

TO: Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

BILL: Senate Bill (SB) 5 – Higher Education - University System of Maryland, Morgan State University, and St. Mary's College of Maryland - Guaranteed Admissions

DATE: January 24, 2024

POSITION: Support

Chair Feldman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) would like to express our support for **SB 5**, which requires the University System of Maryland, Morgan State University, and St. Mary's College of Maryland to develop policies that guarantee admission for freshmen applicants who graduate from a public or nonpublic high school in the State and are in the top 10% of their high school class.

We believe that the intent of this bill is consistent with the steps taken by the State Board to emphasize GPA and longitudinal performance of students throughout high school. It also produces a natural pathway for college and career-ready high school students to attend Maryland institutions of higher education.

In recent months, the State Board and MSDE have deliberated over the adoption of a new college and career readiness standard that would include multiple measures of student achievement alongside or in addition to performance on standardized assessments, including a student's GPA. During its January 23, 2024 meeting, the State Board adopted a standard that would provide students with multiple measures for demonstrating college and career readiness including a pathway that emphasizes earning a 3.0 GPA by 10th grade as an early indicator of college and career-readiness.

This decision was based on careful consideration of research and evaluation of student success in higher education. An independent study commissioned by MSDE demonstrated that earning a 3.0 GPA is a quality predictor of postsecondary success and is more inclusive. As we carry forward with this standard at the secondary school level, the consistent focus on achievement metrics, such as GPA, is a welcome step towards ensuring an effective pipeline of college and career-ready students who are inclined to succeed in postsecondary endeavors.

The State Board and MSDE encourage the committee to consider the size and scope of emerging applicant pools from Maryland's high schools as it deliberates SB 5. We stand ready to partner with local school systems and institutions of higher education on any implementation challenges presented in the legislation.

The State Board and MSDE request a favorable committee report on **SB 5**. Please contact Dr. Akilah Alleyne, Executive Director of Government Affairs, Education Policy, and Government Relations, at Akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov or at 410-767-0504 or Zach Hands, Executive Director of the State Board, at Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov or at 443-915-6094, if you would like any additional information.