

College Readiness and Completion Act of 2013

Senate Bill 740 REVISED

MACC Position: Support with Amendments

SB 740 establishes a number of requirements aimed at increasing college readiness and completion in the State. The bill is a compilation of individual higher education initiatives from across the nation rolled into a single piece of legislation.

Maryland's community college presidents recognized the ability of this legislation to assist the colleges in meeting the State's completion goals and immediately supported the legislation with suggested amendments. Two community college workgroups reviewed the legislation and outlined a series of amendments. Dr. Brad Gottfried presented the MACC testimony before the House and Dr. Bernard Sadusky presented the testimony before the Senate. MACC testimony can be found in the Testimony Section of this report.

SUMMARY

High School Curriculum and Graduation Requirements

The State Board of Education is charged with establishing high school curriculum and graduation requirements for all public schools. This legislation requires the following requirements:

- Beginning with the 2015-2016 school year, no later than grade 11, all students must be assessed for college readiness using acceptable college placement cut scores in English Language Arts and Mathematics.
- By 2016-2017 school year, MSDE must, in collaboration with local school systems and public community colleges, develop and implement transition courses or other instructional opportunities to be delivered in grade 12 to students who have not yet achieved college and career readiness by the end of grade 11.
- The implementation of transition courses or other instructional opportunities under the bill must include an assessment or reassessment of the student after completion of the course and may not preclude or replace enrollment in a course otherwise required for graduation from high school.
- Beginning with the grade 9 classes of 2014, each student must enroll in a mathematics course in each year of high school that the student attends.

- MSDE shall adopt regulations that establish Mathematics and math-related courses that fulfill the requirement, which may include math-related career and technology program courses.
- It is the goals of the state that all students achieve mathematics competency in Algebra II.

MHEC Coordinating Responsibilities and State Education Goals

It is the duty of MHEC to coordinate institutions of higher education throughout the state to ensure the state achieves specified educational goals. The bill adds two goals:

- (1) that at least 55% of Maryland's adults who are age 25 to 64 will hold at least an associate's degree by the year 2025; and
- (2) that all degree-seeking students enrolled in a public community college earn an associate's degree before leaving the community college or transferring to a public four year institution of higher education.

Transfer Agreement, Reverse Transfer Agreement, and Associate's Degree Incentives

MHEC, in collaboration with the public institutions of higher education, must develop and implement the following:

- A statewide transfer agreement whereby at least 60 credits of general education, elective, and major courses that a student earns at any community college in the state toward an associate's of art or associates of science degree must be transferrable to any public four-year higher education institution in the state for credit toward a bachelor's degree by July 1, 2016; and
- A statewide reverse transfer agreement whereby at least 30 credits that a student earns at any public four-year higher education institution in the state toward a bachelor's degree are transferrable to any community college in the state for credit toward an associate's degree by July 1, 2016.
- MHEC and each public institution of higher education must develop and implement incentives for students to obtain an associate's degree before enrolling in a public four-year institution of higher education.

Near Completers

A "near completer" is defined as an individual who has completed some college credits but does not have a college degree and is no longer attending an institution of higher education.

MHEC, in collaboration with institutions of higher education, must create a statewide communication campaign to identify near completers in the state and to encourage near completers to re-enroll in an institution of higher education to earn a degree.

The communication campaign shall:

- make use of a variety of marketing media, including billboards, brochures, and electronic resources;
- provide a centralized contact point for near completers to get information about, and assistance with, re-enrolling;
- make readily available contact information for each public institution of higher education in the state; and
- focus on near completers who earned a minimum grade point average of 2.0 on a scale of 4.0 while in college and earned either at least 45 credit hours at a community college or at least 90 credit hours at a four-year institution of higher education.

In addition, MHEC must develop and implement a plan that would provide an incentive to

- (1) a near completer to re-enroll and earn a degree, and
- (2) a college to identify and graduate near completers.

The incentive plan must use all available resources, including institutional funds, private-sector funds, and State funds.

MHEC and institutions of higher education may implement other near completer initiatives in addition to the campaign and incentive plan required by the bill.

By December 1, 2013, MHEC must submit a report on the details of the statewide plan, including the expected timeline for implementation.

MHEC must also report by December 1, 2013, on obstacles and barriers, if any, toward facilitating the sharing of student information among institutions of higher education in the state in furtherance of the near completers communication campaign established by the bill.

Degree Plan

A “degree plan” is defined as a statement of the course of study requirements that an undergraduate student enrolled in a public higher education institution must complete to graduate from the institution.

- Each undergraduate student enrolled in a senior public higher education institution must file a degree plan with the institution as soon as practicable but not later than by the completion of 45 credit hours of course work.
- Each undergraduate student who transfers to a public four-year institution with at least 45 credit hours of course work must file a degree plan with the institution during the student’s first semester at the institution.
- Each degree-seeking undergraduate student enrolled at a community college must file a degree plan with the institution on entering the institution.

- A degree plan must be developed in consultation with an academic advisor in the student's degree program or, if an academic advisor is not available in the student's degree program, any academic advisor at the institution.
- The degree plan must also follow a pathway to a degree as described below.

Pathways to a Degree

Each public institution of higher education in the state must:

- Develop a pathway system whereby public institutions of higher education establish graduation progress benchmarks for each academic major and for the general education program for students who have not declared a major;
- Require the pathway for each first-time degree-seeking student to include credit-bearing mathematics and English courses in the first 24 credit hours; and
- Require the pathway for each degree-seeking student enrolled in a developmental course in mathematics, reading, or English concurrent with or in the semester immediately following completion of the developmental course.
- The benchmarks established shall specify the credit and course criteria that indicate satisfactory progress toward a degree.
- Students falling behind the program benchmarks shall be required to consult with an academic advisor before registration.

Financial Aid for Community College Transfer Students

Each public four-year institution of higher education must dedicate a portion of institutional financial aid to provide financial assistance to resident undergraduate students that transfer with an associate's degree from a community college in the state.

Standard Number of Credit Hours

Except as discussed below, the standard number of credits required for a baccalaureate degree from a public four-year higher education institution are 120 credit hours; beginning with fall 2015, and

Beginning the Fall 2015, the standard number of credits for an associate's degree from a public community college is 60 credit hours.

The standard number of credits required for a baccalaureate degree (i.e., 120) does not apply if

- the degree program is defined as a five-year baccalaureate degree program;
- professional accreditation requires a higher number of credit hours or requires course work that cannot be completed in 120 credit hours; or
- certification requirements result in a need for credit hours in excess of 120.

The standard number of credits required for an associate's degree (i.e., 60) does not apply if

- the degree program is defined as more than a two-year associate's degree;
- professional accreditation requires a higher number of credit hours or requires course work that cannot be completed in 60 credits; or

- certification requirements result in a need for credit hours in excess of 60.

The governing boards in consultation with MHEC may approve additional exceptions to the credit hour requirements.

Dual Enrollment

“Dually enrolled student” is a student enrolled in a secondary school in the State and in an institution of higher education in the State.

The requirement that a recipient of an Early College Access Grant be a resident of the state is repealed.

A public institution of higher education may not charge tuition to a dually enrolled student.

For each dually enrolled student who is enrolled in a public school in the county, the county board (LEA) shall pay up to a maximum of four courses in which the student is enrolled while the student is a public secondary school in the State:

- For a public four-year institution of higher education, 75% of the cost of tuition; and
- For a community college, the lesser of 5% of the target per pupil foundation amount or 75% of the cost of tuition. *(See chart at end of report for LEA reimbursement to community colleges)*

For each course in excess of four in which a dually enrolled student is enrolled, the LEA shall pay:

- For a public four-year institution of higher education, 90% of the cost of tuition; and
- For a community college, the lesser of 5% of the target per pupil foundation amount or 90% of the cost of tuition.

(See chart on page for LEA reimbursement to community colleges)

- LEAs may charge the student for reimbursement up to 90% for the first four courses and 100% of costs thereafter. FARM students cannot be charged.
- A local board of education must consider the financial ability of students when setting fees and waive the fee for students who demonstrate financial need.
- Prior agreements between a public school and a public institution of higher education take precedence if there is a fiscal advantage to the student.

Each local board of education must make all high school students who meet mutually agreed-on enrollment requirements aware of dual enrollment programs.

Maryland Longitudinal Data

By December 15 of each year, the Maryland Longitudinal Data Center must report to the Governor and the General Assembly, disaggregated by local school system, on

- the number of students who are dually enrolled, and

- the number and course name of the courses in which these students enroll at the high school and at the public institution of higher education.

P-20 Leadership Council

The bill adds to the duties of the P-20 Leadership Council the following: ensuring college readiness and college completion strategies are implemented.

By December 1, 2014, and every two years thereafter, the council must report on the progress of implementing college and career readiness and college completion strategies established in the bill.

Academic Course Articulation Data System and Academic Course Transferability Study

By December 31, 2013, MHEC's Segmental Advisory Council must submit a report on Maryland's academic course articulation data system and academic course transferability between institutions of higher education in the State.

The report must include:

- A review of the online articulation data system currently in use, known as the Articulation System of Maryland Colleges and Universities (ARTSYS), and whether improvements to the transparency and user-friendly functionality of ARTSYS can be accomplished in a timely manner;
- A review of whether there is an alternative articulation data system available and, if so, the cost and schedule of implementation of the alternative system;
- An analysis of any gaps and deficiencies in the articulation of academic course equivalencies amongst segments of higher education;
- Recommendations to establish a course articulation system that is transparent and user-friendly for students and administrators at institutions of higher education; and
- Recommendations on how to maximize degree credit transferability in a cost- and time efficient manner.

Data

By December 31, 2017, MHEC in collaboration with MSDE, USM, Morgan, St. Mary's and MACC shall report on the academic, enrollment and financial impacts of being a dually enrolled student.

By December 1 of each year, MHEC must submit to the Department of Legislative Services the identified data in compliance with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act that is collected from institutions of higher education and submitted to Complete College America (CCA).

By December 15, 2013, MSDE in collaboration with the LEAs and MHEC and with input from other stakeholders shall study the transition courses and examine the development, context and implementation of transition courses to be delivered to students in the 12th grade who are not college and career ready at the end of the 11th grade. The study shall include the alignment of transition courses with the Common Core State curriculum, shall determine the appropriate

assessment to be used to determine college and career ready, and shall include the number of credits toward graduation that students have accumulated upon entering 12th grade. It is the intent of the General Assembly that separate high schools diplomas not be established.

LEA Reimbursement to Community Colleges per Dually Enrolled Course

Community College	Fall 2012 Tuition	75% Tuition	5% of Per Pupil Foundation Amount		LEA per Course
			FY13	FY14	
Allegany College of Maryland	\$315.00	\$236.25	\$338.05	\$341.45	236.25
Anne Arundel Community College	\$291.00	\$218.25	\$338.05	\$341.45	218.25
Baltimore City Community College	\$264.00	\$198.00	\$338.05	\$341.45	198.00
Carroll Community College	\$318.00	\$238.50	\$338.05	\$341.45	238.50
Cecil College	\$321.00	\$240.75	\$338.05	\$341.45	240.75
Chesapeake College	\$285.00	\$213.75	\$338.05	\$341.45	213.75
College of Southern Maryland	\$312.00	\$234.00	\$338.05	\$341.45	234.00
CC of Baltimore County	\$333.00	\$249.75	\$338.05	\$341.45	249.75
Frederick Community College	\$327.00	\$245.25	\$338.05	\$341.45	245.25
Garrett College	\$270.00	\$202.50	\$338.05	\$341.45	202.50
Hagerstown Community College	\$318.00	\$238.50	\$338.05	\$341.45	238.50
Harford Community College	\$261.00	\$195.75	\$338.05	\$341.45	195.75
Howard Community College	\$372.00	\$279.00	\$338.05	\$341.45	279.00
Montgomery College	\$336.00	\$252.00	\$338.05	\$341.45	252.00
Prince George's CCC	\$294.00	\$220.50	\$338.05	\$341.45	220.50
Wor-Wic Community College	\$279.75	\$209.81	\$338.05	\$341.45	209.81

Note: Assumes 3-credit course based on per credit hour tuition rate for fall 2012

Department of Legislative Services, April 2013

	Target Per Pupil Foundation Amount					
	FY 2013	FY 2014	Est. FY 2015	Est. FY 2016	Est. FY 2017	Est. FY 2018
Per Pupil	\$6,761	\$6,829	\$6,897	\$7,042	\$7,196	\$7,346
@5%	\$338.05	\$341.45	\$344.85	\$352.10	\$359.80	\$367.30

Source: Department of Legislative Services

