

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2017 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

House Bill 75 (Delegate Grammer)  
Ways and Means

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**Education - Graduation Requirements - Fine Arts**

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This bill allows the fine arts public high school graduation requirement to be satisfied by completing one credit in computer science, multimedia, or computer programming.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2017.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. Expanding the type of courses that qualify for the fine arts credit graduation requirement does not affect State finances.

**Local Effect:** None. Expanding the type of courses that qualify for the fine arts credit graduation requirement does not affect local finances. However, under the bill, students may take more computer science, multimedia, or computer programming courses (if offered by their local school systems) and fewer visual arts, music, theater, and dance courses, which may affect local course schedules and teacher staffing.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law/Background:** With the advice of the State Superintendent of Schools, the State Board of Education must establish minimum requirements for issuing certificates and diplomas by public and private high schools. The promotion of students in a public school and graduation from a public high school must be in accordance with (1) policies established by the local board of education and (2) the rules and regulations of the State board. Each student who graduates from a public high school must receive the same type

of diploma or certificate, regardless of the high school attended or the course taken. The diploma or certificate must state that the student has completed a program of studies satisfactorily in accordance with the requirements of the State board.

### *High School Diploma Requirements*

According to the Code of Maryland Regulations, 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**

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Credits</u>
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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Specifically, under current law, the one credit in fine arts must be in visual arts, music, theater, dance, or a combination of these.

The Maryland State Department of Education advises that computer science, multimedia, and computer programming courses are not available in all high schools in the State.

**Local Effect:** Under the bill, students may choose to take more computer science, multimedia, or computer programming courses (if offered by their local school systems) and fewer visual arts, music, theater, and dance courses. The bill does not require local school systems to offer computer science, multimedia, or computer programming courses; thus local school systems teacher staffing, course scheduling, and finances are not directly impacted by the bill. However, local school systems may choose to change their staffing and course scheduling.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 1, 2017  
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