

Chapter 613

(Senate Bill 324)

AN ACT concerning

Higher Education – Public Senior Higher Education Institutions – Direct Admission Program and Study

FOR the purpose of establishing a direct admission program at participating public senior higher education institutions for certain eligible high school students beginning in a certain academic year; requiring the Maryland Higher Education Commission ~~to administer the direct admission program through a certain financial aid system and the Common Application~~, the State Department of Education, and public senior higher education institutions to establish eligibility requirements for the direct admission program; requiring the ~~State Department of Education~~ and the Commission jointly to establish a process for notifying the Commission of the high school students who have met ~~the college and career readiness standard~~ certain eligibility requirements each school year; requiring the Commission, in consultation with the Department, to conduct a study on administering the direct admission program; and generally relating to a direct admission program and public senior higher education institutions.

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
 Article – Education
 Section 7–205.1(a) and (c)(2)
 Annotated Code of Maryland
 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
 Article – Education
 Section 10–101(a) and (m)
 Annotated Code of Maryland
 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

BY adding to
 Article – Education
 Section 15–101.1
 Annotated Code of Maryland
 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Education

7–205.1.

(a) In this section, “CCR standard” means the college and career readiness standards established under this section.

(c) (2) A student shall meet the CCR standard when the student meets a standard in English language arts, mathematics, and, when practicable, science that enables the student to be successful in entry level credit bearing courses or postsecondary education training at a State community college.

10–101.

(a) In this division the following words have the meanings indicated.

(m) “Public senior higher education institution” means:

(1) The constituent institutions of the University System of Maryland and the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science;

(2) Morgan State University; and

(3) St. Mary’s College of Maryland.

15–101.1.

(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(2) “CCR STANDARD” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 7–205.1(A) OF THIS ARTICLE.

(3) “HIGH SCHOOL” MEANS A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN THE STATE THAT OFFERS A PROGRAM OF INSTRUCTION FOR AT LEAST GRADES 11 AND 12, INCLUDING A VIRTUAL SCHOOL ESTABLISHED UNDER TITLE 7, SUBTITLE 14 OF THIS ARTICLE.

(B) ~~(1)~~ BEGINNING IN THE ~~2027–2028~~ 2028–2029 ACADEMIC YEAR, THERE IS A DIRECT ADMISSION PROGRAM AT PARTICIPATING PUBLIC SENIOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS FOR ELIGIBLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO MEET THE ~~CCR STANDARD ESTABLISHED UNDER § 7–205.1 OF THIS ARTICLE~~ ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS SPECIFIED IN THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ENTERED INTO UNDER SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION.

~~(2) THE COMMISSION SHALL ADMINISTER THE DIRECT ADMISSION PROGRAM THROUGH THE COMMISSION’S FINANCIAL AID SYSTEM AND THE COMMON APPLICATION.~~

(C) (1) THE COMMISSION, THE DEPARTMENT, THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND, MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY, AND ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND SHALL:

(I) ESTABLISH ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DIRECT ADMISSION PROGRAM, WHICH SHALL INCLUDE, AT MINIMUM, COMPLETION OF THE CCR STANDARD AND A MINIMUM HIGH SCHOOL GRADE POINT AVERAGE; AND

(II) ENTER INTO A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING THAT SPECIFIES THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DIRECT ADMISSION PROGRAM.

(2) A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT IS ELIGIBLE FOR DIRECT ADMISSION TO A PARTICIPATING PUBLIC SENIOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION UNDER THIS SECTION IF THE STUDENT:

~~(1)~~ **(I) HAS COMPLETED OR IS EXPECTED TO COMPLETE ALL OF THE PREREQUISITE COURSES THAT ARE REQUIRED BY THE INSTITUTION TO WHICH THE STUDENT APPLIES BY THE STUDENT'S ANTICIPATED MATRICULATION DATE;**

~~(2)~~ **(II) ~~HAS MET THE CCR STANDARD ESTABLISHED BY THE DEPARTMENT~~ MEETS THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS SPECIFIED IN THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING;**

~~(3)~~ **(III) APPLIES FOR ADMISSION TO AN INSTITUTION:**

~~(4)~~ **1. BY THE REQUIRED APPLICATION DEADLINE ESTABLISHED BY THE INSTITUTION; AND**

~~(5)~~ **2. DURING GRADE 12 OF HIGH SCHOOL;**

~~(4)~~ **(IV) MEETS THE OTHER COURSE REQUIREMENTS ESTABLISHED BY THE INSTITUTION, IF ANY; AND**

~~(5)~~ **(V) MEETS THE ADDITIONAL CRITERIA ESTABLISHED BY THE INSTITUTION, IF ANY.**

(D) (1) A PUBLIC SENIOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION MAY CHOOSE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DIRECT ADMISSION PROGRAM UNDER THIS SECTION.

(2) IF A PUBLIC SENIOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION CHOOSES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DIRECT ADMISSION PROGRAM, THE PARTICIPATING INSTITUTION SHALL:

(I) 1. AGREE TO USE THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS SPECIFIED IN THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING;

2. DETERMINE ANY ADDITIONAL COURSES OR CRITERIA NEEDED FOR A STUDENT TO QUALIFY FOR DIRECT ADMISSION TO THE INSTITUTION, IF ANY; AND

~~2.~~ 3. REPORT THE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS UNDER ITEM ~~1~~ 2 OF THIS ITEM TO THE COMMISSION EACH YEAR;

(II) WAIVE THE APPLICATION FEE FOR STUDENTS WHO APPLY FOR DIRECT ADMISSION TO THE INSTITUTION; AND

(III) OFFER CONDITIONAL DIRECT ADMISSION TO EACH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT WHO MEETS THE ELIGIBILITY ~~CRITERIA UNDER SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION~~ REQUIREMENTS SPECIFIED IN THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING.

(3) A PARTICIPATING INSTITUTION MAY:

(I) VERIFY ANY INFORMATION REQUIRED BY THE INSTITUTION AND PROVIDED BY A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT INDICATING ELIGIBILITY FOR DIRECT ADMISSION UNDER THIS SECTION; AND

(II) REVOKE A STUDENT'S OFFER OF DIRECT ADMISSION AT THE INSTITUTION IF THE STUDENT:

1. IS NOT AWARDED A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA BEFORE THE STUDENT'S ANTICIPATED MATRICULATION DATE;

2. ~~HAS NOT MET THE CCR STANDARD ESTABLISHED BY THE DEPARTMENT~~ DOES NOT MEET THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS SPECIFIED IN THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING;

3. ENGAGES IN ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT; OR

4. AFTER THE STUDENT'S APPLICATION IS SUBMITTED, EXPERIENCES SIGNIFICANTLY DECLINING GRADES THAT, UNDER THE

INSTITUTION’S STANDARD APPLICATION PROCESS, WOULD JUSTIFY THE INSTITUTION REVOKING AN OFFER FOR ADMISSION.

(E) THE DEPARTMENT AND THE COMMISSION JOINTLY SHALL ESTABLISH A PROCESS FOR NOTIFYING THE COMMISSION OF EACH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT IN THE STATE WHO HAS MET THE ~~CCR STANDARD~~ ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS SPECIFIED IN THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING EACH SCHOOL YEAR.

(F) ~~(1)~~ THE COMMISSION SHALL ESTABLISH A PROCESS TO OFFER CONDITIONAL DIRECT ADMISSION FROM EACH PARTICIPATING INSTITUTION TO EACH ELIGIBLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ~~BASED ON:~~

~~(i) THE CCR STANDARD DATA PROVIDED BY THE DEPARTMENT UNDER SUBSECTION (E) OF THIS SECTION; AND~~

~~(ii) THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA PROVIDED BY EACH PARTICIPATING INSTITUTION.~~

~~(2) THE COMMISSION SHALL GENERATE A CUSTOMIZED LIST OF PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS FOR EACH ELIGIBLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT THAT INCLUDES THE SPECIFIC PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS FROM WHICH THE STUDENT IS BEING OFFERED CONDITIONAL DIRECT ADMISSION IN THE COMMISSION’S FINANCIAL AID SYSTEM AND THE COMMON APPLICATION.~~

(G) THE PROVISIONS IN THIS SECTION DO NOT GUARANTEE A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ELIGIBLE FOR DIRECT ADMISSION PLACEMENT IN ANY SPECIFIC PROGRAM OFFERED BY THE PARTICIPATING INSTITUTION OR TO ANY SPECIFIC COLLEGE, SCHOOL, OR FUNCTIONAL EQUIVALENT WITHIN THE PARTICIPATING INSTITUTION TO WHICH THE STUDENT APPLIES.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:

(a) The Maryland Higher Education Commission, in collaboration with the State Department of Education, shall study and make recommendations on the administration of the direct admission program established under § 15–101.1 of the Education Article, as enacted by Section 1 of this Act.

(b) In conducting the study required under subsection (a) of this section, the Commission shall:

(1) identify the financial, technical, legal, and operational mechanisms needed to effectively implement the direct admission program;

(2) evaluate whether a system could be developed to integrate student academic data with financial aid eligibility data to provide simultaneous admission and affordability notifications to students; and

(3) create an implementation timeline for the direct admission program.

(c) On or before July 1, 2027, the Commission shall submit a final report of its findings and conclusions to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article.

SECTION ~~2~~ 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2026. Section 2 of this Act shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 1 month and, at the end of July 31, 2027, Section 2 of this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

Approved by the Governor, May 26, 2026.