

SENATE BILL 502

F1, O3

6lr1805
CF 6lr1803

By: **Senator King**

Introduced and read first time: February 2, 2026

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Language Acquisition Tracking Program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing**
3 **Children – Establishment**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing the Language Acquisition Tracking Program for Deaf and
5 Hard of Hearing Children in the State Department of Education; establishing a State
6 Coordinator of Language Acquisition for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children within
7 the Department to coordinate the Program and create a parent and guardian
8 resource to help parents and guardians of deaf or hard of hearing children track a
9 child's language acquisition progress; establishing the Language Acquisition for Deaf
10 and Hard of Hearing Children Advisory Council to advise and provide certain
11 consultation services to the State Coordinator, approve a certain language
12 assessment tool, and review a certain report; requiring the Department, in
13 consultation with the Maryland Department of Health and the Maryland School for
14 the Deaf, to issue an annual report on the language acquisition of deaf or hard of
15 hearing children; and generally relating to the establishment of a Language
16 Acquisition Tracking Program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children.

17 BY adding to
18 Article – Education
19 Section 8–801 through 8–807 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 8. Language
20 Acquisition Tracking Program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children”
21 Annotated Code of Maryland
22 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

25 **Article – Education**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



**SUBTITLE 8. LANGUAGE ACQUISITION TRACKING PROGRAM FOR DEAF AND HARD
OF HEARING CHILDREN.**

8-801.

**(A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS
INDICATED.**

**(B) “ADVISORY COUNCIL” MEANS THE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION FOR DEAF
AND HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN ADVISORY COUNCIL.**

**(C) “DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING” MEANS A DIAGNOSIS OF PERMANENT
HEARING LOSS IN ONE OR BOTH EARS.**

(D) “ELIGIBLE CHILD” MEANS A DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING CHILD WHO:

(1) IS UNDER THE AGE OF 9 YEARS; AND

(2) HAS:

**(i) AN INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY SERVICE PLAN THROUGH THE
MARYLAND INFANTS AND TODDLERS PROGRAM ESTABLISHED UNDER § 8-416 OF
THIS TITLE;**

**(ii) AN INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM UNDER § 8-405
OF THIS TITLE; OR**

**(iii) A SECTION 504 PLAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FEDERAL
REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973.**

**(E) “PROGRAM” MEANS THE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION TRACKING
PROGRAM FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN.**

**(F) “STATE COORDINATOR” MEANS THE STATE COORDINATOR OF
LANGUAGE ACQUISITION FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN.**

8-802.

**(A) THERE IS A LANGUAGE ACQUISITION TRACKING PROGRAM FOR DEAF
AND HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN IN THE DEPARTMENT.**

1 **(B) (1) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO ENSURE THAT ELIGIBLE**
2 **CHILDREN DEVELOP LANGUAGE SKILLS AT THE SAME RATE AND TO THE SAME**
3 **EXTENT AS THEIR PEERS.**

4 **(2) THE PROGRAM SHALL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO ALL ELIGIBLE**
5 **CHILDREN AT NO COST.**

6 **(3) AN ELIGIBLE CHILD SHALL BE ASSESSED FOR LANGUAGE**
7 **ACQUISITION SKILLS FROM ENTRY INTO THE PROGRAM UNTIL THE CHILD'S NINTH**
8 **BIRTHDAY.**

9 **(C) (1) THE PROGRAM SHALL TRACK EACH ELIGIBLE CHILD'S LANGUAGE**
10 **ACQUISITION USING THE LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT TOOL APPROVED BY THE**
11 **ADVISORY COUNCIL.**

12 **(2) (I) THE LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT TOOL SHALL BE USED TO**
13 **ASSESS THE SIGNED LANGUAGE ACQUISITION OR THE SPOKEN LANGUAGE**
14 **ACQUISITION OF EACH ELIGIBLE CHILD IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBPARAGRAPH (II)**
15 **OF THIS PARAGRAPH.**

16 **(II) AN ELIGIBLE CHILD'S PARENT OR GUARDIAN SHALL USE A**
17 **PROCESS ESTABLISHED BY THE DEPARTMENT TO SELECT WHETHER THE LANGUAGE**
18 **ASSESSMENT TOOL ASSESSES THE ELIGIBLE CHILD'S SIGNED LANGUAGE**
19 **ACQUISITION, SPOKEN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION, OR BOTH.**

20 **(3) THE LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT TOOL SHALL BE ADMINISTERED TO**
21 **EACH ELIGIBLE CHILD:**

22 **(I) BY THE ELIGIBLE CHILD'S TEACHER OR AN ASSESSMENT**
23 **SPECIALIST; AND**

24 **(II) 1. WITHIN 6 MONTHS AFTER THE ELIGIBLE CHILD IS**
25 **DIAGNOSED AS BEING DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING; AND**

26 **2. EVERY 6 MONTHS THEREAFTER.**

27 **(4) AN ASSESSMENT WITH THE LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT TOOL SHALL**
28 **EVALUATE AN ELIGIBLE CHILD'S PROGRESS TOWARD MEETING AGE- AND**
29 **GRADE-APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES AND LANGUAGE**
30 **ACQUISITION BENCHMARKS IDENTIFIED BY THE STATE COORDINATOR.**

31 **(5) EDUCATORS AND ASSESSMENT SPECIALISTS SHALL USE THE**
32 **LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT TOOL TO TRACK AN ELIGIBLE CHILD'S PROGRESS**

1 THROUGH DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES TOWARD KINDERGARTEN READINESS AND
2 ENGLISH LITERACY.

3 (6) ANY INFORMATION COLLECTED USING THE LANGUAGE
4 ASSESSMENT TOOL MAY:

5 (I) BE PROVIDED TO THE ELIGIBLE CHILD'S TEACHER AND
6 PARENT OR GUARDIAN; AND

7 (II) BE INCORPORATED INTO THE ELIGIBLE CHILD'S
8 INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY SERVICE PLAN, INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM,
9 OR SECTION 504 PLAN, AS APPLICABLE.

10 (7) IF AN ELIGIBLE CHILD DOES NOT DEMONSTRATE PROGRESS IN
11 EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AS
12 MEASURED BY THE LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT TOOL, THE ELIGIBLE CHILD'S
13 INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY SERVICE PLAN, INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM,
14 OR SECTION 504 PLAN, AS APPLICABLE, SHALL BE UPDATED TO:

15 (I) EXPLAIN IN DETAIL THE REASONS WHY THE ELIGIBLE
16 CHILD IS NOT MAKING PROGRESS TOWARD AGE- AND GRADE-APPROPRIATE
17 DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION BENCHMARKS; AND

18 (II) SPECIFY SPECIFIC STRATEGIES, SERVICES, AND PROGRAMS
19 THAT WILL BE PROVIDED TO ASSIST THE CHILD.

20 (8) THE STATE COORDINATOR SHALL PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL
21 DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATORS AND ASSESSMENT
22 SPECIALISTS ON THE USE AND OPERATION OF THE LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT TOOL.

23 (D) A PARENT OR GUARDIAN MAY OPT AN ELIGIBLE CHILD OUT OF AN
24 ASSESSMENT UNDER THE PROGRAM BY PROVIDING WRITTEN NOTIFICATION TO THE
25 CHILD'S SCHOOL THAT THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN HAS OPTED THE CHILD OUT OF
26 AN ASSESSMENT.

27 8-803.

28 (A) THERE IS A STATE COORDINATOR OF LANGUAGE ACQUISITION FOR
29 DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN.

30 (B) THE STATE COORDINATOR IS A POSITION WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT.

31 (C) (1) THE STATE COORDINATOR MUST:

1 (I) HOLD AN ADVANCED DEGREE OR A PROFESSIONAL LICENSE
2 IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, THE EDUCATION OF DEAF CHILDREN, OR A
3 RELATED FIELD;

4 (II) DEMONSTRATE PROFICIENCY IN AMERICAN SIGN
5 LANGUAGE AND WRITTEN ENGLISH;

6 (III) DEMONSTRATE A PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF
7 DIFFERENT LANGUAGE MODALITIES INCLUDING SIGNED LANGUAGE, PROTACTILE
8 LANGUAGE, AND SPOKEN LANGUAGE; AND

9 (IV) DEMONSTRATE A PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF HEARING
10 TECHNOLOGIES FOR USE BY DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN.

11 (2) IF PRACTICABLE, THE STATE COORDINATOR MUST BE A DEAF OR
12 HARD OF HEARING INDIVIDUAL.

13 (D) THE STATE COORDINATOR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE
14 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM.

15 (E) THE STATE COORDINATOR'S DUTIES INCLUDE:

16 (1) IDENTIFYING, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE ADVISORY COUNCIL
17 AND OTHER STATES THAT HAVE DEVELOPED SIMILAR MILESTONES AND
18 BENCHMARKS, AGE- AND GRADE-APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES
19 AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION BENCHMARKS TO BE USED BY THE PROGRAM TO
20 EVALUATE THE PROGRESS OF ELIGIBLE CHILDREN IN BOTH EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE
21 SKILLS AND RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE SKILLS;

22 (2) DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A PROCESS FOR ASSESSING
23 THE MILESTONES AND BENCHMARKS IDENTIFIED UNDER ITEM (1) OF THIS
24 SUBSECTION;

25 (3) OVERSEEING THE COLLECTION, TRACKING, AND REPORTING OF
26 ASSESSMENT DATA UNDER THE PROGRAM;

27 (4) ENSURING THAT ELIGIBLE CHILDREN ARE BEING PROPERLY
28 TRACKED BY THE LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT TOOL APPROVED BY THE ADVISORY
29 COUNCIL UNDER § 8-805 OF THIS SUBTITLE;

30 (5) CREATING A PARENT AND GUARDIAN RESOURCE THAT MEETS THE
31 CRITERIA LISTED UNDER § 8-804 OF THIS SUBTITLE;

(6) AIDING THE DEPARTMENT IN PUBLISHING THE ANNUAL REPORT
REQUIRED UNDER § 8-807 OF THIS SUBTITLE;

(7) ENSURING THAT ALL ELIGIBLE STUDENTS ARE EVALUATED WITH
THE LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT TOOL TO TRACK LANGUAGE ACQUISITION PROGRESS
REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE ELIGIBLE STUDENTS HAVE BEEN CATEGORIZED
PRIMARILY AS DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING; AND

(8) CONSULTING WITH THE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE EXECUTION
OF THE PROGRAM.

(F) IN THE PERFORMANCE OF ASSIGNED DUTIES, THE STATE
COORDINATOR SHALL WORK IN COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION WITH:

(1) THE EARLY HEARING DETECTION AND INTERVENTION
PROGRAM ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH UNDER TITLE 13,
SUBTITLE 6 OF THE HEALTH – GENERAL ARTICLE;

(2) THE MARYLAND INFANTS AND TODDLERS PROGRAM
ESTABLISHED UNDER § 8-416 OF THIS TITLE;

(3) COUNTY BOARDS; AND

(4) THE MARYLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF.

8-804.

(A) THE STATE COORDINATOR SHALL CREATE A PARENT AND GUARDIAN
RESOURCE.

(B) (1) THE PURPOSE OF THE PARENT AND GUARDIAN RESOURCE IS TO
PROVIDE PARENTS AND GUARDIANS WITH INFORMATION ABOUT AGE- AND
GRADE-APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES AND LANGUAGE
ACQUISITION BENCHMARKS FOR CHILDREN AT DIFFERENT AGES UNDER THE AGE
OF 9 YEARS.

(2) THE PARENT AND GUARDIAN RESOURCE SHALL:

(I) INCLUDE RESEARCH- AND EVIDENCE-BASED,
COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROGRAM'S:

1 1. AGE- AND GRADE-APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENTAL
2 MILESTONES; AND

3 2. LANGUAGE ACQUISITION BENCHMARKS, INCLUDING
4 SIGNED LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND SPOKEN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION;

5 (II) HELP A PARENT OR GUARDIAN TRACK AN ELIGIBLE CHILD'S
6 PROGRESS TOWARD THE PROGRAM'S:

7 1. AGE- AND GRADE-APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENTAL
8 MILESTONES; AND

9 2. LANGUAGE ACQUISITION BENCHMARKS, INCLUDING
10 SIGNED LANGUAGE ACQUISITION, SPOKEN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION, EXPRESSIVE
11 LANGUAGE ACQUISITION, AND RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION;

12 (III) INCLUDE INFORMATION ABOUT AVAILABLE SERVICES AND
13 PROGRAMS FOR WHICH AN ELIGIBLE CHILD MAY QUALIFY;

14 (IV) BE WRITTEN CLEARLY AND BE EASY TO UNDERSTAND;

15 (V) BE APPROPRIATE FOR USE WITH DEAF OR HARD OF
16 HEARING CHILDREN;

17 (VI) BE CONSISTENT WITH EXISTING STATE AND FEDERAL
18 GUIDELINES GOVERNING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND LANGUAGE
19 ACQUISITION; AND

20 (VII) INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

21 1. "THIS PARENT AND GUARDIAN RESOURCE IS NOT A
22 FORMAL ASSESSMENT OF A CHILD'S LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT.";

23 2. "A PARENT'S OR GUARDIAN'S OBSERVATIONS OF A
24 CHILD MAY DIFFER FROM THE WAY THE CHILD IS DESCRIBED THROUGH FORMAL
25 ASSESSMENT PRESENTED AS PART OF A CHILD'S INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY SERVICE
26 PLAN, INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM, OR SECTION 504 PLAN."; AND

27 3. "A PARENT OR GUARDIAN MAY BRING THIS PARENT
28 AND GUARDIAN RESOURCE TO A CHILD'S INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY SERVICE PLAN
29 MEETING, INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM MEETING, OR SECTION 504 PLAN
30 MEETING IN ORDER TO SHARE OBSERVATIONS ABOUT A CHILD'S EXPRESSIVE

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT.”.

(C) THE STATE COORDINATOR SHALL:

(1) TAKE REASONABLE STEPS TO PROVIDE EQUAL ACCESS TO THE PARENT AND GUARDIAN RESOURCE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY WHO NEED LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING ANY ORAL, WRITTEN, AND SIGN LANGUAGE SERVICES; AND

(2) ARRANGE FOR THE TRANSLATION OF THE PARENT AND GUARDIAN RESOURCE INTO ANY LANGUAGE SPOKEN BY ANY LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT POPULATION THAT CONSTITUTES 3% OF THE POPULATION WITHIN THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA SERVED BY A LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM.

(D) THE DEPARTMENT, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, THE MARYLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF, AND COUNTY BOARDS, SHALL PROVIDE A COPY OF THE PARENT AND GUARDIAN RESOURCE TO THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN OF EACH ELIGIBLE CHILD.

8-805.

(A) THERE IS A LANGUAGE ACQUISITION FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN ADVISORY COUNCIL.

(B) THE ADVISORY COUNCIL CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

(1) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GOVERNOR’S OFFICE OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING, APPOINTED BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE;

(2) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT, APPOINTED BY THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT;

(3) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, APPOINTED BY THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH; AND

(4) SUBJECT TO SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION, THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS, APPOINTED BY THE STATE COORDINATOR:

(I) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EARLY HEARING DETECTION AND INTERVENTION ADVISORY COUNCIL;

(II) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MARYLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF;

(III) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING COMMUNITY WITH EXPERIENCE IN THE EDUCATION OF DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN;

(IV) ONE EMPLOYEE OF A COUNTY BOARD WITH EXPERTISE IN THE EDUCATION OF DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN;

(V) ONE PARENT OR GUARDIAN OF A DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING CHILD WHO COMMUNICATES PRIMARILY THROUGH AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE;

(VI) ONE PARENT OR GUARDIAN OF A DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING CHILD WHO COMMUNICATES PRIMARILY THROUGH SPOKEN ENGLISH;

(VII) ONE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING PARENT OR GUARDIAN OF A DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING CHILD;

(VIII) ONE EMPLOYEE OF A COUNTY BOARD WHO WORKS IN A LOCAL INFANTS AND TODDLERS PROGRAM ESTABLISHED OR DESIGNATED UNDER § 8-416 OF THIS TITLE THAT SERVES DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN;

(IX) ONE TEACHER WHO:

1. TEACHES DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN;

AND

2. HAS EXPERTISE IN AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT; AND

(X) ONE TEACHER WHO TEACHES DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN USING SPOKEN ENGLISH.

(C) IN APPOINTING MEMBERS TO THE ADVISORY COUNCIL, THE STATE COORDINATOR SHALL ATTEMPT TO ENSURE THAT AN EQUAL NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES HAVE EXPERTISE IN SIGNED LANGUAGE AND SPOKEN LANGUAGE.

(D) (1) THE TERM OF A MEMBER IS 3 YEARS.

(2) THE TERM OF A MEMBER BEGINS JULY 1.

1 **(3) THE TERMS OF MEMBERS ARE STAGGERED AS REQUIRED BY THE**
2 **TERMS PROVIDED FOR MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON JULY 1, 2026.**

3 **(4) AT THE END OF A TERM, A MEMBER CONTINUES TO SERVE UNTIL**
4 **A SUCCESSOR IS APPOINTED AND QUALIFIES.**

5 **(5) A MEMBER WHO IS APPOINTED AFTER A TERM HAS BEGUN SERVES**
6 **ONLY FOR THE REST OF THE TERM OR UNTIL A SUCCESSOR IS APPOINTED AND**
7 **QUALIFIES.**

8 **(E) THE MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL SHALL ELECT A CHAIR**
9 **FROM AMONG THE ADVISORY COUNCIL'S MEMBERS.**

10 **(F) THE ADVISORY COUNCIL SHALL MEET WHEN CONVENED BY THE STATE**
11 **COORDINATOR.**

12 **(G) A MEMBER OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL:**

13 **(1) MAY NOT RECEIVE COMPENSATION AS A MEMBER OF THE**
14 **ADVISORY COUNCIL; BUT**

15 **(2) IS ENTITLED TO REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENSES UNDER THE**
16 **STANDARD STATE TRAVEL REGULATIONS, AS PROVIDED IN THE STATE BUDGET.**

17 **(H) THE ADVISORY COUNCIL SHALL:**

18 **(1) EVALUATE EXISTING LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT TOOLS THAT MEET**
19 **THE CRITERIA SPECIFIED IN § 8-806 OF THIS SUBTITLE FOR USE AS PART OF THE**
20 **PROGRAM;**

21 **(2) APPROVE A LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT TOOL TO BE USED BY THE**
22 **PROGRAM TO ASSESS AND TRACK THE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION OF ELIGIBLE**
23 **CHILDREN;**

24 **(3) REVIEW THE ANNUAL REPORT REQUIRED UNDER § 8-807 OF THIS**
25 **SUBTITLE;**

26 **(4) PROVIDE CONSULTATION SERVICES TO THE STATE**
27 **COORDINATOR ON IDENTIFYING AGE- AND GRADE-APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENTAL**
28 **MILESTONES AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION BENCHMARKS IN ACCORDANCE WITH §**
29 **8-803 OF THIS SUBTITLE; AND**

1 **(5) PROVIDE ADVICE TO THE STATE COORDINATOR ON HOW TO**
2 **ACCOMPLISH THE AIMS OF THE PROGRAM.**

3 **(I) THE ADVISORY COUNCIL MAY MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE**
4 **STATE COORDINATOR ON CHANGES TO THE PARENT AND GUARDIAN RESOURCE.**

5 **8–806.**

6 **(A) A LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT TOOL MUST MEET THE CRITERIA DESCRIBED**
7 **UNDER THIS SECTION TO BE USED IN THE PROGRAM.**

8 **(B) THE LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT TOOL SHALL:**

9 **(1) INCLUDE THE STAGES OF AGE– AND GRADE–APPROPRIATE**
10 **LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT;**

11 **(2) BE APPROPRIATE FOR DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN;**

12 **(3) BE A TOOL USED TO ASSESS THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN**
13 **UNDER THE AGE OF 9 YEARS;**

14 **(4) BE IN A FORMAT THAT ALLOWS EDUCATORS AND ASSESSMENT**
15 **SPECIALISTS TO TRACK, THROUGH AN ELIGIBLE CHILD’S EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE**
16 **ACQUISITION AND RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION, PROGRESS TOWARD**
17 **KINDERGARTEN READINESS AND ENGLISH LITERACY; AND**

18 **(5) BE USEFUL IN ESTABLISHING OR REVISING AN ELIGIBLE CHILD’S**
19 **INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY SERVICE PLAN, INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM,**
20 **OR SECTION 504 PLAN, OR AS PART OF AN ASSESSMENT REQUIRED BY COMPARABLE**
21 **PLANS.**

22 **8–807.**

23 **(A) (1) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2028, AND EACH JULY 1 THEREAFTER,**
24 **THE DEPARTMENT, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF**
25 **HEALTH AND THE MARYLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF, SHALL ISSUE A REPORT ON**
26 **THE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT OF ELIGIBLE**
27 **CHILDREN.**

28 **(2) THE REPORT SHALL BE:**

(I) ISSUED, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE; AND

(II) PUBLISHED ON THE DEPARTMENT'S WEBSITE IN A MANNER THAT IS ACCESSIBLE FROM THE HOMEPAGE OF THE WEBSITE.

(B) THE REPORT REQUIRED UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL COMPARE THE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION OF ELIGIBLE CHILDREN WITH THE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION OF THEIR PEERS.

(C) (1) THE REPORT SHALL INCLUDE RESULTS DISAGGREGATED BY AN ELIGIBLE CHILD'S:

(I) LANGUAGE MODALITY, WHETHER SIGNED OR SPOKEN;

(II) HEARING LEVEL;

(III) DISABILITY STATUS, OTHER THAN DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING; AND

(IV) RACE.

(2) IF RESULTS CAN BE INCLUDED TO PRODUCE MEANINGFUL INFORMATION CONSISTENT WITH STATE AND FEDERAL LAW GOVERNING THE PRIVACY OF CHILD AND STUDENT INFORMATION, THE REPORT SHALL INCLUDE RESULTS DISAGGREGATED BY:

(I) SERVICES AN ELIGIBLE CHILD HAS RECEIVED; AND

(II) AN ELIGIBLE CHILD'S GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION.

(D) ALL DATA SHALL BE REPORTED IN A MANNER CONSISTENT WITH STATE AND FEDERAL LAW GOVERNING THE PRIVACY OF CHILD AND STUDENT INFORMATION.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the terms of the initial members of the Language Acquisition for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children Advisory Council shall expire as follows:

(1) four members in 2029;

(2) four members in 2030; and

1 (3) five members in 2031.

2 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
3 1, 2026.