
TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Carey M. Wright, Ed.D., State Superintendent of Schools

DATE: September 10, 2026

SUBJECT: Revisions to COMAR 13A.04.02.02B(4) and B(5)

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

Pillar 3: College and Career Readiness

Goal: Every student graduates high school college and career ready.

Outcome:

3.K Increase the percentage of students in each student group who complete at least one component of a Post-CCR Pathway, such as earning postsecondary credit, AP/IB exam with qualifying score, a career-connected learning experience, or an industry-recognized credential.

Purpose

To request permission to publish amendments to COMAR 13A.04.02.02B(4) and B(5) revising the definitions of career and technical education (CTE) concentrator and CTE completer, so that State regulation reflects Maryland's Core and Flex program of study model, the federal accountability structure established under the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, and the role of sustained work-based learning in demonstrating student readiness.

Background

Two definitions in COMAR 13A.04.02.02B are proposed for amendment. Paragraph B(4) currently defines a CTE concentrator as a student at the secondary level who completes two courses in a single CTE program of study and has enrolled in the third sequential course in a single CTE program of study. The amendment strikes the third-course enrollment condition. Paragraph B(5) currently defines a CTE completer as a student who meets all requirements outlined in the State-approved proposal for a CTE completer program. The amendment replaces that reference with a definition establishing two explicit routes to completer status.

The concentrator language predates Maryland's redesign of CTE programs of study. Under the Core and Flex model, each pathway is built on two required core courses, with the balance of the sequence met through flexible options that include work-based learning, dual enrollment, and industry-recognized credential attainment. A third sequential course is no longer a structural feature of every pathway. A student may complete the full core of a program of study, and may move into a Registered Apprenticeship or another career-connected learning experience, without ever enrolling in a course designated as third in a sequence. The existing definition therefore excludes students who have met the substantive expectation of concentration.

The concentrator amendment also conforms State regulation to federal law. Section 3(12) of the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, Public Law 115-224, defines a secondary CTE concentrator as a student who has completed at least two courses in a single career and technical education program or program of study. Maryland’s added enrollment condition is more restrictive than the federal standard, which produces two different counts for a single term and complicates reconciliation of State reporting with the Consolidated Annual Report submitted to the United States Department of Education.

The completer amendment addresses a term that no longer has a federal counterpart. The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act removed the completer construct from federal secondary accountability and made the concentrator the single reported measure. Maryland retained completer as a State term, but its current definition points to the requirements of a State-approved proposal for a CTE completer program, a construct that predates the shift to programs of study and that varies from proposal to proposal. The proposed definition replaces that reference with two routes. A student qualifies as a CTE completer by completing two courses in a single CTE program of study, or by completing two courses in Career-Connected Learning together with a minimum of 250 hours in a school-based enterprise, employer-led capstone, internship, or apprenticeship experience.

The first route intentionally converges with the revised concentrator definition, establishing a single course-based standard for both terms and ending the divergence between what Maryland counts as a concentrator and what it counts as a completer. The second route extends completer status to students who demonstrate readiness through sustained, supervised work in an employer or school-based setting rather than through an additional course sequence, consistent with the work-based learning and capstone provisions already set out in Regulation .03D and .03K of this chapter.

The amendments are limited to the definitions at .02B(4) and B(5). They do not alter the CTE program development standards in Regulation .03 of this chapter, the enrollment and selection criteria in Regulations .04 and .05, or the federal funds provisions in Regulation .06. The Department notes that the definition of CTE enrollee at .02B(2) refers to a course that is part of an identified CTE completer program, a phrase tied to the construct being replaced, and will bring a conforming amendment to .02B(2) to the Board as a separate action.

Executive Summary

1. The proposed amendment to COMAR 13A.04.02.02B(4) strikes the phrase “and has enrolled in the third sequential course in a single CTE program of study”. A CTE concentrator would be defined as a student at the secondary level who completes two courses in a single CTE program of study, matching Section 3(12) of the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, Public Law 115-224, and Maryland’s Core and Flex model, under which each pathway requires two core courses.
2. The proposed amendment to COMAR 13A.04.02.02B(5) replaces the reference to a State-approved completer program proposal with two defined routes. A CTE completer would be a student who completes two courses in a single CTE program of study, or who completes two courses in Career-Connected Learning and a minimum of 250 hours in a school-based enterprise, employer-led capstone, internship, or apprenticeship experience.

3. Together the amendments establish one course-based standard for both terms and recognize sustained work-based learning as an independent route to completer status. Neither amendment changes CTE program development standards, local school system reporting obligations, or the federal funds requirements in Regulation .06 of this chapter.

Action

Permission to publish amendments to COMAR 13A.04.02.02B(4) and B(5) revising the definitions of career and technical education (CTE) concentrator and CTE completer.

Attachments

COMAR 13A.04.02.02B(4) and B(5) Redlined Text.pdf

CODE OF MARYLAND REGULATIONS

Title 13A State Board of Education

Subtitle 04 Specific Subjects

Chapter 02 Secondary School Career and Technical Education

Proposed Amendments to Regulation .02B(4) and .02B(5)

How to read this document: Text shown with ~~strikethrough~~ is proposed for deletion. Text highlighted in yellow is proposed for addition. All other text is unchanged and is reproduced for context only.

.01 Scope.

- A. Each local school system shall assure that students have equal access to career and technical education programs without regard to sex, race, color, national origin, physical or mental disability, age, socioeconomic status, academic disadvantages, economic disadvantages, or limited English-speaking ability. Each local school system shall further assure that career and technical education programs are readily available to students from all geographic sections of the local school system.
- B. Each local school system shall make career awareness, exploratory career experiences, career and technical student organizations, and unbiased program information equally available to students in accordance with §A of this regulation.
- C. Each local school system that develops career and technical education programs shall do so in accordance with the career and technical education development standards in Regulation .03A of this chapter.

Cross References: 13A.04.02.05A 13A.04.02.05D

.02 Definitions.

- A. In this chapter, the following terms have the meanings indicated.
- B. Terms Defined.
 - (1) “Articulation agreement” means a written commitment as described in the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, Public Law 109-270 (2006).
 - (2) “Career and technical education (CTE) enrollee” means a student who is enrolled in at least one course which is part of an identified CTE completer program.
 - (3) “Career and technical student organization” means an organization for individuals enrolled in CTE programs of study that engages students in co-curricular CTE learning experiences as an integral part of the instructional program, is approved by the Maryland State Department of Education, and adheres to Policies and Procedures for Implementing Career and Technical Student Organizations in Maryland.
 - (4) “CTE concentrator” means a student at the secondary level who completes two courses in a single CTE program of study ~~and has enrolled in the third sequential course in a single CTE program of study.~~

- (5) “CTE completer” means a student who: ~~meets all requirements outlined in the State-approved proposal for a CTE completer program.~~
- (a) Completes two courses in a single CTE program of study; or
 - (b) Completes two courses in Career-Connected Learning and a minimum of 250 hours in a school-based enterprise, employer-led capstone, internship, or apprenticeship experience.
- (6) “Eligible recipient” means an entity that meets the requirements of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, Public Law 109-270 (2006), and federal amendments of the law, and Education Article, §§2-205(h) and 21-203, Annotated Code of Maryland, which are incorporated by reference.
- (7) “Liquidation” means the elimination of financial obligations.
- (8) “Value-added opportunities” means advanced standing at the postsecondary level, industry certification, or guaranteed apprenticeship or employment placement.

.03 Career and Technical Education Development Standards.

CTE Programs shall be:

- A. Developed by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and/or local school system and implemented to increase the academic, career, and technical skills of students in order to prepare them for careers and further education;
- B. Aligned to high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand occupations;
- C. Developed to provide opportunities for student to earn industry-recognized credentials or postsecondary credits;
- D. Developed to provide opportunities for students to engage in work-based learning experiences that require the application of academic and technical knowledge and skills in a work setting;
- E. Developed in collaboration with all relevant stakeholder groups, including industry and postsecondary partners to meet State or local workforce needs;
- F. Organized under broad career clusters, based on all aspects of an industry and designed to help students make informed decisions regarding career pathways;
- G. Developed to include opportunities for students to participate in state-approved, co-curricular career and technical student organizations aligned with career and technical education programs of study;
- H. Developed to include value-added opportunities based on current and projected economic market demands;
- I. Developed to prepare students for both college and careers through the completion of a planned sequential program of study that blends academic, technical, and workplace skills;
- J. Developed to include a coherent set of academic, employability, and technical skills, based on national and State standards that provide students moving directly to employment with a value-added competitive advantage;
- K. Developed to provide multiple options for students as they prepare for entry into careers and further education through articulation agreements, supervised work-based learning opportunities, and industry-mentored or capstone projects;

- L. Based upon the reporting and use of outcome data, such as academic and technical skill attainment, placement and retention in employment, the military or postsecondary programs, for a means of upgrading programs and increasing student performance; and
- M. Developed to meet federal requirements defined by the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, Public Law 109-270 (2006) and federal amendments of the law and the federal Methods of Administration Program.

Cross References: 13A.04.02.01C

.04 Enrollment Criteria.

- A. Each local school system and each community college shall describe in the annual local application how it assures that students have equal access to career and technical education programs without regard to sex, race, color, national origin, physical or mental disability, age, socioeconomic status, academic disadvantages, economic disadvantages, or limited English-speaking ability.
- B. Each local school system and community college shall further assure that career and technical education programs are readily available to students from all geographic sections of the local school system and community college area.

.05 Selection Criteria.

Each local school system:

- A. Shall establish criteria for the selection of applicants for enrollment in career and technical education programs in accordance with Regulation .01A of this chapter;
- B. Shall give priority to enrolling students who intend to seek employment in a related career upon completion of the programs;
- C. May not exclude students who are concurrently preparing for employment in a related career and further education; and
- D. Shall make career and technical student organizations, career awareness, exploratory career experiences, and program information equally available to students in accordance with Regulation .01B of this chapter.

.06 Federal Funds.

- A. Requirements. The State Board of Education shall implement the requirements of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, Public Law 109-270 (2006). Each eligible recipient, as defined by the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, shall comply with these requirements in order to receive and expend federal funds.
- B. Application for Funds.
 - (1) An eligible recipient requesting federal funds for career and technical education programs shall submit an application annually to the State Department of Education on a form prescribed by the State Superintendent of Schools. The application shall:
 - (a) Contain assurances that both the requirements of Education Article, §2-205(h), Annotated Code of Maryland, and this regulation are met;
 - (b) Include a completed CTE Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment evaluating access, equity, and student performance;

- (c) Identify the programs to receive federal funds for career and technical education, which shall be restricted to career and technical programs that are:
 - (i) Approved by the State Department of Education;
 - (ii) Focused on the development, coordination, implementation, or improvement of CTE; and
 - (iii) Related to access, equity, student performance, labor market, workforce, and economic development needs, particularly in high wage, high skill, and in-demand occupations as identified in the CTE Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment;
 - (d) Set forth a plan that targets funds to address eligible recipients priority needs identified through data and analysis;
 - (e) Identify the proposed expenditures for each program; and
 - (f) Include the expected and measurable outcomes resulting from proposed expenditures.
- (2) Collaborative Planning. An eligible recipient shall use a collaborative planning process to ensure the participation of all groups involved in local planning and assessment for career and technical education. These groups include, but are not limited to, the local advisory council, program advisory committees, local workforce investment boards, and local economic development personnel, as well as representatives from secondary and postsecondary instructional areas, guidance and counseling, special education, student support services, and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs.
- (3) Maintenance of Fiscal Effort.
- (a) Payments may not be made to any eligible recipient unless the State determines that its expenditures of general funds per student or aggregate fiscal effort for career and technical education in the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which the determination is made equaled or exceeded its effort for career and technical education for the second preceding fiscal year.
 - (b) If fiscal effort cannot be maintained, the eligible recipient may request a waiver in writing. The request for waiver shall be submitted to the Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Career and College Readiness, Maryland State Department of Education, not later than June 30 of the fiscal year in which effort cannot be maintained. The Assistant State Superintendent may grant a request for waiver of maintenance of effort for good cause.
- (4) Financial Reporting Requirements.
- (a) Financial reports shall be submitted according to the forms and procedures in the "Financial Reporting Manual for Maryland Public Schools", which is incorporated by reference in COMAR 13A.02.01.02C.
 - (b) An eligible recipient shall submit an Annual Financial Report of Expenditures to the State Department of Education not later than September 30 of each year. The report shall include expenditures, source year of funds, and State, local, and federal expenditures during the fiscal year. The Maintenance of Fiscal Effort figure is also reported and it represents the official Maintenance of Effort figure for the eligible recipient. The State Department of Education may withhold CTE payments from an eligible recipient that does not submit this report by the specified date.
- (5) Liquidation of Financial Obligations.
- (a) The liquidation of financial obligations incurred in a given fiscal year shall be completed within 90 calendar days after the end of the grant period.

- (b) The unused balance of funds granted to the eligible recipient which is remaining after the 90 calendar day liquidation period shall be refunded immediately to the State Department of Education.
 - (c) If obligations cannot be eliminated within the 90 calendar day liquidation period, the eligible recipient may request, in writing, an extension of the liquidation period as follows:
 - (i) The request for extension shall be submitted to the Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Career and College Readiness, Maryland State Department of Education, at least 15 calendar days before the end of the liquidation period; and
 - (ii) The Assistant State Superintendent may approve a request for extension for good cause.
- (6) Equipment Management and Inventory. The Division of Career and College Readiness and each eligible recipient shall establish and maintain equipment inventories and appropriate record-keeping systems for equipment with an initial cost of \$5,000 or more that was purchased with federal funds.
- (7) Program Reports.
 - (a) Program reports shall be submitted by the eligible recipient according to a form prescribed by the Maryland State Department of Education and as identified on the Notice of Grant Award.
 - (b) Interim program reports are due no later than January 15 of each year.
 - (c) Final program reports are due July 31 of each year.
 - (d) Other required reports such as outcome data, enrollment files, work-based learning questionnaires, pregraduate surveys, verification of eligible programs, Pell grant recipients, including justification of greater or less than 5 percent variance if needed, local agreed-upon performance levels, and others as may be required are due by the date identified and provided to eligible recipients by the Maryland State Department of Education.
 - (e) The State Department of Education may withhold CTE payments from an eligible recipient that does not submit required reports by the specified date.
 - (f) For grants, applications, and other related items, spending authority becomes effective the first day of the month in which all required items have been submitted in approvable form.
- C. Equity. An eligible recipient receiving federal funds shall comply with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and shall provide information to the Division of Career and College Readiness, as requested, to demonstrate compliance.

CODE OF MARYLAND REGULATIONS

Title 13A State Board of Education

Subtitle 04 Specific Subjects

Chapter 02 Secondary School Career and Technical Education

As Amended, Incorporating Revisions to Regulations .02B(4) and .02B(5)

Reading copy reflecting the amendments as adopted.

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- (d) Set forth a plan that targets funds to address eligible recipients priority needs identified through data and analysis;
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