

WAYS AND MEANS

Testimony by

Dr. Brad Phillips, Executive Director

February 22, 2023

HB689 – Pathways in Technology Early College High (P-TECH) School Program – High School Diplomas

POSITION: Support

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges, thanks Delegate Buckel and the Western Maryland Delegation for their sponsorship of this legislation that would clean up unintentional barriers for P-TECH students around the state.

Pathways in Technology Early College High (P-TECH) schools are collaborations between local school systems, community colleges, and local businesses to provide a clear pathway from high school to college and careers. Students are enrolled from grades 9 to grade 14. P-TECH students are not considered program completers until they have earned the college-level Associate's degree. The high school diploma is kept "on file" with the public school system, per requirement of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), until the Associate's degree has been earned.

These current guidelines can negatively impact student participants in the following ways:

- 1) Federal Financial Aid: Participants are ineligible for federal aid- specifically Pell Grants because they do not have a high school diploma.
- 2) College Athletics: Students must meet a minimum number of credit hours to participate. As mentioned above students are unable to receive federal aid to take classes beyond their P-TECH pathway to increase the number of credits per semester.
- 3) Driver's License: Many PTECH students do not obtain their learners permit until they turn 18. Without their diploma, they have to wait 9 months to obtain the Provisional License and extended probationary period causes transportation issues getting themselves to campus.

We are asking you to support this legislation which would help remove these barriers for P-TECH students in the successful completion of their pathway by immediately awarding their high school diploma upon completion of their graduation requirements. Thank you for your consideration of this bill, and all your efforts to meet the needs of the students we serve.

MACC requests a favorable position on HB689.