

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
Third Reader - Revised

Senate Bill 595

(Senator Rosapepe)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Ways and Means

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Education - Middle School Students - Awarding of Credit

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This bill requires a local board of education to award credit to a middle school student for any course for which a high school student would be awarded credit if the middle school student meets the same requirements as the high school student.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2016.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures for State education aid decrease beginning in FY 2021 to the extent that students graduate from high school early due to being awarded high school credit as a middle school student. Any such decrease cannot be reliably estimated but is anticipated to be minimal. Revenues are not affected.

**Local Effect:** Local school system revenues from State education aid, and corresponding expenditures, decrease beginning in FY 2021 to the extent that students graduate from high school early due to being awarded high school credit as a middle school student. The amount of any decrease and the distribution among school systems cannot be reliably estimated but is anticipated to be minimal. Local boards of education can change their policies of awarding credit to middle school students as specified using existing resources.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## Analysis

### Current Law/Background:

#### *Admissions Standards*

Each public institution of higher education must accept for admission any graduate of an approved public high school who (1) is certified by their high school principal, based on standards of the State Board of Education, as qualified to pursue a course of study at the institution or (2) meets the admission standards of the institution.

A public institution of higher education may accept, for special admission, any student who has completed the seventh grade and has a scholastic aptitude test combined score of 1,200 or an equivalent score on a nationally accepted college entrance examination.

Any such special admission does not affect the State or local share of aid provided to the secondary school in which the student is enrolled.

#### *Mathematics Courses Required*

Chapter 533 of 2013 requires, beginning with the grade 9 class of 2014, each student to enroll in a mathematics course in each year of high school that the student attends. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) was required to adopt regulations that establish the mathematics and math-related courses that fulfill the requirements of Chapter 533, which may include math-related career and technology courses.

According to the Maryland Code of Regulations (COMAR) (13A.03.02.03), beginning with students entering grade 9 in the 2014-2015 school year, each student must enroll in a mathematics course in each year of high school that the student attends, up to a maximum of four years of attendance, unless in the fifth or sixth year a mathematics course is needed to meet a graduation requirement. Selected mathematics and mathematics-related courses must include the following: mathematics transition course; algebra II; precalculus; discrete mathematics; linear algebra; probability and statistics; AP computer science; AP calculus (A/B); AP calculus (B/C); or a computer science course that is not AP computer science if the local school system determines the course meets the mathematics standards required by the regulation.

#### *Other High School Diploma Requirements*

According to COMAR, to be awarded a high school diploma, a student must be enrolled in a Maryland public school system and have earned a minimum of 21 credits in specified subjects as detailed in **Exhibit 1**.

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**Exhibit 1**  
**Distribution of Credits Required to Graduate High School**

<b><u>Subject</u></b>	<b><u>Credits</u></b>
English	4.0
Fine Arts	1.0
Mathematics <sup>1</sup>	3.0
Physical Education	0.5
Health Education	0.5
Science	3.0
Social Studies	3.0
Technology Education	1.0
World Language <i>or</i> American Sign Language <i>or</i> Advanced Technology Education <sup>2</sup>	2.0
Electives <sup>2</sup>	3.0

Note: The credits must meet other requirements specified in the Code of Maryland Regulations. Elective programs and instruction must be developed at the discretion of the local school system, open to enrollment for all students, and must focus on in-depth study in required subject areas, exploration, or application and integration of what has been learned. In addition, all students must complete a locally designed high school program of environmental literacy approved by the State Superintendent of Schools.

<sup>1</sup> However, beginning with students entering grade 9 in the 2014-2015 school year, each student must enroll in a mathematics course in each year of high school that the student attends, up to a maximum of four years of attendance, unless in the fifth or sixth year a mathematics course is needed to meet a graduation requirement.

<sup>2</sup> Alternatively, a student may successfully complete a State-approved career and technology program for four credits and one credit in an elective.

Source: Code of Maryland Regulations; Department of Legislative Services

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*Awarding Credit for Online and Correspondence Courses*

According to COMAR, consistent with local school system policy and procedure, credit may be given for correspondence courses and for MSDE-approved online courses. If credit is to be applied toward minimum graduation requirements, the correspondence course or the MSDE-approved online course must be provided by the local school system.

## *Full-time Equivalent Enrollment and State Education Aid*

According to COMAR, in general, a student may be counted as one full-time equivalent student if the student is between the ages of 5 and 21; is enrolled in a regular public school day program, grades 1 through 12 (or the equivalent); and is present at least one day in September and has not been determined to have withdrawn on or before September 30. There are stipulations for students with disabilities who are enrolled but not attending. A student may be counted as one-fourth of a full-time equivalent student for each course taken carrying one unit of credit or fraction of a unit of credit up to a maximum of one full-time student under specified conditions.

Most of the State's primary and secondary education aid formulas are allocated to local school systems based in part on the full-time equivalent enrollment of all students enrolled in the public schools as well as students with disabilities, limited English proficiency, and eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

**State Expenditures:** Under the bill, a student still needs to complete the credits required by regulations and enroll in a mathematics course in each year of high school that the student attends as required by current law; however, a middle school student will be able to earn high school credit as a middle school student. For example, a middle school student who earns two credits at the high school level in a world foreign language in middle school will not be required to complete an additional two credits as a high school student in order to graduate. Thus, some students may be able to graduate from high school early due to earning credits as a middle school student.

To the extent that students graduate from high school early, State aid for local school systems decreases since State aid formulas are allocated in part based on enrollment. The number of students who will graduate early cannot be reliably estimated; however, the number is not anticipated to be significant.

**Local Fiscal Effect:** As explained above, some students may graduate from high school early under the bill. To the extent students graduate early, State education aid decreases for the local school systems from which the students graduate early. The overall fiscal impact cannot be reliably estimated but is anticipated to be minimal, although it could be significant for some school systems in some years.

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## **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Higher Education Commission, Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center, Department of Legislative Services

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