

Compulsory School Attendance Requirements Change Beginning July 1, 2015

Compulsory Attendance is defined by the regulations that govern attendance in Maryland Public Schools. These regulations identify the age of enrollment, attendance, define truancy and habitual truancy and specify lawful and unlawful absences (Maryland Annotated Code: 7-301, COMAR 13A.08.01.)

Senate Bill 362 passed by the 2012 Maryland General Assembly raises the age of compulsory attendance from 16 to 17 on July 1, 2015 and raises the age to 18 on July 1, 2017. The bill does provide some provisions for withdrawal or alternatives which include students who:

- have a high school diploma, certificate of completion (special education students), or a General Equivalency Diploma
- are severely ill and require home and hospital instruction services.
- are married or in the military.
- are committed by court order to an institution without an educational program.
- provide financial support to their family as documented by the Department of Social Services.
- have been expelled.
- are pregnant or are a parent and enrolled in an alternative program.
- have written parental consent and a written agreement with the county board of education to attend public school part-time and be enrolled in a career school as defined under § 10– 101.
- are waived from the provisions by the State Superintendent.

AS OF JULY 1ST, 2015, ALL STUDENTS OTHER THAN THOSE NOTED IN THE ABOVE EXEMPTIONS ARE REQUIRED TO BE ENROLLED IN AND ATTEND SCHOOL UNTIL AGE 17, AND AS JULY 1ST, 2017 UNTIL AGE 18.

The compulsory attendance law was changed due to this life altering decision being made by some students when turning age 16. There are long-term economic impacts when students choose to drop out of school.

Economic Impact:

The personal economic consequences of dropping out can be devastating. Overall, high school dropouts have more difficulty finding employment, and can be expected to make significantly less than high school graduates. A 2012 U.S. Census Bureau report indicated a \$20,000 versus \$30,000 difference in annual salary. This is especially evident for females whose earnings over 30 year period is \$1,618,470 less than male high school graduates, and \$1,488,990 less than females who are high school graduates. (Sources: US Census American Community Survey 2006-2008)

The economic consequences also impact the nation through taxes and revenue. According to the Alliance for Excellent Education in a brief titled The High Cost of High School Dropouts: What the Nation Pays for Inadequate High Schools, "If the high school students who dropped out of the Class of 2009 had graduated, the nation's economy would have benefited from nearly \$335 billion in additional income over the course of their lifetimes" In addition, non-completers often rely on system resources and government-funded social programs to address needs associated with poverty and limited economic earnings.

Dropping Out of School and Into Incarceration:

The United States has the largest incarcerated population in the world. Dropouts are 3.5 times more likely to be incarcerated in their lifetime than completers. An estimated 59% of federal inmates are dropouts. In Maryland, 75% of the individuals received by the Maryland Division of Correction report themselves as high school drop outs. (Source: Maryland State Department of Education Taskforce on Dropout Prevention, Intervention, and Recovery 1998.)

Non completers often are incarcerated with limited academic skills. An Illinois report indicates the average inmate has educational skills of an 8th grader. In addition, 30 percent of inmates scored below the literacy level of a 6th grader. While in many states students legally leave school at age 16, most have withdrawn academically, emotionally, and socially many years prior.

Health Indicators:

Non-completers have significantly more health concerns than high school graduates, including cardiovascular disease, cancer, lung disease, and diabetes (Muenning, 2005, Baum and Ma, 2007). Pleis, Lucas, and Ward (2009) found that dropouts of ages 25 or older reported being in worse health than adults who are not dropouts regardless of income. In life expectancy those who graduate from high school live 9.2 years longer than high school dropouts.

In July of 2013, all local school systems submitted a plan to address the requirements of the new regulations to the Maryland State Department of Education for review and submission to the Maryland General Assembly as required by law.

For more information refer to the Garrett County Public Schools Student Handbook: Rights, Responsibilities and Discipline, contact your child's High School Counseling Department, or the Pupil Services Department of the Garrett County Public Schools:

Local School Contact Information:

Garrett County Public Schools
Pupil Services Department
40 South Second Street
Oakland, MD 21550
301-334-8900 or go to www.garrettcountyschools.org/

Northern High School
86 Pride Parkway
Accident, MD 21520
301-746-8668

Southern High School
345 Oakland Drive
Oakland, MD 21550
301-334-9447