

BILL: House Bill 971
TITLE: Public Schools - Interscholastic Athletics - Student Eligibility Waiver and School Classification
POSITION: OPPOSE
DATE: February 21, 2024
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes House Bill 971, a bill to mandate changes to the eligibility criteria for student athletes attending a high school other than the one for which they would participate in athletics.

MABE opposes this bill in favor of allowing the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) to continue to govern the operation of Maryland's interscholastic sports, including considering the type of change proposed in this legislation.

Interscholastic sports programs in Maryland's public schools are conducted in accordance with the standards developed by the 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.

Maryland places a high priority on establishing and maintaining a statewide interscholastic athletic system that assures that sports activities are a part of and contribute toward the entire educational program. MABE encourages proponents of the changes contained in House Bill 971 to pursue such changes in the administrative and regulatory arena established for this purpose.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 971.