

## Preamble

WHEREAS, The high schools of the State play an integral role in preparing students for college and work in the 21st century; and

WHEREAS, It is of critical importance to the success of our economy, civic life, and assurance of equal opportunity that public high schools provide this preparation; and

WHEREAS, Without accurate data regarding graduation rates it is extremely difficult to evaluate the efficacy of the State's system of public education; and

WHEREAS, Better information can lead to better policies and program implementation; and

WHEREAS, Parents and community members, who are critical to ensuring strong educational accountability, are hampered in their efforts to improve our schools if they do not have accurate data; and

WHEREAS, It is of critical importance that accurate data be collected, maintained, analyzed, and publicly reported by our State's education system with respect to high school student graduation rates; and

WHEREAS, Existing data from independent researchers indicates that when graduation rates are disaggregated by racial and ethnic groups, students with disabilities, students who are limited English proficient, and socioeconomically disadvantaged students, many of these subgroups are experiencing particularly low rates of high school graduation; and

WHEREAS, The State of Maryland should be committed to developing and implementing a student record data system with unique student identifiers that can track students from kindergarten through postsecondary education; and

WHEREAS, The State of Maryland should be committed to maintaining a data and public reporting system that accurately accounts for all students when calculating high school graduation rates and informs the public of progress toward the goal of universal high school graduation; now, therefore,

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

**Article - Education**

7-203.2.

(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(2) (I) "FOUR-YEAR COHORT" MEANS A GROUP OF STUDENTS WHO ENTER NINTH GRADE TOGETHER.

(II) "FOUR-YEAR COHORT" INCLUDES A STUDENT WHO:

1. TRANSFERS INTO THE GROUP: