

TO: House Ways and Means Committee

BILL: House Bill (HB) 725 – Institutions of Higher Education – Dually Enrolled Students – Alterations

DATE: February 25, 2025

POSITION: Oppose

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) respectfully opposes HB 725, which concerns alterations to the definition of "dually enrolled" students and the related implications for the Part-Time Grant Program and the Early College Access Grant. MSDE is committed to supporting equitable access to high-quality education for all Maryland students. However, we believe that the implications of HB 725 have not been fully considered, particularly concerning the financial and administrative impact on LEAs tasked with implementing these changes.

HB 725 proposes to expand the definition of "dually enrolled" students to include those from nonpublic secondary schools and home-schooled students. This expansion could significantly impact the fiscal responsibilities of Local Education Agencies (LEAs) without a corresponding provision for additional funding or resources. Our key concerns include:

- **Increased Financial Burden on LEAs:** Expanding eligibility for the Part-Time Grant Program and the Early College Access Grant to include a broader student base could substantially increase the number of participants in dual enrollment programs statewide. This would, in turn, place a heavier financial burden on LEAs, which are already required under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future to cover tuition and fees for "dually enrolled" students who meet the College and Career Readiness (CCR) standard.
- **Administrative Challenges:** The proposed changes could lead to significant administrative challenges for LEAs and higher education institutions. The need to accommodate an increased number of dually enrolled students could strain existing resources and complicate program management and oversight, potentially affecting the quality and efficacy of these education programs.
- **Equity and Access Concerns:** While the intention of broadening access is commendable, without careful planning and adequate funding, there is a risk that the expansion could dilute the support provided to currently eligible students, many of whom rely on these programs to advance their postsecondary and career goals.

We recommend that any legislative efforts to adopt the requirements in HB 725 include comprehensive stakeholder engagement to ensure that changes do not inadvertently place undue pressure on our education system or compromise students' educational outcomes.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate HB 725. For further information, please contact Dr. Akilah Alleyne, Executive Director of Government Affairs at kilah.alleyne@maryland.gov or Zach Hands, Executive Director of the State Board at zachary.hands1@maryland.gov.