



September 23, 2021



Re: Weight Certification Information

Dear Wrestling Parent/Guardian:

The following information describes the weight certification procedures that will be used to determine a safe minimum wrestling weight class for Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) wrestlers. Additional information and forms referred to in this letter are available from the coach or on the [MCPS Athletics Webpage](#).

Structure and Concept

The MCPS weight certification program is structured on regulations and guidelines established by the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS), the NFHS Medicine Advisory Committee, and the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA). An essential component of the program is establishing a safe minimum weight class for wrestlers using hydration testing and body fat analyses. Briefly, the current weight, height, and level of body fat is determined for each wrestler, and calculations determine the wrestler's weight if he reduced to a 7% level of body fat (12% for females). The weight that corresponds to a 7% level of body fat is used to determine a safe minimum weight class.

Regulations

As prescribed by NFHS and MPSSAA regulations, Maryland public school wrestlers must have their minimum weight class certified prior to their first match. This process involves two steps. First, each wrestler must have a hydration test and body fat analysis, which are used to determine what the wrestler would weigh if he achieved a 7% level of body fat (12% for females) in a properly hydrated state. Second, a Licensed Health Care Provider (LHCP) signature is required to certify the wrestler's minimum weight class, based on the results of the body fat analysis. Wrestlers may not recertify to a lower weight class after their first match.

Measuring Body Fat: The Tanita TBF-300WA

MCPS will use the Tanita TBF-300WA (300WA) to conduct body fat analyses of MCPS wrestlers. The 300WA is used to conduct similar tests on wrestlers in many states, and is endorsed by the NCAA as a means of calculating safe minimum wrestling weights. The 300WA operates under the principle of bio-impedance. Simply explained, the 300WA sends a very small electric signal through the body, and the amount of time it takes for the charge to complete its circuit determines the amount of body fat. The quicker the circuit is completed, the less body fat. The test takes approximately 10 seconds to complete. The individual simply steps on the scale, a small signal is sent, and the measurement is taken.

Importance of Proper Hydration

To ensure validity and accuracy, an individual must be properly hydrated prior to the body fat analysis. Otherwise, the test will indicate a higher level of fat than actually exists. Briefly, if a body is not properly hydrated, the electric signal is artificially slowed, resulting in a false reading. Accordingly, the hydration level of each wrestler will be determined immediately prior to the body-fat analysis. A wrestler must “pass” the hydration test before undergoing the body fat analysis. A sample of the wrestler’s urine is needed to conduct the test. It will be briefly examined exclusively to determine the level of hydration, and immediately discarded.

It is not difficult for individuals to determine whether they are properly hydrated. Briefly, the clearer the urine, the greater the probability that they are properly hydrated. However, there are a number of factors that can influence an incorrect reading, including coffee, chocolate, and heavy exercise in the hours prior to the test. An information sheet is available on the MCPS Athletics Website or from the coach regarding proper hydration, and recommendations on how wrestlers can ensure that they are properly hydrated for their body fat analyses.

MCPS Will Sponsor Body Fat Analyses/Weight Certification

MCPS will sponsor hydration tests and body fat analyses for wrestlers at no cost to parents. The tests will be conducted on November 6, 2021, at Clarksburg High School, with make-up tests on December 4, 2021. Wrestlers from the 25 respective MCPS high schools are asked to arrive for the test according to the schedule indicated on the *Weight Certification Schedule* available on the MCPS athletics website. Wrestlers should wear gym shorts and t-shirts for the analysis. Parents may accompany their child, but it is not required. Once a wrestler has successfully undergone the body fat analysis, a minimum weight class will be determined and verified by a LHCP present at the test site. The weight certification process is then completed. MCPS will retain a copy of the weight certification document.

Pertinent Forms/MCPS Athletics Website

All pertinent forms and additional information regarding the MCPS Wrestling Weight Certification Program are available on the [MCPS Athletics webpage](#), or from the coach. Pertinent forms and additional information include *Weight Certification Schedule*, *Parent Permission Form*, and *Frequently Asked Questions: A Guide for Parents and Wrestlers*, and *Wrestlers’ Weight Certification Hydration Tip Sheet*.

Parent Consent

Parents are asked to do two things. First, parents are asked to provide permission to allow their child to have their weight certified by MCPS. MCPS will not perform the weight certification process/body fat analysis unless the wrestler has parent permission. The wrestler must bring the signed parent permission form and a student ID to the testing facility. Second, parents will need to have their child at the testing site (Clarksburg High School) at the time designated on the *Weight Certification Schedule* sheet (available on the MCPS Athletics webpage). Since many schools have arranged for transportation, it is recommended that parents call the wrestling coach or athletics specialist (AD) to see if transportation arrangements have been made.

Determining the Minimum Certified Weight Class

The attending LHCP will certify each wrestler at the weight class that corresponds to the wrestler's projected weight at a 7% level of body fat (12% for females). In many instances, a wrestler's projected weight at a 7% level of body fat will fall between two weight classes. If the projected weight is within two percent (2%) of the lower weight class, the attending LHCP may "round down" and certify the wrestler at the lower weight class. Otherwise, the LHCP will "round up" and certify the wrestler at the higher of the two weight classes. This decision will be based on the judgment of the attending LHCP. Wrestlers may not certify for a weight class more than 2% below their projected weight at a 7% level of body fat (12% for females).

Appeals and Independent Testing

Parents who choose to appeal the MCPS-sponsored certification must do so before the first match. There are two circumstances for an appeal. First, if the attending LHCP chose not to "round down" and certify a wrestler to the lower of two weight classes, and the wrestler's projected weight at a 7% level of body fat (12% for females) is within 2% of the lower weight class, the wrestler's family LHCP may do so if he or she feels that it is safe for the wrestler. This certification from the family LHCP must be submitted in writing, with acknowledgement of the results of the body fat analysis. Weight certification below a 2% margin will not be allowed.

Second, if a parent wishes to appeal the results of the MCPS-sponsored weight certification using the Tanita TBF-300WA, or if a parent chooses to forego the MCPS sponsored weight certification and have an independent body fat analysis for his or her child, then the parent may seek an alternative test at the parents' expense. MCPS has arranged through Maryland Orthopedic Specialists (MOS) to handle appeals or original non-MCPS sponsored weight certifications. MOS uses the Tanita TBF-300WA (the same instrument used in the MCPS assessments). Weights calculated to correspond to a 7% level of body fat conducted through MOS may not be "rounded" down to achieve certification. Computer generated results of the independent body fat analysis, including results of the hydration test, must be submitted.

Third, a parent may elect to have a body-fat analysis conducted by a private organization other than MCPS or MOS. This option will require use of either a Dual Energy X-ray Absorptiometer (DEXA Scan) or Hydrostatic Weighing. Like with MOS, doctors may not "round down" to achieve certification at a lower weight class.

Nutrition Education

An extremely important component of the MCPS and MPSSAA weight certification program is to provide nutrition information to wrestlers, parents, and coaches. Medical evidence supports that reducing weight to a 7% level of body fat (12% for females) is the minimum to which a high school athlete should aspire. However, the manner in which wrestlers reduce and maintain weight is a potential matter of concern. The nutrition information provided on the MPSSAA web site (www.mpssaa.org) is adopted from the California High School Athletic Association's nutrition education program. The information is specifically designed to provide wrestlers and parents with information on how wrestlers may attain and maintain an appropriate body fat level while maintaining maximum strength and energy. Wrestlers and parents are strongly encouraged to access this information on the MPSSAA web site (www.mpssaa.org).

Please remember that reducing to a 7% level of body fat (12% females) is not necessarily a recommendation, but rather, it is a minimum. In fact, the large majority of high school wrestlers compete at a weight above a 7% level of body fat. In no way is MCPS recommending or endorsing that a wrestler reduce to a weight that corresponds to a 7% level of body fat. However, if in the opinion of a medical doctor and a wrestler's parents a 7% level of body fat is safe and appropriate for a wrestler, then the wrestler may reduce to a corresponding weight classification.

Thank you in advance for supporting our efforts to attain the highest degree of safety for your child.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Sullivan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

Jeffrey K. Sullivan, Ed.D.
Director, Systemwide Athletics