

House Ways and Means Committee

February 11, 2026

**HB 479 – Southern Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway Program and Program Workgroup -
Establishment****Position: Favorable with Amendments**

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland’s 16 community colleges, supports **HB 479** with amendments. Community colleges are the primary providers of dual enrollment and early college instruction across the State and already operate robust, regionally tailored pathways into teaching and other high-need professions, including in Southern Maryland. As such, MACC approaches new early college initiatives with an interest in ensuring alignment with existing community college programs, capacity, and expertise.

HB 479 establishes a new Southern Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway Program and creates a Program Workgroup tasked with designing and implementing the pathway in coordination with State agencies and higher education partners. While MACC has questions about how this new program will intersect with existing community college-led dual enrollment and teacher preparation efforts, we recognize the interest of regional partners in advancing additional teacher pipeline strategies and understand that this proposal is moving forward.

Given the central role community colleges play in early college delivery, dual enrollment instruction, and teacher pipeline development, MACC believes it is essential that Maryland’s community colleges have formal representation in the development of this program. The bill currently includes representation from a single institution but lacks a statewide community college perspective that reflects broader operational, academic, and policy considerations. Including the MACC Executive Director or the Executive Director’s designee on the Program Workgroup would help ensure coordination, avoid duplication, and strengthen alignment with existing community college programs statewide.

Accordingly, MACC urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report on **HB 479 with AMENDMENTS** to include the MACC Executive Director or the Executive Director’s designee as a member of the Southern Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway Program Workgroup.

Please contact Brad Phillips (bphillips@mdacc.org) or Drew Jabin (djabin@mdacc.org) with questions.