

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2025 Session

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

Senate Bill 8 (Senators Kagan and Ready)  
Education, Energy, and the Environment

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**Education - Maryland Civic Excellence Program - Established**

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This bill establishes the Maryland Civic Excellence Program, beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, as a voluntary program in which local school systems may recognize students and public schools that promote the civic readiness and civic engagement of students in public schools. The bill establishes minimum standards for a participating local school system to (1) award a student a Seal of Civic Excellence and (2) designate a public school as a Center of Civic Excellence. Participating local school systems must recognize students and schools that meet the requirements for the civic engagement program as specified. By July 1, 2027, and each July thereafter, each participating local school system must submit to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) a report on the program based on the most recently completed school year. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.**

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** MSDE can accept reports on the program from participating local school systems using existing resources. No effect on revenues.

**Local Effect:** To the extent that a local school system chooses to participate and a local school wishes to be designated as a Center of Civic Excellence, local expenditures may increase and operations may be affected to achieve such designation. However, any expenditures or operational effects are discretionary. Revenues are not affected.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** Each participating public school system must (1) award a student a Seal of Civic Excellence if the student applies and meets the criteria established by the local school system and (2) designate a public school as a Center of Civic Excellence if the school applies and meets the criteria adopted by the local school system.

### *Seal of Civic Excellence*

At a minimum, a participating local school system's criteria for a Seal of Civic Excellence must require a student to (1) take the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment for Government and meet the requirements for graduation; (2) earn specified grades in specified high school social studies courses; and (3) complete and demonstrate evidence of student service activities, as specified.

A local school system that determines a student has fulfilled the criteria under the program must (1) award the student a Seal of Civic Excellence; (2) record the award on the student's official high school transcript; and (3) recognize the award by awarding a cord or medal or by attaching other insignia on the student's high school diploma.

### *Center of Civic Excellence*

At a minimum, a participating local school system's criteria for a Center of Civic Excellence designation must require a public school to have at least 50% of the students in its graduating class who have earned a Seal of Civic Engagement.

A local school system that determines that a public school has fulfilled the criteria under the program must (1) designate the school as a Center of Civic Excellence and (2) recognize the designation by providing a banner, Governor's citation, or citation from MSDE.

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## Additional Information

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See SB 762 of 2024 and SB 271 of 2023.

**Designated Cross File:** HB 72 (Delegate Vogel) - Ways and Means.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; St. Mary's County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 26, 2025  
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