

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2018 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 479 (Senator Rosapepe, *et al.*)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

High School Credit for College Courses Act of 2018

This bill requires a local board of education to award a high school student *elective credit* for successful completion of any specified college course for which the student receives college credit. A local board of education must award *graduation credit* for a college course unless the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has determined that the course does not satisfy a graduation requirement. The bill also establishes procedures that an institution of postsecondary education and MSDE must follow to certify a course to meet a graduation requirement. MSDE must maintain a publicly available list on its website of college courses that satisfy specific high school graduation requirements. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2018.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MSDE can likely implement the bill using existing resources, as discussed below. Higher education finances are not materially affected. No effect on revenues.

Local Effect: Local government finances are not materially affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary:

Specified College Courses

A “college course” is defined as (1) a course taken at an institution of postsecondary education or (2) a course recognized for credit by an institution of postsecondary education in the State through an approved direct credit articulation agreement as defined in State regulation, which references the federal Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.

Process to Certify a Course

The institution of postsecondary education offering the college course must certify to MSDE that the course, in the institution’s professional judgement, meets a specific high school graduation requirement and identify the specific high school graduation requirement that the course is designed to meet. MSDE has 90 days from receiving such a certification to make its own determination whether the college course meets a specific high school graduation requirement. Unless MSDE determines otherwise within 90 days, the course is deemed to satisfy the high school graduation requirement.

If MSDE determines the college course does not meet a specific high school graduation requirement, MSDE must identify (1) specific changes in the college course that would be necessary to meet the specific graduation requirement and (2) the process that must be followed to make the changes to the college course that are necessary to meet the specific graduation requirement.

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.

Public High School Diploma Requirements

According to 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**.

Exhibit 1
Distribution of Credits Required to Graduate High School

| <u>Subject</u> | <u>Credits</u> |
|---|----------------|
| English | 4.0 |
| Fine Arts | 1.0 |
| Mathematics ¹ | 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 ² | 2.0 |
| Electives ² | 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, be open to enrollment for all students, and 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.

¹However, 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.

²Alternatively, 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

Institution of Postsecondary Education

“Institution of postsecondary education” is defined as a school or other institution that offers an educational program in the State for individuals who are at least 16 years old and who have graduated from or left elementary or secondary school. “Institution of postsecondary education” does not include (1) any adult education, evening high school, or high school equivalence program conducted by a public school system of the State or (2) any apprenticeship or on-the-job training program subject to approval by the Apprenticeship and Training Council.

Specifically, “institution of postsecondary education” includes the following types of public and private institutions: four-year institutions of higher education; community colleges; and private career schools.

Private Career School

A “private career school” is defined in statute as “a privately owned and privately operated institution of postsecondary education other than an institution of higher education that furnishes or offers to furnish programs, whether or not requiring a payment of tuition or fee, for the purpose of training, retraining, or upgrading individuals for gainful employment as skilled or semiskilled workers or technicians in recognized occupations or in new and emerging occupations.”

To operate in Maryland, a private career school must be approved by the Maryland Higher Education Commission; some are also accredited by national associations.

Private career school programs generally provide training in one of the following areas: allied health, audio visual methods, cosmetology, barbering, bartending, computers, massage, Montessori Teacher methods, real estate, truck driving, or mechanics. There are also programs in cooking, dog grooming, dry cleaning, maritime studies, photography, polygraph, travel, and trade schools.

Courses at private career schools are generally offered by the clock hour rather than by the credit hour.

High School Credit for College Courses

There are several programs operated by local school systems in which high school students earn high school and/or college credit for college courses. These programs include dual enrollment, early college, and P-TECH (Pathways in Technology Early College High). In these programs, local school systems direct students to take college courses that meet high school graduation requirements and other requirements of the program. Students can also enroll in college courses independent from the local school system. It is unknown if any local school system has a set policy on the awarding of high school credit for college courses taken without prior local school system approval.

High school students may want to take college courses for high school credit for a variety of reasons. Reasons may include the following: taking courses that are not available at the student’s high school; attempting to graduate from high school early; interest in taking more challenging course work; recovering high school credits due to failing a course or illness; and addressing scheduling conflicts.

State Expenditures: Assuming that only a few requests for high school graduation credit for college courses are made each year, MSDE can approve courses using existing resources. To the extent that more requests for high school graduation credit approval are made than anticipated, MSDE expenditures increase to hire additional program specialists to develop scoring rubrics for courses, implement the multi-step review of courses and revisions within specific timelines, and maintain the list of approved courses. For informational purposes, hiring a contractual educational specialist costs approximately \$71,200 annually.

This estimate assumes that the list of approved college courses that MSDE must maintain only consists of courses for which a student has previously requested approval. The development of a list of courses independent of requests increases expenditures by an unknown amount.

Public four-year institutions of higher education and Baltimore City Community College can provide the required certification of college courses taken by high school students to MSDE using existing resources. Any changes to a college course to make it meet a high school graduation requirement could increase expenditures; however, institutions of higher education are not required to make any such changes.

Local Fiscal Effect: Local school systems can award high school credit for college courses as required by the bill using existing resources.

Local community colleges can provide the required certification of college courses taken by high school students to MSDE using existing resources. Any changes to a college course to make it meet a high school graduation requirement could increase expenditures; however, institutions of higher education are not required to make any such changes.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 940 (Delegate Patterson, *et al.*) - Ways and Means.

Information Source(s): Montgomery County; Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Higher Education Commission; Baltimore City Community College; Morgan State University; St. Mary's College of Maryland; Maryland Independent College and University Association; Department of Legislative Services

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