

Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall, Board Member

SUBJECT: MID-SEASON TRANSFERS FOR INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL, & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: SAFE, HEALTHY, & SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

All Miami-Dade Public Schools (MDCPS) students who are willing, able, trained, and skilled should have a fair and equitable opportunity to enjoy the educational benefits associated with participating in interscholastic sports. Benefits include moral reasoning (caring versus fairness), socialization, striving for excellence, hard work, dedication, competition, health and fitness, and leadership traits and commitment to a goal. These benefits are inextricably linked to our nation's mainstream cultural values. A student-athlete's participation in sports can be critical in their intellectual and physical development, but this development can be stunted or curtailed if a student-athlete is unable to participate in the sport of their choice because of rules or procedures that may be unfairly or inconsistently applied.

On March 15, 2017, Board Policy 2431, *Interscholastic Athletics*, was revised to reflect new statutory requirements related to the right of high school students to participate in interscholastic athletics immediately upon transfer from one school to another under certain conditions. Policy 2431 is intended to promote the Legislature's intent to ensure that students are not unfairly restricted by transfer rules and that parental choice is promoted in eligibility requirements for participation in interscholastic activities.

MDCPS student-athletes who have met academic and conduct eligibility requirements contained in Board Policy 5845, *Student Activities*, Board Policy 5500, *Student Conduct and Discipline*, and those of the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) and the Greater Miami Athletic Conference (GMAC) Bylaws, are permitted to transfer to another MDCPS school and participate in sports immediately in a variety of circumstances that were not previously allowed.

However, pursuant to Florida Statutes, Section 1006.15, a student may not participate in a sport if the student participated in that same sport at another school during that school year, unless the student meets one of the following criteria:

Dependent children of active-duty military personnel whose move resulted from military orders;

- a. Children who have been relocated due to a foster care placement in a different school zone.
- b. Children who move due to a court-ordered change in custody due to separation or divorce, or the serious illness or death of a custodial parent.
- c. As authorized for good cause in district or charter school policy.

Board Policy 2431 authorizes the following good cause transfers:

- a. students who have fully and completely moved to a new residence in Miami-Dade County from another Florida county or another state;
- b. students who are involuntary reassigned by the Board during the school year to a different school for reasons other than athletic or disciplinary;
- c. students who transfer within the first twenty (20) days of the school year to magnet schools or programs that are subject to specific admissions requirements and/or random lotteries that are governed by Policy 2370, Magnet Programs/Schools;
- d. all good cause mid-season transfer eligibility requests must be reviewed and approved by the Superintendent's Athletic Eligibility Transfer Review Committee (AETRC) prior to engaging in athletic participation.

These grounds for a transfer are reasonable and acceptable and have not presented any significant issues in their application.

Nevertheless, the current mid-season transfer requests for good cause are limited and often result in unfair or inequitable application. Additionally, the AETRC often lacks proper guidance in determining what constitutes "good cause" in the application of the transfer rules. Therefore, the transfer process, including the "good cause" criteria applied to student-athletes mid-season transfer requests, should be further evaluated by MDCPS.

Under F.S. 1006.15, MDCPS has some latitude in defining the grounds and process upon which "good cause" should be determined and granted. Such grounds should be perceived as consistent, fair, and equitable for all participants in the GMAC, including student-athletes who participate on behalf of MDCPS schools, charter schools, and private schools, as well as home school student-athletes.

As such, it is appropriate for the Superintendent to consult with MDCPS administrators and coaches, review Policy 2431, and determine if the grounds and process for good cause transfer requests should be revised so that such determinations can be more manageable, consistent, fair, and equitable for all student-athletes.

This item has been approved by the School Board Attorney's Office as to form and legal sufficiency.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY DR. DOROTHY
BENDROSS-MINDINGALL:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent to:

1. consult with administrators and coaches involved in the administration of policies governing MDCPS interscholastic athletics;
2. review Policy 2431 to determine if the criteria for good cause transfer requests, including mid-season transfers, should be revised to make determinations more consistent, fair, and equitable to all GMAC participants;
3. report back to the Board by December 14, 2022; and
4. if deemed appropriate, initiate rulemaking to revise Policy 2431 to incorporate any recommendations that result from the consultation and review.