

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 505
Ways and Means

(Delegate Smith, *et al.*)

Public and Nonpublic Schools - Student School Transfers - Academic Records
Documentation

This bill requires a public or nonpublic elementary or secondary school receiving a transferring student to accept specified unofficial academic records for enrollment purposes if the sending school refuses to provide official records due to a dispute between the sending school and the student. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill applies only to local school systems.

Local Effect: None. Local school systems can review unofficial academic records for enrollment purposes under the circumstances described using existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: A child age 5 to 18 must attend public school regularly unless the child is otherwise receiving regular, thorough instruction at an alternative setting (*i.e.*, a private or home school). An individual who has legal custody of a child age 5 to 16 and fails to see that the child attends school is guilty of a misdemeanor.

The transfer of academic records for enrollment purposes is not generally addressed in statute; however, there are requirements for specific student populations. For example, under the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, if official records cannot be released immediately, the sending school must provide unofficial educational records and the receiving school must enroll and appropriately place the

student based on those records pending validation. Upon request, the sending school must furnish official records within 10 days or as otherwise determined by the Interstate Commission. Additional regulatory provisions apply to students in State-supervised care, homeless students, and students with disabilities.

Local Expenditures: The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) advises that it receives, on average, approximately 25 complaints annually regarding nonpublic schools declining to issue official transcripts due to unpaid tuition or other financial disputes. MSDE further advises that withholding transcripts until financial obligations are satisfied appears to be a common practice among some nonpublic schools.

It is assumed that local school systems can review unofficial academic records for enrollment purposes under the circumstances described using existing resources. For example, Montgomery County Public Schools reports that the bill is expected to have minimal operational impact, as schools already collect and review student records during enrollment. Accepting unofficial academic records under the circumstances described in the bill can be accommodated using existing resources.

Additional Comment: To the extent that nonpublic schools withhold transcripts as a mechanism to enforce payment of outstanding tuition balances, the bill may reduce the effectiveness of that practice. As a result, some nonpublic schools may need to modify enrollment or records release policies.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland School for the Deaf; Baltimore City Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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caw/mcr

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