

**Department of Legislative Services**  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2026 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Third Reader - Revised**

House Bill 29

(Delegate Wilkins, *et al.*)

Ways and Means

Education, Energy, and the Environment

**Public High Schools - Post College and Career Readiness Pathways - Alterations**

This bill repeals the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Committee’s CTE Skills Standards Advisory Committee and alters the membership, purpose, and duties of the CTE Committee. The bill also extends the date by which the State Board of Education (SBE) and Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) may limit courses for dually enrolled post-college and career readiness (post-CCR) students to fiscal 2030. Lastly, the bill authorizes a local school system to develop and establish income eligibility guidelines and procedures for payment of costs for the competitive entry college preparatory post-CCR pathway available to high school students, as specified. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures increase by \$96,600 beginning fiscal 2027 for staff at the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) to re-align curriculum. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) can re-align standards with existing resources. The Governor’s Workforce Development Board (GWDB) advises that the bill streamlines CTE Committee operations. MSDE and AIB can collaborate with the CTE Committee as necessary with existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	96,600	105,500	110,200	115,000	119,800
Net Effect	(\$96,600)	(\$105,500)	(\$110,200)	(\$115,000)	(\$119,800)

*Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease*

**Local Effect:** Local school system expenditures may decrease, potentially significantly, due to not having to cover post-CCR pathway program fees for some students, but a reliable estimate is not feasible, as discussed below. Local school system payments for courses of dually enrolled students may also be affected, but any increase or decrease is assumed to

be minimal, as discussed below. No effect on revenues as the bill does not alter education aid formulas.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

---

## Analysis

### Bill Summary:

#### *Career and Technical Education Committee*

The purpose of the CTE Committee is to *direct and coordinate* the development of an integrated, globally competitive and *aligned system* for providing CTE to Maryland students, as specified. In addition to other criteria under current law, members of the CTE Committee must reflect the industrial diversity of the State. The chair of the committee must be selected from among members who are employer representatives.

The duties of the CTE Committee are altered and expanded to require it to:

- adopt and, where appropriate, develop and regularly update a comprehensive and cohesive system of *career pathway information, including necessary skills, knowledge, competencies, and credentialing standards* to drive the State's *workforce development* and CTE systems;
- make recommendations and provide guidance on setting the occupational standards necessary for a strong CTE system that forms the basis for the post-CCR pathways required under current law;
- in collaboration with and subject to approval by GWDB, develop and maintain a list of high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand priority occupations for the State; and
- make recommendations to State agencies and offices, as specified, on adjustments to the State's CTE system to ensure that it (1) remains globally competitive; (2) is administered according to global best practices; and (3) leverages the career pathway and occupational standards, as specified.

For each listed high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand occupation, the CTE Committee must develop, in collaboration with GWDB, publicly accessible career pathway information that must include specified elements. All State agencies and relevant workforce development and education programs must use the occupational list and career pathway information as a guideline for curriculum alignment, credentialing, and career advancement.

### *Post-college and Career Readiness Payment of Costs*

The bill authorizes a local school system to develop and establish income eligibility guidelines and procedures for payment of costs for the competitive entry college preparatory post-CCR pathway available to high school students. Guidelines must specify that a student with a family income below 300% of the federal poverty level must be provided access to the competitive entry college preparatory post-CCR pathway at no cost to the student or the student's parents or guardians. The bill also makes a technical clarification to consistently refer to parents *or guardians* in reference to the cost of access to specified post-CCR pathways.

### *Post-college and Career Readiness Pathway Courses*

The bill extends from the end of fiscal 2027 to the end of fiscal 2030 the time frame during which SBE and AIB may, in consultation with local school systems, limit the number and types of courses that a student dually enrolled at the student's public high school and at an institution of higher education may enroll in during the school year at the institution of higher education as part of the post-CCR pathway.

### **Current Law:**

#### *Blueprint for Maryland's Future*

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future (the Blueprint) legislation (including Chapter 771 of 2019, Chapters 36 and 55 of 2021, and Chapter 33 of 2022) established new programs, updated education funding formulas, and, among other provisions, included mechanisms for holding units of State and local government accountable for implementing the Blueprint.

State and local government units responsible for implementing an element of the Blueprint must develop implementation plans consistent with a specified Comprehensive Implementation Plan that describe the goals, objectives, and strategies that will be used to improve student achievement and meet the Blueprint recommendations for each segment of the student population.

#### *Career and Technical Education*

Chapter 36 of 2021 (Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Implementation) created the CTE Committee as a unit within the GWDB. The purpose of the committee is to build an integrated, globally competitive framework for providing CTE to Maryland students in public schools, postsecondary institutions, and the workforce. The committee is staffed by the Maryland Department of Labor. The Governor, President of the Senate, and

Speaker of the House of Delegates must jointly appoint a chair of the committee from among its members.

Chapter 36 also created the CTE Skills Standards Advisory Committee to make recommendations and provide advice to the CTE Committee on setting the occupational standards necessary for a strong CTE system. The advisory committee's recommendations must form the basis for a post-CCR CTE pathway required by the Blueprint.

### *College and Career Readiness Standard*

The State Board of Education (SBE) was required to adopt a CCR standard as specified in English language arts, mathematics, and, when practicable, science. MSDE was required to develop and begin to implement a plan to publicize the standards by January 1, 2022.

It is the goal of the State that students enrolled in public school meet the CCR standard before the end of grade 10 and no later than the time the student graduates from high school. It is also the goal of the State that each student enrolled in public school, regardless of the student's race, ethnicity, gender, address, socioeconomic status, or the language spoken in the student's home, have equitable access to CCR and meet the CCR standard at an equal rate.

Each student must be assessed no later than grade 10 by a method adopted by SBE to determine whether the student meets the CCR standard. Meeting the CCR standard initially required a student to achieve the equivalent of a score of 4 or 5 in the mathematics and English portions of the Partnership for Assessment for College and Career Readiness grade 10 assessments, on the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) grade 10 assessments, or any successor assessments. Statute required MSDE to conduct an empirical study of the interim CCR standard to determine whether the standard adequately measured students' readiness for college or careers. After completion of the required empirical study, the CCR standard was required to reflect the results of the study.

On January 23, 2024, SBE adopted a new CCR standard, informed by the study's results. Proficiency under the new CCR standard can be demonstrated in two ways. The first method is for a student who has earned a high school grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 or higher. Such a student must also earn a grade of A, B, or C in Algebra I, or score proficient or above on the Algebra I MCAP. The second method entails a student scoring proficient or above on both the English Language Arts 10 and the Algebra I MCAP.

These standards were expanded in the State board's adoption of a March 2025 [CCR Standard Policy Document](#). The policy document specifies that, beginning with the graduating class of 2030-2031, the Math Mastery option of the CCR standard is altered to define math mastery as at least either (1) earning a final course grade of A,B, or C in *both*

Algebra I and II; (2) scoring proficient or above on the integrated Algebra statewide assessment; or (3) earning a final course grade of A, B, or C in an Advanced Mathematics Pathways course in which integrated Algebra is a prerequisite. The updated policy document also outlines a number of alternative CCR measures students may meet to be considered CCR ready, including meeting either:

- Earning a one-year high school GPA of 3.00 or higher in their 11th grade or 12th grade year (with a grade of A, B, or C in a high school level math course);
- Earning an A, B, or C in two dual enrollment or dual credit courses (one math and one English language arts course);
- Meeting performance thresholds on at least two advanced academics (Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate programs) at any points in the student’s high school career (one math and one English language arts, science, or social studies);
- Meeting College and Career Readiness Benchmarks on the SAT, PSAT, or ACT;
- Obtaining a score of “at Target” on both the math and English language arts Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessments (for students determined eligible in accordance with the student’s individualized education program teams);
- Earning silver or better on the ACT WorkKeys National Career Readiness Certificate assessment;
- Earn a State-approved Industry-Recognized Credential, aligned with a CTE or Comprehensive Arts pathway;
- Completing a high school level of a registered apprenticeship program; or
- Earning a score of at least 50 on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery.

#### *Post-college and Career Ready Pathways*

Each local board of education must provide all students who meet the CCR standard with access to specific post-CCR pathways *at no cost (including fees) to them or their parents* (emphasis added). These pathways include (1) a competitive entry college preparatory program chosen by the local board of education, as specified; (2) a program that allows a student, through an early college program or dual enrollment at a student’s high school and an institution of higher education to earn an associate degree or at least 60 credits toward a bachelor’s degree; and (3) a robust set of CTE programs, as specified, that allow a student to complete specified credentials or apprenticeships.

A public high school must provide access to these programs directly or through another public school in the county. A student meeting the CCR standard must enroll in at least one post-CCR pathway, with counseling and advising services offered to help each student choose at least one pathway aligning with the student’s goals. SBE must adopt regulations that guarantee, to the extent practicable, statewide uniformity in the quality of the

post-CCR pathways, meeting the specified CCR pathway requirements, and granting high school graduation credit for the CCR pathway programs.

### *College and Career Ready Funding*

In addition to funding for non-CCR and CCR students provided within the foundation formula, funding is provided for students who have met the CCR standard adopted by SBE. Per-pupil funding, covered by both State and local shares, begins at \$517 in fiscal 2022 and is adjusted for inflation each subsequent year. Post-CCR funding is based on the number of students in grades 9 through 12 who have met the post-CCR standard. For fiscal 2026, this per-pupil funding is providing local school systems with an estimated total of \$31.8 million in State funds and \$31.8 million in local funding to facilitate provision of post-CCR pathways to students through the Blueprint funding formula. Fiscal 2027 funding will be \$594 for each student in grades 9 through 12 meeting the CCR standard in spring 2025.

Each fiscal year, the State must distribute the State share of the CCR program amount to each local board of education. The local board of education must distribute to each school the minimum school funding amount for CCR, which is 75% of the per-pupil amount.

### *Dual Enrollment*

A public institution of higher education may not charge tuition to a dually enrolled student. A public school system must pay 75% of the cost of tuition for a public institution of higher education for its students. If there is an agreement before July 1, 2020, between a public school and a public institution of higher education in which the public institution charges less than 75% of tuition to a dually enrolled student, the local board must pay the cost of tuition under the existing agreement. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Revisions (Chapter 55) expanded dual enrollment to include noncredit courses leading to an industry-recognized certificate or license.

Under Chapter 164 of 2024, to phase in expansion of dual enrollment to maximize the number of students who can earn the maximum number of dual enrollment credits consistent with the phased increases in school funding, SBE and AIB, in consultation with each local education agency, may, for fiscal 2025 through 2027, limit the number and types of courses that a student dually enrolled at a public high school and at an institution of higher education may enroll in during the school year at the institution of higher education as part of the post-CCR pathway.

*Federal Poverty Level*

In 2025, the federal poverty level for a family of four is \$33,000, so 300% of that level is \$99,000.

**State Expenditures:** MHEC incurs staffing costs to ensure that relevant postsecondary programs align with a focus on the priority occupations list established under the bill and to direct and coordinate the development of an integrated, globally competitive framework for providing CTE to Maryland students in postsecondary education. General fund expenditures increase by \$96,616, which accounts for a 90-day start-up delay from the bill’s effective date. Though MHEC advises it will require three additional positions, this estimate reflects the cost of hiring one additional education policy analyst. It includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Position	1.0
Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$76,475
Other Expenses	<u>20,141</u>
Total FY 2027 MHEC Expenditures	\$96,616

Future year expenditures reflect a full salary with annual increases and employee turnover as well as annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

**Local Expenditures:** The bill authorizes, but does not require, a local school board to require students who meet the CCR standard and have family incomes above 300% of the federal poverty level to pay fees associated with the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program, the Cambridge AICE Diploma Program, or a comparable program consisting of Advanced Placement courses specified by the College Board (*i.e.*, the competitive entry college preparatory pathway programs). To the extent that a local school system institutes such a requirement, and to the extent that eligible students opt for one of these post-CCR programs, local school system expenditures decrease due to not paying related fees for those students. A reliable estimate is not feasible because it cannot be known which school systems elect to adopt such policies, or how many eligible students opt for those post-CCR pathway programs in those counties. The savings may be significant in some local school systems that elect to adopt guidelines authorized by the bill.

It is assumed that if specified entities exercise authority to limit the number and types of courses that a dually enrolled student may take, the number of *students* taking advantage of dual enrollment courses increases, but there is no determinate impact on the number of *courses* for public institutions of higher education to provide to dual enrollment students. Therefore, the effect on local board of education payments for dual enrollment is indeterminate but assumed to be minimal on a statewide basis.

## **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 1262 of 2025.

**Designated Cross File:** SB 343 (Senator King) - Education, Energy, and the Environment.

**Information Source(s):** Accountability and Implementation Board; Maryland Department of Labor; Maryland Higher Education Commission; Maryland State Department of Education; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Baltimore City Public Schools; Baltimore County Public Schools; Frederick County Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; Prince George's County Public Schools; St. Mary's County Public Schools; Wicomico County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 27, 2026  
js/mcr Third Reader - April 3, 2026  
Revised - Amendment(s) - April 3, 2026

---

Analysis by: Michael E. Sousane

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510