

High School Athletics Program Recommended Enhancements

Following are recommendations of the Extracurricular Activities (ECA) Workgroup for MCPS Athletics, as the final remaining actions from a three-year analysis of program operations. All recommendations were approved by Dr. Donna Redmond Jones, associate superintendent, on January 16, 2026, following approval by high school principals at the Montgomery County Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MCPSSAA) meeting on January 15, 2026.

Recommendation #1 - Transition Coed Volleyball to Boys' Junior Varsity Volleyball starting with the Spring 2027 season. Athletic directors unanimously support, 25-0. High school principals (MCPSSAA) unanimously support, 25-0.

Rationale:

- MCPS may be the only district in the country offering coed volleyball
- Girls from the fall season who participate may be violation of MPSSAA regulations and have a second season of participation
- Coed volleyball coaches who coach girls' volleyball in the fall season are potentially coaching students out-of-season
- Boys are split between boys' and coed volleyball, creating a competitive imbalance
- This will provide equitable opportunities for girls and boys in the sport of volleyball, which is the most requested new sport among middle school students
- Align with the anticipated addition of volleyball to the middle school athletics program

Actions:

- Transition coed volleyball stipend to a junior varsity boys' volleyball stipend
- Modification of the varsity and JV boys' volleyball stipends, to align with the varsity girls' volleyball stipends

Timeline:

- Changes become effective with the Spring 2027 season

Recommendation #2 - Discontinue gymnastics as an interscholastic sport, following the Spring 2026 season. Athletic directors strongly support: 22 in favor, 3 abstentions. High school principals (MCPSSAA) strongly support: 21 in favor, 4 abstentions.

Rationale:

- Once a sport offered across multiple counties, MCPS is the last offering the sport
- 7 schools offer gymnastics - B-CC, Blair, Blake, Walter Johnson, Sherwood, Springbrook, Walt Whitman
- Participation - under 100 students in 2025
- Concerns with finding qualified coaches

- Equipment - concerns with high costs, storage, set-up
- Facility concerns

Actions:

- Eliminate the gymnastics stipend and realign funding to provide a new sport activity for girls, with a goal of offering the activity at all MCPS comprehensive high schools

Timeline:

- The Spring 2026 season would be the last season for gymnastics

Recommendation #3 - Pilot [STUNT](#) at 13 MCPS high schools for Spring 2026, as a potential new sport for female students during the spring season. Athletic directors unanimously support, 25-0. High school principals (MCPSSAA) unanimously support, 25-0.

Rationale:

- STUNT is a rapidly growing activity at the high school and collegiate level
- STUNT was approved as a championship sport at the Division I, II, and III levels, at the NCAA National Convention, on January 16, 2026
- The activity would initially draw from students participating and/or interested in the sports of cheerleading & pompons. Cheerleading is one of the most diverse sports in MCPS.
- Aligns with increasing interest in cheerleading at the middle school level

Actions:

- Utilize current gymnastics stipends at 13 of the 18 schools without teams to fund the pilot season
- Pilot schools - Wootton, Quince Orchard, John F. Kennedy, Seneca Valley, Damascus, Clarksburg, Albert Einstein, Watkins Mill, Northwood, Paint Branch, Northwest, Magruder, Winston Churchill
- Purchase mats for schools
- Recruit and train officials/judges
- Conduct an abbreviated season - 3 week preseason, 3-4 week regular season
- Assess and evaluate the success of the sport, based on student participation and feedback across stakeholders

Timeline:

- The Spring 2026 season would be a pilot season for STUNT. An analysis would occur following the pilot season, to determine if the activity is appropriate.

Data Points:

- Overall participation
- Number of teams

- Demographics
- Officials - number and association structure

Recommendation #4 - Add junior varsity girls' flag football to the fall season. Athletic directors unanimously support, 25-0. High school principals (MCPSSAA) unanimously support, 25-0.

Rationale:

- The girls' flag football program has thrived during the first two years of implementation
- There are participation numbers across the program that would support the addition of junior varsity girls' flag football
- The MPSSAA is anticipated to elevate girls' flag football to a fully sanctioned championship sport, starting with the Fall 2026 season
- It is anticipated that the middle school athletics program will add flag football during the 2026-27 school year

Actions:

- Add junior varsity girls' flag football to the fall season sport offerings for MCPS Athletics

Timeline:

- Fall 2026 would be the first season of junior varsity girls' flag football

Action - Amplify Allied softball during the Spring 2026 season, to maximize participation, with the goal of increasing the number of schools fielding teams.

Rationale:

- Participation has dropped to 9 schools. MCPS would like to field a corollary sport at all 25 comprehensive high schools, similar to pickleball (fall) and bocce (winter)

Allied Softball Promotion Actions:

- Coach overview - recruiting
- Sports Insight video - corollary sports
- SALC promotional video
- High school special education PLC promotion
- Adapted PE promotion
- One-page flyer and letter
- 1 on 1 accommodations are available - process confirmed and communicated

Data Point:

- Number of teams - goal to expand to 12 or 13 schools for Spring 2026

