

**I. Policy Statement**

The Board of Education of Howard County is committed to providing a well-rounded program of education-based student activities for high school students as a complement to the academic program. The Board further recognizes that to best carry out the vision and mission of the school system, extracurricular activities will not, in any way, supplant academics as the primary focus of the school system.

**II. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish minimum academic criteria that must be met by high school students in order to be eligible to participate in school-sponsored extracurricular activities.

**III. Definitions**

Within the context of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- A. Extracurricular Activities – Activities, available to students beyond the regular school day, which are voluntary and not required for the satisfactory completion of a particular class.
- B. Education-Based Student Activities – Approved extracurricular activities that promote learning while contributing to the educational program of the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) and to the development of good citizenship.
- C. Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) – Provision of regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet a student’s individual educational needs.
- D. Parent – Any one of the following, recognized as the adult(s) legally responsible for the student:
  - 1. Biological Parent – A natural parent whose parental rights have not been terminated.
  - 2. Adoptive Parent – A person who has legally adopted the student and whose parental rights have not been terminated.
  - 3. Custodian – A person or an agency appointed by the court as the legal custodian of the student and granted parental rights and responsibilities.

4. Guardian – A person who had been placed by the court in charge of the affairs of the student and granted parental rights and responsibilities.
5. Caregiver – An adult resident of Howard County who exercises care, custody or control over the student, but who is neither the biological parent nor legal guardian, as long as the person satisfies the requirements of the Education Article §7-101 (c) (Informal Kinship Care).
6. Foster Parent – An adult approved to care for a child who has been placed in their home by a state agency or a licensed child placement agency as provided by the Family Law Article §5-507.

#### **IV. Standards**

- A. This policy governs minimum academic eligibility for student participation in extracurricular activities for which there is a HCPSS contracted sponsor. There are no academic eligibility standards for extracurricular activities participation when participation is required as part of a course and for clubs and activities with a sponsor not contracted by HCPSS.
- B. For high school, a full-time student earns academic eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities by maintaining a 2.0 grade-point average (GPA), calculated using credit or non-credit courses, with no more than one failing grade for the marking period which governs eligibility for that activity.
  1. This provision does not apply to incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade students for fall eligibility.
  2. Incomplete grades must be converted to a letter grade to determine eligibility. (Policy 8020 Grading and Reporting: High School)
  3. If a student withdraws from a course, the grades at the time of withdrawal will be used in determining academic eligibility.
- C. Weighted grades will be used for academic eligibility for extracurricular activities, including high school athletics.
- D. These marking period criteria will be followed in addition to IV. B. above.
  1. Seasonal:
    - a. Each extracurricular activity is governed by only one marking period.
    - b. A student must earn academic eligibility prior to the start of the activity.
    - c. Academic eligibility is determined by the student's last report card.

- d. Once academic eligibility has been determined, the student remains academically eligible for the duration of that activity season (e.g., basketball season).
2. Yearlong:
    - a. In the cases of yearlong activities or those which do not have a particular time frame, eligibility will be reviewed at the end of each marking period during which the student participates.
    - b. In cases of yearlong activities or those which do not have a particular time frame, if a student is academically ineligible prior to the start of the activity, his/her eligibility will be reviewed at the end of each marking period.
    - c. A student who has not earned academic eligibility prior to the start of the activity, for a particular time frame, may not become eligible during the course of the activity.
  3. The Marking Periods for Academic Eligibility are determined by the following:
    - a. Interscholastic Athletics
      - i. Fall sport eligibility – For incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade students, all students are eligible for fall athletics. For all returning students, eligibility is determined by the final marking period grades of the preceding June.
      - ii. Winter sport eligibility – Determined by the grades earned on the closest report card issued prior to November 15.
      - iii. Spring sport eligibility – Determined by the grades earned on the closest report card issued prior to March 1.
    - b. Other Extracurricular Activities
      - i. Activities, such as try-outs or auditions for plays, announcing candidacy for elective office are governed by the report card most immediately preceding the start of the activity.
      - ii. In the case of non-required trips by performing groups, the report card most immediately preceding the trip will govern.

Students who have less than a 2.0 grade point average with no more than one failing grade for the final marking period may attend summer school and raise the appropriate grade and the GPA to gain eligibility for fall interscholastic athletics and other extracurricular activities. HCPSS authorized summer school courses taken in order to gain academic

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eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities must be approved in advance by the principal/designee. (Policy 8020 Grading and Reporting: High School)

- E. Special Education Students/504 students
  - 1. A special education student may receive a waiver of academic ineligibility from the local school Individualized Education Program (IEP) team only if it is determined that failure to meet the academic eligibility requirement is a direct result of not providing Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and that the failure to provide FAPE led to the student being academically ineligible. Such a determination by the IEP team is to be reported immediately to the school principal who will then certify the student's eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities.
  - 2. A student with a 504 Plan may receive a waiver of academic ineligibility from the local 504 team when it is determined that FAPE was not provided, and that the failure to provide FAPE led to the student being academically ineligible. Such a determination by the 504 team is to be reported immediately to the school principal who will then certify the student's eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities.

## **V. Responsibilities**

- A. A student participating in athletics and his/her parent/guardian will certify the student's academic eligibility by signing the HCPSS participation form prior to participation.
- B. Sponsors will verify the academic eligibility of each student who desires to participate in a nonathletic extracurricular activity prior to the first activity participation.
- C. Athletic coaches will verify the academic eligibility of each athlete who desires to participate on their team prior to the tryouts.
- D. Athletics and Activities Managers (AAM) will verify the academic eligibility of each athlete participating on athletic teams at his/her school prior to the first game.
- E. The principal/designee will certify that all students participating in a nonathletic extracurricular activity meet academic eligibility requirements prior to the first activity.
- F. The principal/designee will certify that each athlete representing his/her school meets the HCPSS's academic eligibility requirements prior to the first game.
- G. The Superintendent/Designee will provide a list of system-paid sponsors.

**VI. Delegation of Authority**

The Superintendent is directed to develop appropriate procedures to implement this policy.

**VII. References**

- A. Legal
  - Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
  - The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article §5-112
  - The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article §7-101 (c) Kinship Care
  - Family Law Article §5-507
  
- B. Other Board Policies
  - Policy 7120 Coaches and Advisors of High School Extracurricular Activities
  - Policy 8020 Grading and Reporting: High School
  - Policy 9000 Student Residency, Eligibility, Enrollment and Assignment
  - Policy 9060 Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Compliance: Section 504
  - Policy 9080 Interscholastic Athletic Program
  
- C. Relevant Data Sources
  - ASPEN Sports and Activities Ineligibility report
  
- D. Other
  - Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Recommendations on Minimum Standards for Participation in Interscholastic Sports
  - The Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) Report
  - Master Agreement Between the Board of Education and the Howard County Education Association

**VIII. History**

ADOPTED: July 23, 1981

REVIEWED:

MODIFIED:

REVISED: May 9, 1991  
January 28, 1993  
August 22, 1996  
May 25, 2000  
January 27, 2005  
April 25, 2013

EFFECTIVE: July 1, 2013

**ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY FOR HIGH SCHOOL**  
**EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Effective: July 1, 2013

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**I. Definitions**

- A. Fall Sports Season – The Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) August start date until the final date of the county, conference, district, regional, or State tournament.
- B. Winter Sports Season – November 15 until the final date of the local conference, district, regional, or State tournament. When November 15 falls on Sunday, practice will start the preceding Saturday.
- C. Spring Sports Season – March 1 until the final date of the local conference, district, regional, or State tournament. When March 1 falls on Sunday, practice will start the preceding Saturday.

**II. Grade Reporting Periods**

- A. High schools will determine which 10th, 11th, and 12th graders are eligible in the fall by using the grades of the final marking period of the preceding June. All schools will determine winter and spring eligibility by the grades earned on the designated date closest to November 15 and March 1.
- B. Without regard to their middle school grades, all incoming 9th graders are eligible for fall extracurricular activities.

**III. Summer School**

- A. For calculating eligibility, review and original credit course grades earned in summer school will be used in lieu of the grade earned in the same course during the fourth marking period.
  - 1. A student may enroll in an original credit course in summer school for the purpose of receiving full credit for the course if he/she has completed the eighth grade and has never been enrolled in the course or has previously been enrolled in the course and failed more than two quarters.
  - 2. A student may enroll in a review credit course in summer school if he/she has completed the course and passed at least two quarters.

- B. Determining eligibility using summer school grades:
  - 1. Substitute grades earned in summer school (review and/or original credit).
  - 2. Compute new grade point average and check for no more than one failing grade.
  - 3. Students become eligible if the new grade point average (GPA) is 2.0 or above and no more than one failing grade remains.

#### **IV. Transfer Students**

- A. Within County  
A student transferring to a different school within Howard County will use the grade report from the prior school to determine eligibility for that specific activity.
- B. Out of County  
A student moving into the county who wishes to participate in extracurricular activities must meet the eligibility requirements of this policy. The student's eligibility will be determined by the student's grades during the last full quarter of attendance in his/her previous school.

#### **V. Special Education Students**

- A. If a special education student becomes academically ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities, the student and/or his/her parent/guardian may contact the principal of the school and request convening an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team meeting to determine whether or not the student's ineligibility is the direct result of not being provided a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and that the failure to provide FAPE led to the student being academically ineligible.
- B. The IEP team will convene at the earliest possible date following receipt of a request.
  - 1. In the case of athletic activities, the student may begin practicing with the team once the request is made to the principal. The student may not participate in any games until the IEP team determines that ineligibility should be waived.
  - 2. In the case of nonathletic activities, the student may begin participating in preparatory activities (e.g., practices, rehearsals, etc.) once the request is made to the principal. The student may not participate in special events associated with that activity (e.g., performances, field trips, etc.) until the IEP team determines that ineligibility should be waived.

- C. The IEP team will make a determination as to whether or not the student's academic ineligibility is a direct result of not being provided a FAPE and the failure to provide FAPE led to the students being academically ineligible. The IEP team will notify the principal immediately of the determination.
  - 1. If the IEP team determines that the student's ineligibility is due to not being provided FAPE and that the failure to provide FAPE led to the student being academically ineligible the principal will grant a waiver and declare the student eligible. The student may begin full participation in the extracurricular activities immediately.
  - 2. If the IEP team determines that FAPE was provided, then the student is not eligible to continue further participation in extracurricular activities.

## **VI. Students with a 504 Plan**

- A. If a student with a 504 Plan becomes academically ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities, the student and/or his/her parent/guardian may contact the principal of the school to request that the local 504 team convene to determine whether a failure to provide the student FAPE led to the student's ineligibility.
- B. The 504 team will convene at the earliest possible date following receipt of a request.
  - 1. In the case of athletic activities, the student may begin practicing with the team once the request is made to the principal. The student may not participate in any games until and unless the 504 team determines that the ineligibility should be waived.
  - 2. In the case of nonathletic activities, the student may begin participating in the preparatory activities (e.g., practices, rehearsals, etc.) once the request is made to the principal. The student may not participate in special events associated with the activity (e.g., performances, field trips, etc.) until the 504 team determines that the ineligibility should be waived.
- C. The 504 team will make a determination as to whether a failure to provide the student FAPE led to the student's ineligibility and will notify the principal immediately of that determination.
  - 1. If the 504 team determines that FAPE was not provided and led to the student being ineligible, the principal will grant the waiver and declare the student eligible. The student may begin full participation in extracurricular activities immediately.
  - 2. If the 504 team determines that ineligibility is not a result of a failure to provide FAPE, the student is not eligible to continue further participation.



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