

TO: Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment

BILL: Senate Bill (HB) 899- Education – High School Class Rankings and Guaranteed Admissions to Public Senior Institutions of Higher Education

DATE: February 19, 2025

POSITION: Information

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is pleased to provide this letter of information regarding **Senate Bill (HB) 899- Education – High School Class Rankings and Guaranteed Admissions to Public Senior Institutions of Higher Education.**

SB 899 Summary

SB 899 directs Maryland high schools to determine a class ranking based on cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) for the purpose of determining students in the top 5% and 10% of the graduating class. The bill also outlines criteria for eligibility, including National Merit finalists and home-schooled students meeting specific score requirements. Additionally, it required Maryland Public Senior institutions of higher education to develop a process for accepting students who apply under guaranteed admission policy.

MSDE Information

MSDE supports increasing access to Maryland's Public Universities for Maryland students. To ensure the successful implementation of this initiative, MSDE recognizes the need for careful consideration of several key factors. Institutions of higher education will need to develop comprehensive procedures for processing applications from students who qualify for guaranteed admission. This includes allocating staff to manage the process and verifying student eligibility, including class rank and National Merit Scholarship status. These institutions may also need to modify existing application systems or implement new ones and adjust resource allocations to accommodate the admitted students. The application process will use transcripts from public and nonpublic schools, as well as standardized test results for homeschooled students.

It is important to note that in 2024, there were 60,789 12th graders in Maryland public schools, and an estimated 8,100 students graduated from nonpublic schools. MSDE emphasizes the need for a standard methodology for determining class rankings across all Local Education Agencies (LEAs). Currently, the determination of class rankings and the use of weighted or unweighted GPAs may vary among LEAs. Establishing a consistent, statewide approach or a requirement to use unweighted GPA will be essential to ensure equitable application of the policy.

MSDE is committed to working collaboratively with all stakeholders to achieve the goals of SB 899. We look forward to further collaboration to ensure that the guaranteed admissions program is implemented effectively and provides meaningful opportunities for all Maryland students.

MSDE respectfully requests consideration of these comments as SB 899 is discussed and deliberated. For further information, please contact Dr. Akilah Alleyne at 410-767-0504, or Akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov