

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1305
Ways and Means

(Delegate Kaiser, *et al.*)

State Child Welfare System - Reporting

This bill requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to annually report to the General Assembly and the Department of Human Services (DHS) on the number of foster youth who enroll in college and graduate within six years. In reporting this, and other information regarding children and foster youth in the State child welfare system per current law, MSDE must include, where appropriate, comparison data for children and students not in the State child welfare system. Further, by December 1, 2026, MSDE, in cooperation with DHS, must develop and submit a report to the General Assembly on improving outcomes for students in the State child welfare system. **The bill takes effect October 1, 2026, and provisions related to the report to the General Assembly only terminate after September 30, 2027.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. MSDE and DHS can meet reporting requirements using existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The one-time report due to the General Assembly must:

- identify each State agency that provides services for foster youth;

- specifically for children and foster youth students, identify needs and gaps in services that could improve educational outcomes;
- identify best practices from other states that have demonstrated success with college and career readiness for foster youth;
- provide recommendations for improving educational outcomes for foster youth students in the State;
- evaluate the effectiveness of the information reported regarding children and foster youth in the State child welfare system under § 5-1312 of the Family Law Article ; and
- provide recommendations for improving data collection and reporting requirements on foster youth students.

Current Law: Under § 5-1312 of the Family Law Article, DHS must report to the General Assembly and publish on the DHS website information on numerous specified items regarding children and foster youth in the State child welfare system.

Under Chapters 315 and 316 of 2021, as indicated within § 5-1312, regarding children and foster youth in the State child welfare system, MSDE must annually report the (1) stability of school placements; (2) number of children with individualized education plans; (3) number of children with a plan under § 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act for students with disabilities; (4) number of children who have been retained a grade; (5) number of children who graduate from high school; (6) dropout rates; (7) number of children who are truant students; (8) rates of absenteeism; (9) rates of suspension; (10) rates of expulsion; and (11) number of school-based arrests.

Additional Comments: Though current law refers to individualized education *plans*, the Department of Legislative Services assumes this is intended to mean individualized education *programs*.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center; Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Higher Education Commission; Department of Human Services; Department of Legislative Services

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jg/clb

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