

Montgomery County Board of Education_HB 1438_Suppo

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential

15 West Gude Drive ♦ Suite 100 ♦ Rockville, Maryland 20850

BILL: House Bill 1438

TITLE: State Board of Education - Public High School Graduation Requirements

DATE: April 7, 2026

POSITION: Support

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment

CONTACT: Patricia Ursprung, Coordinator, Legislative Affairs

The Montgomery County Board of Education (Board) supports House Bill 1438.

This bill requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to review graduation requirements at least once every five years and make any needed adjustments.

On August 21, 2025, the Montgomery County Board of Education (Board) adopted a legislative platform that contains priority issues and ongoing concerns. One of the Board's priority issues for the 2026 legislative session is ensuring that graduation credit requirements for students remain relevant to future careers and opportunities. We believe that House Bill 1438 is a reasonable step toward that goal.

The last time the graduation credit requirements were reviewed and updated was in 2018. At that time, the Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) directed MSDE to engage a task force to complete a credit review and recommend updates. In December 2020, nearly three years later, the task force presented their findings and recommendations to the State Board. This lengthy process is not conducive to keeping graduation requirements relevant to our changing economy and world.

House Bill 1438 prioritizes regular reviews of graduation requirements. Ideally, with more frequent reviews, each evaluation will be able to be accomplished in a shorter timeframe than what occurred in 2018. This will allow the State Board to respond more quickly to a changing world with changing workforce demands and opportunities, while maintaining continuity and consistency that is important for student learning.

Given how rapidly our world is changing, as well as feedback from students who continue to express concern that current graduation credit requirements feel outdated and disconnected from their needs, the Montgomery County Board of Education supports House Bill 1438, which ensures that graduation requirements are regularly reviewed so that students can be best prepared for their future. The Board urges a **favorable** report.

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Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

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Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON CROSSOVER BILL HB#1438- POSITION: FAVORABLE

State Board of Education - Public High School Graduation Requirements

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of crossover bill HB#1438, State Board of Education - Public High School Graduation Requirements

The College and Careers Pathway organization has studied *Changing Graduation Requirements for a Changing World*¹

What do high school graduates need to know and be able to do to be prepared for college and career? This is the fundamental question that state policy makers confront when determining minimum high school graduation requirements or assessing whether these requirements need to change to meet the needs of a rapidly evolving economy. States typically set minimum course requirements to earn a high school diploma and some also specify assessments that students must complete to graduate. In some states, policymakers have created multiple diploma options or pathways to graduation to increase flexibility for students.

Trends in changing graduation requirements - Increased emphasis on non-core-academic graduation requirements. States have long included a health education course as part of their graduation requirements, but many states are now adding additional non-core-academic requirements geared towards preparing healthy, financially literate, well-rounded, and engaged citizens:

- **civics education**
- **community service**
- **financial literacy course**
- **CPR/first aid training**
- **ethnic studies**

Promotion of science, technology, and math (STEM)

- **Creating STEM diplomas or a STEM diploma seal**
- **Computer science or technology course requirement** Increased emphasis on career preparation

¹ <https://collegecareerpathways.org/changing-graduation-requirements-for-a-changing-world/>

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Career and technical education (CTE) coursework or career-related activities

- **CTE coursework**
- **transition, career, or postsecondary plans**

Addition of competency-based options or requirements

- A **capstone project**
- An **apprenticeship** to fulfill career and technical education requirements
- A standards-based **portfolio**
- A **project-based learning experience**

This bill recognizes that what we should ensure our students learn is constantly changing as the world changes. In recognition of the pace of technology and cultural factors this bill will require the State Board of Education to review graduation requirements for public high school students every 5 years; and require implementation of updated graduation requirements for the cohort entering high school in the school year following State Board approval.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on crossover bill HB#1438.