

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

Senate Bill 601

(Senator Brooks)

Education, Energy, and the Environment

Ways and Means

Education - Dependent Children of Service Members - Advance Enrollment
Procedures

This bill requires local school systems to allow a dependent child of a service member to apply for advance enrollment in a public school and specifies requirements for advance enrollment procedures. The Secretary of Veterans and Military Families, in consultation with specified entities, must publish and maintain information on (1) advance enrollment procedures and (2) any assistance and services available to service members regarding advance enrollment. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not materially affect governmental operations or finances.

Local Effect: Local school systems can implement the bill's requirements with existing resources. No effect on revenues.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The bill alters the definition of "service member" to include members of the uniformed services and members of a reserve component, each as defined under federal law, on active duty orders.

To advance enroll a child, a service member must provide to the local superintendent military orders showing that the service member will be stationed in the State during the current or immediately following school year. The local superintendent must establish a

remote registration process to allow for advance enrollment. The process may not charge a fee or require the service member or other parent or guardian or the dependent child to physically appear at a location within the county to complete any part of the advance enrollment. Advance enrollment can be finalized within 10 days of the published arrival date if the service member provides the local school with (1) satisfactory evidence of the child's dependent status; (2) a copy of the military orders; and (3) proof of residence in the county.

A dependent child of a service member who advance enrolls may remain enrolled in school until completion of the highest grade level available at the school, subject to a case-by-case review of the local school system. A local school system must prioritize a dependent child's continuity in education when making determinations regarding school enrollment.

The bill includes specific protections for disabled students of service members who advance enroll and requires that a dependent child of a service member must have access to all academic courses and programs, as specified.

Current Law: A service member is defined as an active duty member of the U.S. Armed Forces and includes a member of the National Guard on active duty orders.

Under federal law, "uniformed services" means, the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, Coast Guard, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Public Health Service. A "reserve component" means the Army National Guard, Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, Coast Guard Reserve, or the Reserve Corps of the Public Health Service.

A local superintendent must allow a dependent child of a service member who is relocating to the State on military orders and is not residing in the county during the enrollment period to apply for enrollment in the same manner and at the same time as residents of the county. Within 10 days of the published arrival date on the service member's military orders, the service member must provide the school with (1) satisfactory evidence of the child's dependent status; (2) a copy of the military orders; and (3) proof of residence in the county. The service member may use specified addresses (including temporary military housing) as proof of residence.

Interstate Compact

Since 2010, Maryland has been a member of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, which addresses enrollment of dependents of members of the uniformed services when the service member is under active orders. The purpose of the compact is to remove barriers to educational success imposed on children of military families because of frequent moves and deployment by their parents. Among other things,

it seeks to (1) facilitate the timely enrollment of children of military families and (2) facilitate the student placement process.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: HB 596 (Delegate Patterson, *et al.*) - Ways and Means.

Information Source(s): Maryland School for the Deaf; Maryland State Department of Education; St. Mary's County Public Schools; Baltimore County Public Schools; Department of Veterans and Military Families; Baltimore City Public Schools; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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Analysis by: Michael C. Rubenstein

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510