MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Preparing World-Class Students

Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

200 West Baltimore Street • Baltimore, MD 21201 • 410-767-0100 • 410-333-6442 TTY/TDD

November 22, 2013

The Honorable Martin O'Malley
State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Michael E. Busch
H-101 Sate House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller
H-107 State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Transition Courses (JCR p. 111 and MSAR #9764)

Dear Governor O'Malley, President Miller, and Speaker Busch:

Senate Bill 740, College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act of 2013 was passed during the 2013 legislative session and signed into law. The bill and a Joint Chairmen's Report (p. 111) required that on or before December 15, 2013, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) shall:

(1) Study the transition courses required under Section 7-205.1, collaboration with the Maryland Higher Education Commission, county boards of education, and input from other stakeholders;
(2) Examine development, content, and implementation of transition courses to be delivered to students in 12th grade who are not college and career ready at the end of 11th grade;
(3) Examine the alignment of the transition courses to the Common Core State Standards;
(4) Consider whether courses should be credit-bearing;
(5) Determine the appropriate assessment(s) to be used to determine college and career readiness;
(6) Include the number of credits toward graduation that students have accumulated upon entering 12th grade in each local education agency; and
(7) Address how students' level of college and career readiness will be reflected on high school transcripts.

Maryland sent a team of teachers to workshop with the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) on their transition courses this summer; another team is attending an SREB workshop later in December. The University System of Maryland, in collaboration with the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) and MSDE, has submitted a grant proposal to the Institute of Education Science (IES) to develop transition courses in Maryland Public Schools.

This grant was submitted on September 4, 2013. MSDE will learn whether the grant has been accepted in December 2013 or January 2014. While MSDE, MHEC, county educators, and county boards have been engaged in this study, transition course frameworks are still in the early stages.

I would appreciate your consideration of an eight-week extension to this reporting requirement. I believe you will find the final report on the development, implementation, and assessment of transition courses more extensive and complete. If you need additional information, please contact me or Renee Spence at (410) 767-0462 or Judy Jenkins at (410) 767-0347. Thank you so very much.

Sincerely,

Lillian M. Lowery

Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

C: Rachel Hise
Cathy Kramer

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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200 West Baltimore Street • Baltimore, MD 21201 • 410-767-0100 • 410-333-6442 TTY/TDD

March 5, 2014

The Honorable Martin O'Malley
State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller
H-107 State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Michael E. Busch
H-101 State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: **SB 740** - College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act of 2013
2014 Legislative Report of the Workgroup on Transition Courses

Dear Governor O'Malley, President Miller and Speaker Busch:

Pursuant to Senate Bill 740 enacted during the 2013 legislative session, the State Department of Education, in collaboration with the county boards of education and the Maryland Higher Education Commission, and with input from other stakeholders, shall study the transition courses required under Section 7-205.1 of the Education Article as enacted by Section 1 of this Act and examine the development, content, and implementation of transition courses to be delivered to students in the 12th grade who are not college and career ready at the end of 11th grade.

The study shall include the alignment of transition courses with the Common Core State Curriculum as well as whether the courses should be credit-bearing and should be considered to meet the requirements for high school graduation. The study shall determine the appropriate assessment to be used to determine college and career readiness and include the number of credits toward graduation that students have accumulated upon entering 12th grade in each local education agency. The study shall also address how students' level of college and career readiness will be reflected on high school transcripts. It is the intent of the General Assembly that separate high school diplomas not be established.

A report including any recommendations shall be submitted to the Governor and, in accordance with §2-1246 of the State Government Article, the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, the House Ways and Means Committee, and the House Appropriations Committee no later than December 15, 2013. In December 2013, the workgroup requested and was granted an extension for submission of the report.

Should you have questions or need additional information, please contact Judy Jenkins, Director of Curriculum, at (410) 767-0348 or by email at jjenkins@msde.state.md.us.

Sincerely,

Lillian M. Lowery

Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

C: Sen. Joan Carter Conway
Sen. Edward J. Kasemeyer
Del. Norman H. Conway
Del. Sheila E. Hixson

Workgroup Structure and Accomplishments

To address the requirements identified in the College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act of 2013, stakeholders from across the state volunteered to serve on the workgroup. The list of members is in Attachment A. While some members wanted to serve on the workgroup at large, others volunteered to serve on one of four subcommittees: Assessments, Credits/Transcripts, Mathematics Transition Course, and English Language Arts/Literacy Transition Course. The four subcommittees met to collect information, discuss critical issues, and draft recommendations. Each subcommittee shared its recommendations.

Additionally, the workgroup surveyed the local school system assistant superintendents for curriculum and instruction and the chief academic officers of the community colleges. Both groups believed that having a consistent set of expectations for transition courses was critical, but felt that local school systems should have flexibility in transition course delivery, materials of instruction, and scheduling. Each local school system was surveyed to determine how many credits are required for graduation, how many mathematics credits are required, how many credits are required for senior designation, and how many students are enrolled in Algebra II by the end of their junior year, and how many students are enrolled in Algebra II during their senior year. This data may be used to determine the impact on staffing in some local school systems. This information is presented in Attachment B.

Two teams of Maryland educators attended training on the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) transition courses for mathematics and literacy. One team attended in the summer of 2013, and the other team attended in December 2013. Although both teams felt that components of the SREB modules for both mathematics and literacy could be used, no team member felt that the modules were sufficient to be used as a transition course.

Members of the P-20 Council and members of the workgroup met this summer to apply for a grant offered by United States Department of Education, through the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), to develop transition courses. The lead agency was the University System of Maryland, and the title of the grant is *Transition, Learning and Collaboration (TLC): Collaboratively Developed Transition Courses in Maryland Public Schools.* If awarded, this grant would provide resources to support the development of the transition courses, including the recommendations delineated in the recommendations section. Notification for grant awards should be available sometime this spring.

Recommendations

The Workgroup on Transition Courses was established to study the current status of college and career readiness courses, and to examine the development, content, and implementation of transition courses as required by the College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act of 2013. This includes examining assessments that shall be used to determine college and career readiness at the end of the 11th grade year, how to identify college and career readiness on students' high school transcripts, and whether transition courses should receive high school credit.

Workgroup Recommendations:

The Workgroup on Transition Courses proposed the following recommendations for the development, content, and implementation of transition courses and college and career ready assessments.

Credits and Transcripts:

- Transition courses should receive high school credit because the course work is preparing students for college and career. Students should not receive college credit for this course work.
- High school transcripts should indicate only that the student is college and career ready; the student's score should NOT be recorded on the high school transcript.

MSDE was also asked to determine the feasibility of awarding a Maryland high school diploma regardless of whether a student has completed the minimum requisite credits or 4 years of high school. At this time, Code of Maryland Administrative Regulations (COMAR) provides options for students to receive a Maryland high school diploma if they are accepted and satisfactorily complete an Early College Admission Program, or an Early Admission to a Vocational, Technical, or Other Postsecondary School Program (COMAR 13A.03.02.10. The regulations specify how students may make this request.

Assessments to Determine College and Career Readiness:

- College and Career Readiness should be defined as listed:
    - **College Readiness:** College readiness means the expectation of student success with credit- bearing college courses in English, Language Arts, and Mathematics upon entrance into college.
    - **Career Readiness:** Career readiness means being ready to enter a career field with the prospect of advancement.
- By the end of 11th grade, all students must take an assessment to determine college and career readiness. There are several different indicators which can be used to assess a student's college readiness. Since the PARCC assessments are not ready yet, other methods for determining college and career readiness must be used. The chart below contains a list of the different current indicators that can be used to help determine a student's college readiness.

College Readiness

Assessment	**Mathematics**	**English Language Arts**	**Composite**
Accuplacer	110 +	Reading 79 + Writing 6+ Sentence Skills 90 +	NA
SAT	500 +	Reading 500 + Writing 500 +	1500 +
ACT			21 +
AP English Composition or Literature		3 +	
AP Mathematics, including: AP Calculus AB AP Calculus BC AP Statistics	3 +		
Dual Enrollment for English and Mathematics Courses			Students must earn a C or better in courses for which they are receiving a college credit

Some committee members also felt consideration should be given to IB assessments and PSAT scores. Most students take the PSAT so there would be no additional expense to those students who take the PSAT but do not take one of the other assessments. Some committee members also felt that the PARCC English 11 and PARCC Algebra II assessments should be added once these assessments have been reviewed and validated and assessment cut-scores have been determined.

The committee also believes there is a need to look at the ACT composite score and report the ACT scores out for each discipline. Additionally, some committee members felt that AP Computer Science should be included in the AP Mathematics list.

Career Readiness

Students who are career ready should show mastery of skills and the ability to advance their career through workplace advancements or attending a technical school or college. To achieve this, students must earn an industry license or national certification and a certain grade point average in their high school program.

State License or National Certification	At least 2.5 grade point average (GPA) un-weighted

- There is a recommendation that the definitions and assessments for College and Career Readiness be changed to College and/or Career Readiness since there is a distinct difference between college readiness and career readiness.

- **Alternative Perspective Regarding Career Readiness:**
  There is an expectation that all high school students (including those enrolled in a career and technology program of study) still have to meet the Common Core State Standards (MD College and Career Readiness Standards). Some college faculty presume that the point of these standards is to make all students "college ready." From this perspective, going on to receive a State License or National Certification does not seem to be relevant. The college faculty members also do not support using a minimum high school GPA to determine college readiness given the great variance in grading scales. The college faculty members assert that if students are going to be college ready, there should not be a distinction between college and career readiness.
- **A recommendation is made for further discussion on the topic of career readiness as it applies to the Common Core State Standards**

Mathematics Transition Course:

- The committee believes that a great opportunity exists to build common and consistent expectations among Maryland school systems and institutions of higher education.
    - It is recommended that a committee representing local school systems and 2-year and 4-year institutions of higher education be convened to complete the listed tasks.
        - Develop consistent expectations and definitions for "College Readiness" in mathematics, including the variations that might exist to accommodate students' program interests. (For example, "What does 'college readiness' mean for a student studying Psychology? And what mathematics programming best defines 'readiness' for that student?").
        - Develop agreements about the scope of content that defines a "Transition Course" (College Readiness).
        - Develop agreements about indicators (or measures) to monitor program implementation and effectiveness.
        - Facilitate the development of the "Transition Course" and its iterations. (For example, there will be some students who simply need some additional support in one or two areas and others who need a comprehensive support plan. These students should have different opportunities to demonstrate readiness).

- The committee believes that students should be presented with multiple opportunities to enroll in a course that serves the definition of "Transition Course." Some of these options are listed.
    - Enrollment in the next credit-bearing high school mathematics course. (For example, a student failing to pass the College Readiness Assessment may continue on from Algebra II and enroll in a Pre-Calculus course. The Pre-Calculus course would be considered the "Transition Course").
    - Enrollment in online, hybrid, or face-to-face content recovery modules. Students may earn "certification" for demonstrating mastery for "College Readiness" content outside of the traditional classroom model.
    - Enrollment in a traditional classroom experience such as a course designed to teach the exact content defined to support "college readiness."
    - Enrollment in a community college's last developmental math course. (These courses would be developed under the leadership described above).
- The committee believes that College and Career Ready content standards with opportunities for alignment as appropriate should be determined. (For example, the Maryland College and Career Ready Algebra II course includes units on Probability and Statistics). These are topics not typically found (based on a sampling analysis) in

developmental math courses. Therefore, some Algebra I and Algebra II objectives may be appropriate and others may not.

English Language Arts/Literacy Transition Course

- The committee believes that a great opportunity exists to build common and consistent expectations among Maryland school systems and institutions of higher education.
    - It is recommended that a committee representing local school systems, 2-year and 4-year institutions of higher education be convened to complete the listed tasks.
        - Develop agreements about the scope of content that defines a "Transition Course" (College Readiness). The content should reflect the Anchor Standards for English Language Arts/Literacy that are found in the Common Core State Standards documents, that form the foundation of the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards for English Language Arts/Literacy and the outcomes for the highest developmental courses for English used by Maryland's Institutions of Higher Education (IHE).
    - It is recommended that the English Language Arts Transition Course include English 12 and other instructional opportunities or enhancements that address the individual student's specific content weaknesses. This recommendation is critical because students must earn four credits in English to earn a Maryland high school diploma. Adding an additional credit requirement in English would create undue burden on students who are already struggling to meet the requirements. By including additional opportunities and enhancements to the English 12 course, students could meet their requirements and increase their skills to be college and career ready.
    - Other instructional opportunities and enhancements may be delivered in a variety of models: on-line, hybrid, or face-to-face content recovery modules; traditional classroom experiences; community college's last developmental English course (These courses would be developed under the leadership of K-12 and IHE faculty).

Additional Recommendation

- Requiring all students to take mathematics every year they are enrolled in high school may make an impact on high school staffing requirements. Data has been collected and needs further analysis to determine the impact of this requirement on some local school systems.

Summary

To address the requirements in the College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act of 2013, this report offered a series of recommendations to address the development, content, and implementation of transition courses to be delivered to Maryland students in the 12th grade who are not yet determined to be college and career ready by the end of the 11th grade. These recommendations were based on the findings of a study conducted by a statewide transition courses workgroup and four subcommittees, with broad representation from both the K-12 and higher education community. The recommendations were also informed by the findings from a survey of local school system assistant superintendents for curriculum and instruction and chief academic officers of community colleges. This work began in summer 2013 and concluded in February 2014, with the development of the recommendations that are included in this report.

Four subcommittees within the broader transition courses workgroup addressed the following specific topics:

- Credits and Transcripts
- Assessments to Determine College and Career Readiness
- Mathematics Transition Courses
- English Arts/Literacy Transition Courses

Recommendations were made to convene discipline-specific committees in Mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy, including teachers and faculty from local school systems and two-year and four-year colleges and universities, in order to develop consistent definitions and expectations for college readiness in the discipline, to come to agreement about the scope and content of transition courses, and to identify other instructional opportunities or enhancements to address students' specific content weaknesses.

The recommendations developed by each of these four subcommittees are included in this report. In some cases, recommendations were made for further study, including further discussion on the topic of career readiness as in applies to the Common Core State Standards, and further discussion of the impact of four years of mathematics on high school staffing requirements.

Attachment A
Workgroup Membership

Members from Higher Education

Kristyanna Erickson	Cecil College
Corinda Calhoun	Allegany Community College
Deborah Kraft	Stevenson University
Dewayne Morgan	University System of Maryland
Donna McKusick	Community College of Baltimore County
Eleanor Welsh	Chesapeake College
Ellen England	Montgomery College
Francis Gulick	University of Maryland
Jennifer Levi	Cecil College
John Hamman	Montgomery College
Karen Verbeke	University of Maryland Eastern Shore
Kathleen Weiss	Cecil College
Kathryn Barbour	Chesapeake College and Maryland Association of Community Colleges
Kathy Angeletti	University of Maryland
Kerry Taylor	Anne Arundel Community College
Kimberly Murphy	Montgomery College
Kimetta Hairston	Bowie State University
Mary Robinson	Montgomery College
Ming Tomayko	Towson University
Norma Goldstein	Montgomery College
Randy Groth	Salisbury State University
Robyn Toman	Anne Arundel Community College
Sandra Dunnington	Prince George's Community College and Maryland Association of Community Colleges
Susan Bernadzikowski	Cecil College

Members from Local School Systems

Aimee Bergonia	Worcester County
William Barnes	Howard County
Felicia Martin	Prince George's County
Frank Cardo	Cecil County
Jessica Pratta	Charles County
John Staley	Baltimore County
Lacye Shank	Carroll County
Luis Lima	Baltimore City
Margaret Pfaff	Carroll County
Melissa Frey	Carroll County
Melissa Mulligan	Caroline County
Michelle Harman	Garrett County
Nina Newlin	Kent County
Robert Watkins	Queen Anne's County
Ryan Reid	Baltimore City

Sharon Mudd	Charles County
Stacey Bundy	Maryland School for the Deaf
Tina Thomas	Queen Anne's County

Members from Maryland Higher Education Commission
Jennifer Frank

Members from Maryland State Educators Association
Cheryl Bost

Members from Public School Superintendents of Maryland
Carl Roberts

Members from Maryland State Department of Education
Judy Jenkins, Director of Curriculum
Lynne Gilli, College and Career Ready Division
Cecilia Roe, Director of Instructional Assessment and Professional Development

Liaison with Legislature

Sara Fidler

Maryland Association of Boards of Education
John Woolums
Nancy Reynolds

Attachment B
Credit Information

The information presented below are the results from the returned county surveys:

Credits Required for Graduation

Code of Maryland Administrative (COMAR) requires a minimum of 21 credits for earning a Maryland High School Diploma. Four English credits are required and three mathematics credits are required, including content aligned to algebra and geometry.

Each county has may set additional requirements. There is a range in the number of credits each local system required; local school systems consider the number of possible credits available based on the high school schedule (traditional seven period day, block schedule, A-B day block).

Credits Required	Number of Counties
21	6
22	4
23	3
23.5	1
24	3
25	3
26	4

Credits Required for Senior Designation

Each local school system may determine the number of credits a student must earn before earning senior status. The information below shows how many credits a student must earn out of the number of credits required for graduation.

Credits required for Senior Designation/Total Credits	Number of Counties
13/21	1
14/21	3
15/21	2
15/22	2
15/26	1
16/23	2
16/24	1
17/22	1
17/23	1
17/23.5	1
17/24	1
17/25	1

18/22	1
18/25	2
18/26	2
20/26	1

One local school system states that for a student to be designated a senior, a student must be able to complete credits during senior year.

Some local school systems require students earn four credits in high school mathematics. The chart below shows the number of local systems that require and the number that require four. The data reflects requirements for entering freshman, 2013-2014.

Number of mathematics credits required	Number of counties
3	10
4	14

For those counties who require three credits, they were asked to provide the number of seniors enrolled in a mathematics course their senior year. Of the ten reporting they required three credits, the number of students enrolled in mathematics and the number of total seniors was calculated to determine a percentage.

Seventy percent (70%) of the seniors from counties who do not require four credits of mathematics are enrolled in a mathematics course their senior years. This indicates that there could be a significant staffing impact on some local systems now that all students must take mathematics every year they are enrolled in high school. Even for systems that require four credits, there could be impact as students who begin taking high school mathematics courses in middle school, can complete their four credits by the end of their sophomore or junior years. Additionally, educators from other content areas have expressed concern that increasing the requirements for mathematics may have an impact on students who are now able to choose more electives, such as courses from the fine arts, or physical education.