

**HB 966.pdf**

Uploaded by: Amanda Lattimore

Position: FAV

To Whom it May Concern,

I am an AP Computer Science teacher in Maryland where I have taught for 20 years. I appreciate you taking time to review this bill which will help many students.

In computer science, I have had students pay to retake the AP exam because University of Maryland only accepts a 5 on AP CS A and doesn't accept any score on AP CS Principles, but other schools such as UMBC accept a 3 or higher for both exams. Most students do not have the opportunity to pay \$96 more than once to retake the exam and are therefore restricted by which colleges accept credit. In a public university system, I believe there should be consistency and transparency. I have scored the AP CS A exam for the past 9 years and a score of 3 or higher is certainly sufficient for students to earn college credit. I hope that you see that this will positively impact our students and give them more choice when attending public institutions in Maryland.

Thank you for your time, and I urge support of this bill.

Sincerely,  
Amanda Lattimore

**HB966\_Solomon\_FAV1.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jared Solomon

Position: FAV

JARED SOLOMON  
Legislative District 18  
Montgomery County

Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittees

Education and Economic Development  
Oversight Committee on Personnel



The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 222  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
301-858-3130 · 410-841-3130  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3130  
Fax 301-858-3233 · 410-841-3233  
Jared.Solomon@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Sponsor Testimony - HB 966 Academic Credit for Prior Learning Examinations**

**Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee**

**April 5, 2022, 1:00pm**

Chairwoman Pinsky, Vice-Chairman Kagan, and Esteemed Colleagues,

Thank you for the opportunity to present today on my legislation HB 966, a bill to require that Maryland public institutions of higher education establish uniform standards to award credit for prior learning assessments like Advanced Placement (AP), College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), and International Baccalaureate (IB).

Many states and university systems have already established uniform policies to ensure that students who earn qualifying scores on these assessments are guaranteed credit at public colleges and universities. Thirty-one states have adopted uniform AP credit policies and 19 have established CLEP policies. Of the 31 states or large systems across the US that already have an AP policy in place, none of them have ever reversed their policies. These policies save students time and money, reducing both the time to graduation and student debt loads, while also reducing the cost for the state. Unfortunately, Maryland institutions do not have a uniform policy. Maryland can support its students and adult learners by deliberately and thoughtfully reviewing these assessments and implementing comprehensive standards for awarding credit for prior learning.

While this bill would encompass other programs, I'd like to focus a moment on AP. AP Exams are scored on a scale of one to five with a score of three recommended by the American Council on Education as a score for which college credit should be given. Research shows that students who score a three on at least one AP exam are more likely to enroll in college, more likely to major or minor in the area of their exam, more likely to persist to graduation, and more likely to graduate on time. Research also shows that students who pass an AP exam with a score of three and are placed into the subsequent course, perform as well or better than students who took the traditional classroom course. In 2020, Maryland ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in the nation in AP performance with over 31% of the graduating cohort earning a three or higher on at least one AP Exam, and this number is likely to grow with the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. If students were able to earn credit for these scores, the potential cost savings to the state's students and their families would be over \$63 million.

Presently, Maryland does not have a uniform AP college credit policy in place, which means that some students will not earn college credit for their scores of three. When colleges award credit for only fours and fives it is often the students who need the credit the most who are left out. Fifty-six percent of low-income students who passed AP tests in Maryland scored a three; this number is 52% for African American students. In 2020, of the Maryland students who earned a three on their AP exams, over 4,200 qualified for free and reduced lunch.

When you look at “acceptable scores” that are granted credit by institutions across the state – there’s often little rhyme or reason. For example: Why is a three on statistics accepted at some community colleges and some USM institutions but not others?

I’d also like to speak briefly about CLEP, which is an appealing option for adult learners who would like to earn college credit for job experience. Earning credit through successful CLEP Exams is extremely beneficial to those who are juggling family, work, and school obligations. In fact, the U.S. Department of Defense has funded CLEP Exams for active-duty service members for over 50 years, helping our service men and women earn credit and placement. If Maryland joined the 19 states that already have a uniform CLEP policy in place, it would not only benefit our high school students, but the large number of returning veterans and active duty military service-members in our state. Also, with the large number of individuals that may be returning to higher education following COVID-19, uniform standards to measure prior learning will be even more important.

### **What Will the Bill Do?**

The legislation requires each public institution of higher education develop and implement policies and procedures for awarding academic credit for prior learning examinations. The policies shall require:

- academic credit be awarded for a minimum score of three on AP examinations;
- academic credit be awarded for a minimum of a 50 on College-Level Examination Program examinations; and
- a determination of the minimum required score for awarding credit on the Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education Diploma Program examination and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program examination.

Additionally, higher education institutions must determine if the academic credit will be awarded for general education, major, or elective requirements.

Each public institution will publicly post the policies and procedures and report to the Maryland Higher Education Commission the following information:

- the total number of students awarded academic credit for prior learning;
- the total number of academic credits awarded to students for prior learning; and
- the total number of academic credits awarded to matriculating students for prior learning and of those credits were awarded for major requirements and elective requirements.

## **Credit Policies Benefit Students**

While all students stand to benefit, standardized credit policies have a strong impact on the educational opportunities for underserved populations and nontraditional students. In 2020, almost one-third of Maryland students who earned a 3 on their AP Exams identified as underserved minority students and 4,200 qualified for free and reduced lunch. The CLEP program benefits adult learners who often have families and full-time jobs they must juggle with their school obligations. It also supports military personnel and veterans; the Department of Defense has funded CLEP Exams for active-duty service members for over 50 years.

Passage of this legislation will support Maryland's students, returning veterans, and adult learners by providing increased opportunities to access and afford higher education.

I am excited about the change this bill could bring and its positive impact on Maryland students and families. Although the bill has a small fiscal note, the potential savings more than outweigh the costs. College-bound Maryland AP students in the high school class of 2019 who enrolled in a public institution potentially **saved the state over \$9 million in state funding** as a result of their success on 32,163 AP exams with scores of three or higher.

**I urge you to provide a favorable report on HB 966.** The bill passed the House Appropriations Committee 21-0 with 2 excused absences and the House unanimously. I am now pleased to let you hear the firsthand perspective of AP teachers from across Maryland.

**HB 966 MVBradner .pdf**

Uploaded by: Mirta Valdés-Bradner

Position: FAV

Members of the Education Committee:

My name is Mirta Valdés-Bradner and I am an AP Spanish Language and Culture teacher at North Caroline High School in Caroline County where I have taught for the last 19 of my 26 years in education. Caroline County is a rural, agricultural community located in the heart of Maryland's Eastern Shore.

I want to express my support for Delegate Solomon's prior learning credit policy bill, HB 0966, Credit for Prior Learning Task Force. Advanced Placement (AP), the College- Level Examination Program (CLEP) and the International Baccalaureate (IB), combine rigorous college-level work course work with nationally recognized assessments. These programs create opportunities for all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, age or socioeconomic background, to potentially earn college credit for their hard work in classrooms in our state every school day.

An AP Exam is scored on a scale of 1 to 5 with research determining that scores of 3 and higher are appropriate for earning college credit; yet, some of our public colleges and universities do not give credit for scores of 3, which can have a detrimental impact on students. For example, in my own course, the majority of students who earned a score of 3 on the AP Exam last year, were minority and low-income. Whether intended or not, the lack of a uniform credit policy harms our most vulnerable students making the transition to postsecondary even more challenging.

Protecting credit awarded in transfer is also an issue for Maryland students. Students who start at a community college, may lose all their AP credit when transferring to a four-year school if that school requires a higher AP score. You can imagine how upsetting that would be for a student who thinks they're going to begin their major course studies, but who learns they have to go back and take an introductory course.

One of the parents of a former AP student that last year earned a 3 during the pandemic in the course taught last year virtually said this "As a parent of a future college student, it will greatly impact our ability to send my child to college as college costs are a big factor in our family's current finances. Having the option to take on the additional coursework in high school to meet the requirements of an AP class and taking the AP test that could then grant her college credit is an invaluable benefit to our family's current and future financial stability. The score of 3 being accepted would be also a just reward to her efforts in high school".

In 2020, Maryland ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in the nation in AP performance with over 31% of its public-school graduating class earning a 3 or higher on at least one AP Exam. We are proud of this position. Most states would like to be where we are. To be clear, this level of success is not achieved by accident, but through the hard work and commitment of students, teachers, administrators, and counselors. Please reward us all for these efforts by creating a stronger prior learning credit policy system.

I thank the committee for its time and attention and would be happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully,  
Mirta Valdés-Bradner  
WL/ Spanish Teacher  
National Board Certified  
North Caroline High School

