

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 486

(Delegate Fennell)

Ways and Means

Education, Energy, and the Environment

Public Schools - Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day - Establishment

This bill designates November 14 each year as “Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day” to commemorate Ruby Bridges who, on November 14, 1960, became the first African American student to integrate an all-White elementary school in New Orleans, Louisiana. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must make resource materials publicly available to assist local school systems in planning a program of education for Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day. The Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day resource materials provided by MSDE may include instructional materials, as specified, and must include resources to assist teachers to engage in discussions about civil rights and social justice. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MSDE can make resources publicly available for the program using existing resources; however, resources may be temporarily diverted from current priorities.

Local Effect: None. However, local school systems may choose to implement a program of education based on the resources made available by MSDE. Any impact is at the discretion of local school systems.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The public schools must devote a part of the day to appropriate exercises for the following days: Washington’s Birthday; Lincoln’s Birthday; Veterans’ Day; Columbus Day; Arbor Day; Black History Month with an emphasis on Harriet Tubman

and Frederick Douglass and the contributions they made in the fight against slavery; and any other day of national significance.

The [Maryland Standards and Frameworks in Social Studies](#) provides students with several age-appropriate opportunities to learn about Ruby Bridges and civil rights, including those for grade 5 social studies, middle school U.S. history, and high school U.S. history and U.S. Government. State Frameworks are defined as supporting documents and provide guidance for implementing the State Standards in Social Studies, which are reviewed and adopted by the Maryland State Board of Education every eight years.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See SB 1003 and HB 493 of 2025.

Designated Cross File: SB 526 (Senator A. Washington) - Education, Energy, and the Environment.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Baltimore City Public Schools; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Baltimore County Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; Prince George's County Public Schools; Frederick County Public Schools; Wicomico County Public Schools; St. Mary's County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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