
TO: Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

BILL: House Bill (HB) 662 – Election Law - Election Judges - Compensation for Public School Students

DATE: February 18, 2026

POSITION: Information

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) provides this Letter of Information regarding **House Bill (HB) 662 – Election Law - Election Judges - Compensation for Public School Students**. HB 662 would allow high school students to be compensated and receive service-learning hours towards the graduation requirement for serving as an election judge.

MSDE offers the following information to highlight how HB 662 would interact with existing service-learning graduation requirements and current guidance regarding compensated activities. The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.03.02.05 states that to graduate from a Maryland High School, students must complete: (a) 75 hours of student service that includes preparation, action, and reflection components and that, at the discretion of the local school system, may begin during the middle grades; or (b) a locally designed program in student service that has been approved by the State Superintendent of Schools.

Service-learning is an instructional strategy that combines meaningful service to the community with curriculum-based learning. It is a form of civic education that provides students with opportunities to explore and reflect on what it means to be an active, engaged citizen. LEAs decide where and what types of service-learning projects students may engage in to earn credit toward the service-learning graduation requirement. MSDE guidance to service-learning programs is that service-learning activities that compensate a student with money, goods, or services may not be counted toward the service-learning graduation requirement.

HB 662 would introduce the option of being paid for a service-learning activity while also earning service-learning hours to meet the graduation requirement. Serving as an election judge would be the only approved service-learning activity for which a student may also be paid. Establishing this exception may prompt similar requests for other compensated activities to qualify for service-learning credit.

MSDE respectfully requests consideration of these comments as **HB 662** is discussed and deliberated. For further information, please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov.