

HOUSE BILL 479

F1, F2

6lr1391
CF SB 529

By: **Delegates Patterson, Boaf, Davis, Fennell, J. Long, McComas, Odom, and Turner**

Introduced and read first time: January 23, 2026

Assigned to: Ways and Means

Reassigned: Ways and Means and Appropriations, January 28, 2026

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 30, 2026

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Southern Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway ~~Program and Program~~**
3 **Workgroup – Establishment**

4 FOR the purpose of ~~establishing the Southern Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway~~
5 ~~Program; requiring the State Department of Education to administer and~~
6 ~~implement, in consultation with the Maryland Higher Education Commission, the~~
7 ~~Program subject to a certain condition; requiring a Program student to be considered~~
8 ~~a dually enrolled student for a certain purpose;~~ requiring the University System of
9 Maryland to develop, in consultation with the State Department of Education and
10 the Maryland Higher Education Commission, ~~the~~ certain recommendations for a
11 Southern Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway Program and ~~the~~ a teacher
12 preparation pathway in a certain manner; establishing the Southern Maryland
13 Early College Teacher Pathway Program Workgroup; and generally relating to ~~the~~
14 ~~Southern Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway Program and~~ the Southern
15 Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway Program Workgroup.

16 ~~By adding to~~
17 ~~Article Education~~
18 ~~Section 7-2201 through 7-2204 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 22. Southern~~
19 ~~Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway Program”~~
20 ~~Annotated Code of Maryland~~
21 ~~(2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)~~

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 BY adding to
2 Article – Education
3 Section 12–124
4 Annotated Code of Maryland
5 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

6 ~~BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,~~
7 ~~Article – Education~~
8 ~~Section 15–127~~
9 ~~Annotated Code of Maryland~~
10 ~~(2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)~~

11 Preamble

12 WHEREAS, Maryland faces a critical shortage of qualified teachers, especially in
13 high–need schools and rural areas such as Southern Maryland where local school systems
14 report persistent vacancies in core subject areas and growing challenges in retaining
15 educators; and

16 WHEREAS, The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future calls for expanding high–quality
17 pathways into the teaching profession, increasing college readiness, and improving
18 workforce pipelines in every region of the State; and

19 WHEREAS, Nationally, early college programs have proven to increase college
20 enrollment, degree attainment, and workforce participation — particularly among
21 first–generation and low–income students — and can be leveraged to build stronger and
22 more diverse teacher pipelines; and

23 WHEREAS, Despite strong national evidence of success, Maryland lags behind most
24 states in providing early postsecondary opportunities for its students; and

25 WHEREAS, As of 2023, Maryland ranked low nationally for dual enrollment
26 participation as a percent of high school enrollment at 10% and ranked low nationally for
27 dual enrollment as a percent of undergraduate enrollment at 7%; and

28 WHEREAS, As of 2022, participation in dual enrollment and early college programs
29 in Maryland is overly concentrated at community colleges with only 5% of students enrolled
30 through public four–year institutions — compared to approximately 28% nationally —
31 limiting exposure to bachelor’s degree pathways, including teacher preparation programs;
32 and

33 WHEREAS, Southern Maryland’s geography, limited access to nearby four–year
34 institutions, and workforce needs make it an ideal region for a program that bridges high
35 schools, community colleges, and the University System of Maryland regional higher
36 education centers to create a seamless teacher preparation pathway; and

1 WHEREAS, Establishing a Southern Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway
2 Program will align with the Blueprint’s goals; now, therefore,

3 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
4 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

5 Article – Education

6 ~~SUBTITLE 22. SOUTHERN MARYLAND EARLY COLLEGE TEACHER PATHWAY~~
7 ~~PROGRAM.~~

8 ~~7-2201.~~

9 ~~IN THIS SUBTITLE, “PROGRAM” MEANS THE SOUTHERN MARYLAND EARLY~~
10 ~~COLLEGE TEACHER PATHWAY PROGRAM.~~

11 ~~7-2202.~~

12 ~~(A) THERE IS A SOUTHERN MARYLAND EARLY COLLEGE TEACHER~~
13 ~~PATHWAY PROGRAM.~~

14 ~~(B) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO:~~

15 ~~(1) CREATE A STRUCTURED, CREDIT-BEARING PATHWAY FOR HIGH~~
16 ~~SCHOOL STUDENTS TO BEGIN PREPARATION TO TEACH PRIMARY AND SECONDARY~~
17 ~~EDUCATION;~~

18 ~~(2) EXPAND ACCESS TO AND ENSURE THE AFFORDABILITY OF~~
19 ~~HIGHER EDUCATION FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO ARE:~~

20 ~~(i) HISTORICALLY UNDERREPRESENTED IN HIGHER~~
21 ~~EDUCATION; AND~~

22 ~~(ii) FROM RURAL AREAS OF THE STATE;~~

23 ~~(3) BUILD A STRONG AND DIVERSE TEACHER PIPELINE TO SERVE THE~~
24 ~~STATE’S PUBLIC PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS; AND~~

25 ~~(4) SERVE AS A MODEL TO BE REPLICATED FOR REGIONAL~~
26 ~~IMPLEMENTATION STATEWIDE.~~

27 ~~(C) THE DEPARTMENT, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE MARYLAND HIGHER~~
28 ~~EDUCATION COMMISSION, SHALL ADMINISTER AND IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM ON~~

1 ~~COMPLETION OF THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND'S DEVELOPMENT OF THE~~
2 ~~PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 12-124 OF THIS ARTICLE.~~

3 ~~7-2203.~~

4 ~~A PROGRAM STUDENT SHALL BE CONSIDERED A DUALY ENROLLED STUDENT~~
5 ~~FOR PURPOSES OF § 15-127 OF THIS ARTICLE AND MAY NOT BE REQUIRED TO PAY~~
6 ~~ANY COST THAT IS RELATED TO ENROLLMENT OR PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM,~~
7 ~~INCLUDING TUITION AND MANDATORY FEES.~~

8 ~~7-2204.~~

9 ~~THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO CARRY OUT THE~~
10 ~~PROVISIONS OF THIS SUBTITLE.~~

11 12-124.

12 (A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS
13 INDICATED.

14 (2) "PROGRAM" ~~HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 7-2201 OF THIS~~
15 ~~ARTICLE~~ MEANS THE SOUTHERN MARYLAND EARLY COLLEGE TEACHER PATHWAY
16 PROGRAM.

17 (3) "PROGRAM WORKGROUP" MEANS THE SOUTHERN MARYLAND
18 EARLY COLLEGE TEACHER PATHWAY PROGRAM WORKGROUP.

19 (B) IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION AND IN
20 CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT AND THE COMMISSION, THE UNIVERSITY
21 SHALL DEVELOP ~~THE~~ RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A SOUTHERN MARYLAND EARLY
22 COLLEGE TEACHER PATHWAY PROGRAM AND ~~THE~~ A TEACHER PREPARATION
23 PATHWAY IN SOUTHERN MARYLAND TO:

24 (1) CREATE A STRUCTURED, CREDIT-BEARING PATHWAY FOR HIGH
25 SCHOOL STUDENTS TO BEGIN PREPARATION TO TEACH PRIMARY AND SECONDARY
26 EDUCATION;

27 (2) EXPAND ACCESS TO AND ENSURE THE AFFORDABILITY OF
28 HIGHER EDUCATION FOR ALL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, INCLUDING STUDENTS WHO
29 ARE:

30 (i) HISTORICALLY UNDERREPRESENTED IN HIGHER
31 EDUCATION; AND

1 **(II) FROM RURAL AREAS OF THE STATE;**

2 **(3) BUILD A STRONG AND DIVERSE TEACHER PIPELINE TO SERVE THE**
3 **STATE'S PUBLIC PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS; AND**

4 **(4) SERVE AS A MODEL TO BE REPLICATED FOR REGIONAL**
5 **IMPLEMENTATION STATEWIDE.**

6 **(c) (1) THE UNIVERSITY SHALL CONVENE A SOUTHERN MARYLAND**
7 **EARLY COLLEGE TEACHER PATHWAY PROGRAM WORKGROUP TO DEVELOP THE**
8 **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROGRAM AND THE TEACHER PREPARATION**
9 **PATHWAY IN SOUTHERN MARYLAND.**

10 **(2) THE PROGRAM WORKGROUP SHALL CONSIST OF THE FOLLOWING**
11 **MEMBERS:**

12 **(I) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR,**
13 **APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR;**

14 **(II) ONE MEMBER OF THE SENATE OF MARYLAND, APPOINTED**
15 **BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE;**

16 **(III) ONE MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES, APPOINTED**
17 **BY THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE;**

18 **(IV) THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT, OR THE STATE**
19 **SUPERINTENDENT'S DESIGNEE;**

20 **(V) THE CHAIR OF THE ACCOUNTABILITY AND**
21 **IMPLEMENTATION BOARD, OR THE CHAIR'S DESIGNEE;**

22 **(VI) THE SECRETARY, OR THE SECRETARY'S DESIGNEE;**

23 **(VII) THE CHANCELLOR, OR THE CHANCELLOR'S DESIGNEE;**

24 **(VIII) THE SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR FOR ACADEMIC AND**
25 **STUDENT AFFAIRS OF THE UNIVERSITY, OR THE SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR'S**
26 **DESIGNEE;**

27 **(IX) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM**
28 **OF MARYLAND AT SOUTHERN MARYLAND, OR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S**
29 **DESIGNEE;**

1 (X) THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND,
2 COLLEGE PARK CAMPUS, OR THE PRESIDENT'S DESIGNEE;

3 (XI) THE PRESIDENT OF TOWSON UNIVERSITY, OR THE
4 PRESIDENT'S DESIGNEE;

5 (XII) THE PRESIDENT OF ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND,
6 OR THE PRESIDENT'S DESIGNEE;

7 ~~(XII)~~ (XIII) THE PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE OF SOUTHERN
8 MARYLAND, OR THE PRESIDENT'S DESIGNEE;

9 (XIV) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE MARYLAND
10 ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES, OR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S
11 DESIGNEE;

12 ~~(XIII)~~ (XV) THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS, OR THE COUNTY
13 SUPERINTENDENTS' DESIGNEES, OF THE FOLLOWING COUNTIES:

- 14 1. CALVERT COUNTY;
- 15 2. CHARLES COUNTY; AND
- 16 3. ST. MARY'S COUNTY; ~~AND~~

17 (XVI) ONE REPRESENTATIVE, WHO IS A LICENSED
18 SCHOOL-BASED EMPLOYEE WITH EXPERIENCE IMPLEMENTING POSTSECONDARY
19 READINESS OR EARLY TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS, FROM EACH OF THE
20 FOLLOWING ENTITIES:

21 1. THE CALVERT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION,
22 DESIGNATED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION, OR THE PRESIDENT'S
23 DESIGNEE;

24 2. THE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF CHARLES
25 COUNTY, DESIGNATED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION, OR THE
26 PRESIDENT'S DESIGNEE; AND

27 3. THE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF SAINT MARY'S
28 COUNTY, DESIGNATED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION, OR THE
29 PRESIDENT'S DESIGNEE; AND

30 ~~(XIV)~~ (XVII) ANY OTHER MEMBERS DESIGNATED BY THE
31 UNIVERSITY.

1 (3) ON OR BEFORE JUNE 30, 2029, THE UNIVERSITY SHALL REPORT
 2 TO THE DEPARTMENT, THE COMMISSION, THE GOVERNOR, AND, IN ACCORDANCE
 3 WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, THE ~~GENERAL ASSEMBLY~~
 4 SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE AND THE
 5 HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE ON:

6 (I) THE PROGRAM WORKGROUP'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
 7 THE PROGRAM AND THE TEACHER PREPARATION PATHWAY IN SOUTHERN
 8 MARYLAND, INCLUDING:

9 1. THE STRUCTURE OF THE TEACHER PREPARATION
 10 PATHWAY;

11 2. AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE TEACHER
 12 PREPARATION PATHWAY; AND

13 3. ANY LEGISLATIVE OR REGULATORY CHANGES
 14 NECESSARY FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TEACHER PREPARATION
 15 PATHWAY; AND

16 (II) THE USE OF STATE FUNDS TO DEVELOP THE PROGRAM
 17 WORKGROUP'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROGRAM AND THE TEACHER
 18 PREPARATION PATHWAY IN SOUTHERN MARYLAND.

19 (D) FOR EACH OF FISCAL YEARS 2028 AND 2029, THE GOVERNOR SHALL
 20 INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET BILL AN APPROPRIATION OF ~~\$250,000~~ \$125,000
 21 TO THE UNIVERSITY TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRAM
 22 WORKGROUP'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROGRAM AND THE TEACHER
 23 PREPARATION PATHWAY IN SOUTHERN MARYLAND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS
 24 SECTION.

25 ~~15-127.~~

26 ~~(a) (1) In this section, "dually enrolled student" means a student who is dually~~
 27 ~~enrolled in:~~

28 ~~(i) A secondary school in the State; and~~

29 ~~(ii) An institution of higher education in the State.~~

30 ~~(2) "Dually enrolled student" includes a student enrolled in a credit or~~
 31 ~~noncredit certificate or license program, course, or sequence of courses that leads to~~
 32 ~~certification or licensure at an institution of higher education in the State.~~

1 ~~(b) A public institution of higher education may not charge tuition to a dually~~
2 ~~enrolled student.~~

3 ~~(c) Subject to subsection (d) of this section, for each dually enrolled student who~~
4 ~~is enrolled in a public school in the county, the county board shall pay 75% of the cost of~~
5 ~~tuition for a public institution of higher education in the State.~~

6 ~~(d) (1) If there is an agreement before July 1, 2020, between a public school~~
7 ~~and a public institution of higher education in which the public institution of higher~~
8 ~~education charges less than 75% of the cost of tuition to a dually enrolled student, the~~
9 ~~county board shall pay the cost of tuition under the existing agreement.~~

10 ~~(2) Every 2 years, a public school and a public institution of higher~~
11 ~~education may evaluate and modify an agreement made under paragraph (1) of this~~
12 ~~subsection.~~

13 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
14 1, 2026. It shall remain effective for a period of 4 years and, at the end of June 30, 2030,
15 this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and
16 of no further force and effect.

Approved:

Governor.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.

President of the Senate.