

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

House Bill 1438  
Ways and Means

(Delegate Woorman, *et al.*)

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State Board of Education - Public High School Graduation Requirements

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This bill requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to (1) review and update graduation requirements every five years and (2) implement changes to graduation requirements for the cohort entering high school in the school year following SBE approval. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** None. The bill establishes a statutory review timeline for graduation requirements; any associated workload is assumed to be handled with existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

**Local Effect:** Likely minimal fiscal and operational impact on local school systems, unless the bill results in more frequent or significant changes to graduation requirements adopted by SBE. Revenues are not affected.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law:**

*High School Diploma Requirements*

With the advice of the State Superintendent of Schools, SBE must establish minimum requirements for issuing certificates and diplomas by public and private high schools. Local school systems may establish graduation requirements beyond the

minimum requirements established by the board. SBE must establish high school curriculum, college and career readiness standards, and graduation requirements for all public schools.

**State/Local Expenditures:** The bill generally formalizes a five-year review cycle for graduation requirements and clarifies that any approved changes apply to the cohort entering high school in the school year following SBE approval. The SBE already has authority to review and update graduation requirements under current law.

The Maryland State Department of Education advises that SBE periodically reviews and updates graduation requirements, most recently in 2022 to align college and career readiness standards with the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. Although the bill establishes a statutory timeline for review, any additional coordination or standards development activities are assumed to be handled with existing resources. Accordingly, State expenditures are not affected.

Local school systems must comply with graduation requirements established by SBE under current law. The bill does not mandate specific new graduation requirements and potentially affects only the timing of future changes rather than their content. To the extent that future updates adopted by SBE result in additional course requirements or modifications to course offerings, local school system expenditures could increase. However, any such impact depends on future policy decisions by SBE and cannot be reliably estimated; any impact is likely minimal.

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### **Additional Information**

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

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Accountability and Implementation Board; Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Higher Education Commission; Maryland Department of Labor; Baltimore City Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; Prince George’s County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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caw/mcr

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