

SENATE BILL 204

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(PRE-FILED)

6lr0716
CF HB 57

By: **Senators Kagan and Ready**

Requested: August 20, 2025

Introduced and read first time: January 14, 2026

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

A BILL ENTITLED

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; authorizing a local school system to participate in the
5 Program to recognize students who meet criteria related to student proficiency in
6 civics and civic literacy; and generally relating to the Maryland Civic Excellence
7 Program.

8 BY adding to
9 Article – Education
10 Section 7–137
11 Annotated Code of Maryland
12 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

15 **Article – Education**

16 **7–137.**

17 **(A) IN THIS SECTION, “PROGRAM” MEANS THE MARYLAND CIVIC**
18 **EXCELLENCE PROGRAM.**

19 **(B) (1) THERE IS A MARYLAND CIVIC EXCELLENCE PROGRAM IN THE**
20 **DEPARTMENT.**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



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

(C) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM.

(D) NOT LATER THAN THE 2027–2028 SCHOOL YEAR, THE DEPARTMENT, IN CONSULTATION WITH EXPERTS AND STAKEHOLDERS, SHALL DEVELOP GUIDELINES TO ASSIST PARTICIPATING LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS TO DETERMINE STUDENT PROFICIENCY IN CIVICS AND CIVIC LITERACY.

(E) (1) THIS SUBSECTION APPLIES ONLY TO A LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM THAT PARTICIPATES IN THE PROGRAM.

(2) A PARTICIPATING LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM SHALL UTILIZE THE GUIDELINES ESTABLISHED UNDER SUBSECTION (D) OF THIS SECTION TO ESTABLISH:

(I) A MARYLAND CIVIC EXCELLENCE PROGRAM IN SCHOOLS;

(II) APPLICATION CRITERIA TO ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM;

AND

(III) CRITERIA FOR AWARDING A STUDENT THE SEAL OF CIVIC EXCELLENCE.

(F) A PARTICIPATING LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM THAT DETERMINES A STUDENT HAS FULFILLED THE CRITERIA UNDER THE PROGRAM MAY:

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

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

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

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

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