The approved regulations went into effect on August 22, 2022. The change allowed for schools to participate in the National Federation of State High School (NFHS) and MPSSAA sanctioned events outside the defined sport season and provided opportunities for other sports to have those opportunities, as well.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 343.