

# SENATE BILL 529

F1, F2

6lr2573  
CF HB 479

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By: **Senator Harris**

Introduced and read first time: February 4, 2026

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

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Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: March 4, 2026

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## CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Southern Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway ~~Program and~~ Program**  
3 **Workgroup – Establishment**

4 FOR the purpose of ~~establishing the Southern Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway~~  
5 ~~Program; requiring the State Department of Education to administer and~~  
6 ~~implement, in consultation with the Maryland Higher Education Commission, the~~  
7 ~~Program subject to a certain condition; requiring a Program student to be considered~~  
8 ~~a dually enrolled student for a certain purpose;~~ requiring the University System of  
9 Maryland to develop, in consultation with the State Department of Education and  
10 the Maryland Higher Education Commission, ~~the~~ certain recommendations for a  
11 Southern Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway Program and ~~the~~ a teacher  
12 preparation pathway in a certain manner; establishing the Southern Maryland  
13 Early College Teacher Pathway Program Workgroup; and generally relating to ~~the~~  
14 ~~Southern Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway Program~~ and the Southern  
15 Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway Program Workgroup.

16 ~~BY adding to~~  
17 ~~Article – Education~~  
18 ~~Section 7-2201 through 7-2204 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 22. Southern~~  
19 ~~Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway Program”~~  
20 ~~Annotated Code of Maryland~~  
21 ~~(2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)~~

22 BY adding to  
23 Article – Education

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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 Section 12–124  
2 Annotated Code of Maryland  
3 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

4 ~~BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,~~  
5 ~~Article — Education~~  
6 ~~Section 15–127~~  
7 ~~Annotated Code of Maryland~~  
8 ~~(2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)~~

9 Preamble

10 WHEREAS, Maryland faces a critical shortage of qualified teachers, especially in  
11 high–need schools and rural areas such as Southern Maryland where local school systems  
12 report persistent vacancies in core subject areas and growing challenges in retaining  
13 educators; and

14 WHEREAS, The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future calls for expanding high–quality  
15 pathways into the teaching profession, increasing college readiness, and improving  
16 workforce pipelines in every region of the State; and

17 WHEREAS, Nationally, early college programs have proven to increase college  
18 enrollment, degree attainment, and workforce participation — particularly among  
19 first–generation and low–income students — and can be leveraged to build stronger and  
20 more diverse teacher pipelines; and

21 WHEREAS, Despite strong national evidence of success, Maryland lags behind most  
22 states in providing early postsecondary opportunities for its students; and

23 WHEREAS, As of 2023, Maryland ranked low nationally for dual enrollment  
24 participation as a percent of high school enrollment at 10% and ranked low nationally for  
25 dual enrollment as a percent of undergraduate enrollment at 7%; and

26 WHEREAS, As of 2022, participation in dual enrollment and early college programs  
27 in Maryland is overly concentrated at community colleges with only 5% of students enrolled  
28 through public four–year institutions — compared to approximately 28%  
29 nationally — limiting exposure to bachelor’s degree pathways, including teacher  
30 preparation programs; and

31 WHEREAS, Southern Maryland’s geography, limited access to nearby four–year  
32 institutions, and workforce needs make it an ideal region for a program that bridges high  
33 schools, community colleges, and the University System of Maryland regional higher  
34 education centers to create a seamless teacher preparation pathway; and

35 WHEREAS, Establishing a Southern Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway  
36 Program will align with the Blueprint’s goals; now, therefore,

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

3 Article – Education

4 ~~SUBTITLE 22. SOUTHERN MARYLAND EARLY COLLEGE TEACHER PATHWAY~~  
5 ~~PROGRAM.~~

6 ~~7-2201.~~

7 ~~IN THIS SUBTITLE, “PROGRAM” MEANS THE SOUTHERN MARYLAND EARLY~~  
8 ~~COLLEGE TEACHER PATHWAY PROGRAM.~~

9 ~~7-2202.~~

10 ~~(A) THERE IS A SOUTHERN MARYLAND EARLY COLLEGE TEACHER~~  
11 ~~PATHWAY PROGRAM.~~

12 ~~(B) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO:~~

13 ~~(1) CREATE A STRUCTURED, CREDIT-BEARING PATHWAY FOR HIGH~~  
14 ~~SCHOOL STUDENTS TO BEGIN PREPARATION TO TEACH PRIMARY AND SECONDARY~~  
15 ~~EDUCATION;~~

16 ~~(2) EXPAND ACCESS TO AND ENSURE THE AFFORDABILITY OF~~  
17 ~~HIGHER EDUCATION FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO ARE:~~

18 ~~(i) HISTORICALLY UNDERREPRESENTED IN HIGHER~~  
19 ~~EDUCATION; AND~~

20 ~~(ii) FROM RURAL AREAS OF THE STATE;~~

21 ~~(3) BUILD A STRONG AND DIVERSE TEACHER PIPELINE TO SERVE THE~~  
22 ~~STATE’S PUBLIC PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS; AND~~

23 ~~(4) SERVE AS A MODEL TO BE REPLICATED FOR REGIONAL~~  
24 ~~IMPLEMENTATION STATEWIDE.~~

25 ~~(C) THE DEPARTMENT, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE MARYLAND HIGHER~~  
26 ~~EDUCATION COMMISSION, SHALL ADMINISTER AND IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM ON~~  
27 ~~COMPLETION OF THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND’S DEVELOPMENT OF THE~~  
28 ~~PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 12-124 OF THIS ARTICLE.~~

29 ~~7-2203.~~

~~A PROGRAM STUDENT SHALL BE CONSIDERED A DUALY ENROLLED STUDENT FOR PURPOSES OF § 15-127 OF THIS ARTICLE AND MAY NOT BE REQUIRED TO PAY ANY COST THAT IS RELATED TO ENROLLMENT OR PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM, INCLUDING TUITION AND MANDATORY FEES.~~

~~7-2204.~~

~~THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO CARRY OUT THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SUBTITLE.~~

~~12-124.~~

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

(2) "PROGRAM" ~~HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 7-2201 OF THIS ARTICLE~~ MEANS THE SOUTHERN MARYLAND EARLY COLLEGE TEACHER PATHWAY PROGRAM.

(3) "PROGRAM WORKGROUP" MEANS THE SOUTHERN MARYLAND EARLY COLLEGE TEACHER PATHWAY PROGRAM WORKGROUP.

(B) IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION AND IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT AND THE COMMISSION, THE UNIVERSITY SHALL DEVELOP ~~THE~~ RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A SOUTHERN MARYLAND EARLY COLLEGE TEACHER PATHWAY PROGRAM AND ~~THE~~ A TEACHER PREPARATION PATHWAY IN SOUTHERN MARYLAND TO:

(1) CREATE A STRUCTURED, CREDIT-BEARING PATHWAY FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO BEGIN PREPARATION TO TEACH PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION;

(2) EXPAND ACCESS TO AND ENSURE THE AFFORDABILITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR ALL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, INCLUDING STUDENTS WHO ARE:

(I) HISTORICALLY UNDERREPRESENTED IN HIGHER EDUCATION; AND

(II) FROM RURAL AREAS OF THE STATE;

(3) BUILD A STRONG AND DIVERSE TEACHER PIPELINE TO SERVE THE STATE'S PUBLIC PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS; AND

1           **(4) SERVE AS A MODEL TO BE REPLICATED FOR REGIONAL**  
2 **IMPLEMENTATION STATEWIDE.**

3           **(c) (1) THE UNIVERSITY SHALL CONVENE A SOUTHERN MARYLAND**  
4 **EARLY COLLEGE TEACHER PATHWAY PROGRAM WORKGROUP TO DEVELOP THE**  
5 **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROGRAM AND THE TEACHER PREPARATION**  
6 **PATHWAY IN SOUTHERN MARYLAND.**

7           **(2) THE PROGRAM WORKGROUP SHALL CONSIST OF THE FOLLOWING**  
8 **MEMBERS:**

9                   **(i) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR,**  
10 **APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR;**

11                   **(ii) ONE MEMBER OF THE SENATE OF MARYLAND, APPOINTED**  
12 **BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE;**

13                   **(iii) ONE MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES, APPOINTED**  
14 **BY THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE;**

15                   **(iv) THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT, OR THE STATE**  
16 **SUPERINTENDENT'S DESIGNEE;**

17                   **(v) THE CHAIR OF THE ACCOUNTABILITY AND**  
18 **IMPLEMENTATION BOARD, OR THE CHAIR'S DESIGNEE;**

19                   **(vi) THE SECRETARY, OR THE SECRETARY'S DESIGNEE;**

20                   **(vii) THE CHANCELLOR, OR THE CHANCELLOR'S DESIGNEE;**

21                   **(viii) THE SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR FOR ACADEMIC AND**  
22 **STUDENT AFFAIRS OF THE UNIVERSITY, OR THE SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR'S**  
23 **DESIGNEE;**

24                   **(ix) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM**  
25 **OF MARYLAND AT SOUTHERN MARYLAND, OR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S**  
26 **DESIGNEE;**

27                   **(x) THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND,**  
28 **COLLEGE PARK CAMPUS, OR THE PRESIDENT'S DESIGNEE;**

1 (XI) THE PRESIDENT OF TOWSON UNIVERSITY, OR THE  
2 PRESIDENT'S DESIGNEE;

3 (XII) THE PRESIDENT OF ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND,  
4 OR THE PRESIDENT'S DESIGNEE;

5 ~~(XII)~~ (XIII) THE PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE OF SOUTHERN  
6 MARYLAND, OR THE PRESIDENT'S DESIGNEE;

7 ~~(XIII)~~ (XIV) THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS, OR THE COUNTY  
8 SUPERINTENDENTS' DESIGNEES, OF THE FOLLOWING COUNTIES:

- 9 1. CALVERT COUNTY;
- 10 2. CHARLES COUNTY; AND
- 11 3. ST. MARY'S COUNTY; ~~AND~~

12 (XV) ONE REPRESENTATIVE FROM EACH LOCAL UNION  
13 REPRESENTING EDUCATORS IN SOUTHERN MARYLAND, DESIGNATED BY THE  
14 UNIVERSITY; AND

15 ~~(XIV)~~ (XVI) ANY OTHER MEMBERS DESIGNATED BY THE  
16 UNIVERSITY.

17 (3) ON OR BEFORE JUNE 30, 2029, THE UNIVERSITY SHALL REPORT  
18 TO THE DEPARTMENT, THE COMMISSION, THE GOVERNOR, AND, IN ACCORDANCE  
19 WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, ~~THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY~~  
20 SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE AND THE  
21 HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE ON:

22 (I) THE PROGRAM WORKGROUP'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR  
23 THE PROGRAM AND THE TEACHER PREPARATION PATHWAY IN SOUTHERN  
24 MARYLAND, INCLUDING:

- 25 1. THE STRUCTURE OF THE TEACHER PREPARATION  
26 PATHWAY;
- 27 2. AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE TEACHER  
28 PREPARATION PATHWAY; AND

1                   **3. ANY LEGISLATIVE OR REGULATORY CHANGES**  
 2 **NECESSARY FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TEACHER PREPARATION**  
 3 **PATHWAY; AND**

4                   **(II) THE USE OF STATE FUNDS TO DEVELOP THE PROGRAM**  
 5 **WORKGROUP'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROGRAM AND THE TEACHER**  
 6 **PREPARATION PATHWAY IN SOUTHERN MARYLAND.**

7           **(D) FOR EACH OF FISCAL YEARS 2028 AND 2029, THE GOVERNOR SHALL**  
 8 **INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET BILL AN APPROPRIATION OF ~~\$250,000~~ \$125,000**  
 9 **TO THE UNIVERSITY TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRAM**  
 10 **WORKGROUP'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROGRAM AND THE TEACHER**  
 11 **PREPARATION PATHWAY IN SOUTHERN MARYLAND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS**  
 12 **SECTION.**

13 ~~15-127.~~

14           ~~(a) (1) In this section, "dually enrolled student" means a student who is dually~~  
 15 ~~enrolled in:~~

16                   ~~(i) A secondary school in the State; and~~

17                   ~~(ii) An institution of higher education in the State.~~

18                   ~~(2) "Dually enrolled student" includes a student enrolled in a credit or~~  
 19 ~~noncredit certificate or license program, course, or sequence of courses that leads to~~  
 20 ~~certification or licensure at an institution of higher education in the State.~~

21           ~~(b) A public institution of higher education may not charge tuition to a dually~~  
 22 ~~enrolled student.~~

23           ~~(c) Subject to subsection (d) of this section, for each dually enrolled student who~~  
 24 ~~is enrolled in a public school in the county, the county board shall pay 75% of the cost of~~  
 25 ~~tuition for a public institution of higher education in the State.~~

26           ~~(d) (1) If there is an agreement before July 1, 2020, between a public school~~  
 27 ~~and a public institution of higher education in which the public institution of higher~~  
 28 ~~education charges less than 75% of the cost of tuition to a dually enrolled student, the~~  
 29 ~~county board shall pay the cost of tuition under the existing agreement.~~

30                   ~~(2) Every 2 years, a public school and a public institution of higher~~  
 31 ~~education may evaluate and modify an agreement made under paragraph (1) of this~~  
 32 ~~subsection.~~

33           SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July  
 34 1, 2026. It shall remain effective for a period of 4 years and, at the end of June 30, 2030.

1 this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and  
2 of no further force and effect.

Approved:

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Governor.

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President of the Senate.

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Speaker of the House of Delegates.