

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 1274  
Ways and Means

(Delegate Miller, *et al.*)

Education, Energy, and the Environment

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**Education - Posthumous Diploma Awards - Established (Eric's Law)**

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This bill requires a local school system to award a posthumous honorary diploma to a deceased student who was, at the time of the student's death enrolled in any grade from kindergarten through grade 12 in a public school. The bill requires that a diploma be awarded only upon written request of a parent, legal guardian, or next of kin. Posthumous diplomas awarded under the bill are ceremonial and do not confer legal rights associated with academic completion. Any diploma awarded under the bill may not be included in graduation rate calculations. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. The bill applies only to local school systems.

**Local Effect:** Local school system expenditures may increase minimally to process requests and issue posthumous diplomas; however, any costs are expected to be absorbable within existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:**

*High School Diploma Requirements*

With the advice of the State Superintendent of Schools, the State Board of Education must establish minimum requirements for issuing certificates and diplomas by public and private

high schools. Local school systems may establish graduation requirements beyond the minimum requirements established by the board.

According to regulations, to be awarded a high school diploma, a student entering grade 9 in the 2021-2022 school year or later must be enrolled in a Maryland public school system and have earned a minimum of 22 credits in specified subjects.

**Local Fiscal Effect:** Local school system expenditures may increase minimally to process requests and verify eligibility for posthumous diplomas. MSDE advises that implementation can be managed with existing resources. Several local school systems, including Anne Arundel County Public Schools and Wicomico County Public Schools, report no fiscal impact, while Frederick County Public Schools advises that any additional diploma printing costs are negligible and absorbable within existing resources.

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### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Frederick County Public Schools; Wicomico County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 8, 2026  
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