

HOUSE BILL 57

F1
HB 72/25 – W&M

(PRE-FILED)

6lr0717
CF SB 204

By: **Delegate Vogel**

Requested: August 20, 2025

Introduced and read first time: January 14, 2026

Assigned to: Ways and Means

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 6, 2026

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Public Schools – Maryland Civic Excellence Program – Established**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Maryland Civic Excellence Program ~~in the State~~
4 ~~Department of Education~~ for certain public high school students; requiring the State
5 Board of Education to establish the criteria and requirements for the Program in
6 regulation; requiring that a certain capstone project be included in the Program;
7 authorizing a local school system to participate in the Program to recognize students
8 ~~who meet criteria related to student proficiency in civics and civic literacy~~ public
9 high school students for their civic readiness and civic engagement; and generally
10 relating to the Maryland Civic Excellence Program.

11 BY adding to

12 Article – Education

13 Section 7–137

14 Annotated Code of Maryland

15 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

16 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,

17 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

18 **Article – Education**

19 **7–137.**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 (A) IN THIS SECTION, "PROGRAM" MEANS THE MARYLAND CIVIC
2 EXCELLENCE PROGRAM.

3 (B) ~~(1)~~ THERE IS A MARYLAND CIVIC EXCELLENCE PROGRAM ~~IN THE~~
4 ~~DEPARTMENT~~ THAT RECOGNIZES THE CIVIC READINESS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
5 OF PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE STATE.

6 ~~(2)~~ ~~THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO RECOGNIZE STUDENTS~~
7 ~~AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS THAT PROMOTE THE CIVIC READINESS AND CIVIC~~
8 ~~ENGAGEMENT OF STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE STATE.~~

9 ~~(C)~~ ~~THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM.~~

10 ~~(D)~~ (C) (1) NOT LATER THAN THE 2027-2028 SCHOOL YEAR, THE
11 ~~DEPARTMENT~~ STATE BOARD, IN CONSULTATION WITH EXPERTS AND
12 STAKEHOLDERS, ~~SHALL DEVELOP GUIDELINES TO ASSIST PARTICIPATING LOCAL~~
13 ~~SCHOOL SYSTEMS TO DETERMINE STUDENT PROFICIENCY IN CIVICS AND CIVIC~~
14 ~~LITERACY~~ ADOPT REGULATIONS TO ESTABLISH THE CRITERIA AND REQUIREMENTS
15 FOR AWARDING A SEAL OF CIVIC EXCELLENCE TO A QUALIFIED STUDENT WHO
16 ATTENDS A PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL IN A PARTICIPATING LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM.

17 (2) THE CRITERIA ESTABLISHED BY THE STATE BOARD SHALL
18 INCLUDE A REQUIREMENT THAT, IN ORDER TO RECEIVE A SEAL OF CIVIC
19 EXCELLENCE, A STUDENT MUST COMPLETE A CAPSTONE PROJECT THROUGH AN
20 EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY THAT IS FOCUSED ON CIVIC SERVICE IN STATE,
21 COUNTY, OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

22 ~~(E)~~ (D) (1) ~~THIS SUBSECTION APPLIES ONLY TO A~~ A LOCAL SCHOOL
23 SYSTEM THAT PARTICIPATES MAY CHOOSE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM.

24 (2) A PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL IN A PARTICIPATING LOCAL SCHOOL
25 SYSTEM SHALL UTILIZE THE GUIDELINES ESTABLISHED UNDER SUBSECTION (D) OF
26 THIS SECTION TO ESTABLISH:

27 (i) ~~A MARYLAND CIVIC EXCELLENCE PROGRAM IN SCHOOLS;~~

28 (ii) ~~APPLICATION CRITERIA TO ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM;~~

29 ~~AND~~

30 (iii) ~~CRITERIA FOR AWARDING A STUDENT THE SEAL OF CIVIC~~
31 EXCELLENCE MAY NOT OPT OUT OF PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM.

32 (3) IF A LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM CHOOSES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE
33 PROGRAM, A PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL SHALL IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM, IN

1 ACCORDANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS ADOPTED BY THE STATE BOARD, BY
2 INCORPORATING A CIVIC SERVICE CAPSTONE PROJECT INTO AN EXTRACURRICULAR
3 ACTIVITY AT THE SCHOOL THAT:

4 (I) IS AN EXISTING EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY AT THE TIME
5 THE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM CHOOSES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM; OR

6 (II) IS A NEW EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY THAT IS
7 SUPERVISED BY A PAID STAFF MEMBER.

8 ~~(F)~~ (E) A PARTICIPATING LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM THAT DETERMINES A
9 PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT HAS FULFILLED THE CRITERIA UNDER THE
10 PROGRAM MAY ESTABLISHED IN REGULATIONS ADOPTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH
11 SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION SHALL:

12 (1) AWARD THE STUDENT A SEAL OF CIVIC EXCELLENCE; AND

13 (2) RECOGNIZE THE AWARD BY AWARDING A CORD OR MEDAL OR BY
14 ATTACHING OTHER INSIGNIA ON THE STUDENT’S HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA.

15 ~~(G)~~ (F) A PARTICIPATING LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM MAY COLLABORATE
16 WITH NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS, CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS, OR INSTITUTIONS OF
17 HIGHER EDUCATION TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM.

18 ~~(H)~~ (G) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2028, AND EACH JULY 1 THEREAFTER,
19 EACH PARTICIPATING LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM SHALL SUBMIT TO THE DEPARTMENT
20 A REPORT ON THE PROGRAM BASED ON THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED SCHOOL
21 YEAR.

22 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
23 1, 2026.

Approved:

Governor.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.

President of the Senate.