

SENATE BILL 324

F2, F1

6lr2277
CF 6lr2925

By: **Senator Augustine**

Introduced and read first time: January 22, 2026

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Higher Education – Public Senior Higher Education Institutions – Direct**
3 **Admission Program**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing a direct admission program at participating public senior
5 higher education institutions for certain eligible high school students beginning in a
6 certain academic year; requiring the Maryland Higher Education Commission to
7 administer the direct admission program through a certain financial aid system and
8 the Common Application; requiring the State Department of Education and the
9 Commission jointly to establish a process for notifying the Commission of the high
10 school students who have met the college and career readiness standard each school
11 year; and generally relating to a direct admission program and public senior higher
12 education institutions.

13 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
14 Article – Education
15 Section 7–205.1(a) and (c)(2)
16 Annotated Code of Maryland
17 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

18 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
19 Article – Education
20 Section 10–101(a) and (m)
21 Annotated Code of Maryland
22 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

23 BY adding to
24 Article – Education
25 Section 15–101.1
26 Annotated Code of Maryland
27 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



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 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.

1 **(2) THE COMMISSION SHALL ADMINISTER THE DIRECT ADMISSION**
2 **PROGRAM THROUGH THE COMMISSION'S FINANCIAL AID SYSTEM AND THE COMMON**
3 **APPLICATION.**

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

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

10 **(2) HAS MET THE CCR STANDARD ESTABLISHED BY THE**
11 **DEPARTMENT;**

12 **(3) APPLIES FOR ADMISSION TO AN INSTITUTION:**

13 **(I) BY THE REQUIRED APPLICATION DEADLINE ESTABLISHED**
14 **BY THE INSTITUTION; AND**

15 **(II) DURING GRADE 12 OF HIGH SCHOOL;**

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

18 **(5) MEETS THE ADDITIONAL CRITERIA ESTABLISHED BY THE**
19 **INSTITUTION, IF ANY.**

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

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

25 **(i) 1. DETERMINE ANY ADDITIONAL COURSES OR CRITERIA**
26 **NEEDED FOR A STUDENT TO QUALIFY FOR DIRECT ADMISSION TO THE INSTITUTION,**
27 **IF ANY; AND**

28 **2. REPORT THE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS UNDER**
29 **ITEM 1 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.

(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;

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 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.

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

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

11 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
12 1, 2026.