



MLDS CENTER

Maryland Longitudinal Data System

Address 550 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
Phone 410-706-2085
Email mlds.center@maryland.gov
Website www.MLDSCenter.org

Senate Bill 127
Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center – Student FAFSA Data – Reporting Requirement

Testimony for the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
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Currently, Education Article § 7-212(c), Annotated Code of Maryland, requires each county board of education to report to the Maryland Longitudinal Data System (MLDS) Center the number of students who completed and submitted the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the number who did not complete and submit the FAFSA, and the number who completed the FAFSA by the deadline for eligibility for State financial aid. In turn, the MLDS Center is required to compile and report that information at the high school level to specified committees in the General Assembly.

This bill eliminates the requirement for the county boards of education to report FAFSA completions to the MLDS Center. Instead, the bill requires the MLDS Center to report the information to the General Assembly using student FAFSA completion data provided by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) from the federal Student Aid Internet Gateway and collected by MHEC's Office of Student Financial Assistance.

With access to student level FAFSA completion data, the MLDS Center can incorporate FAFSA completion data into the MLDS, and match those data against data already submitted to the Center by MSDE. This approach will allow for more in-depth analysis. For example, in addition to reporting FAFSA completion rates by county, the Center will also be able to report FAFSA completion by race, ethnicity, gender and socioeconomic status. Accordingly, the changes proposed by this bill not only eliminate a cumbersome reporting requirement for county boards of education, it also will provide more in depth information for policy makers.

The MLDS Governing Board fully supports the reporting changes established by this bill and asks the committee to return a favorable report on SB 127.

Respectfully submitted by: Ross Goldstein, Executive Director