

FreeState Challenge and Job Corps 2016

The compulsory attendance law, §7-301 of the Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, requires children age 5 or older and under age 17 to “attend a public school regularly during the entire school year” unless the child satisfies an exemption. One of the exemptions is if the child attends an “alternative educational program.” Md. Code Ann., Educ. §7-301(a)(12). MSDE has determined that Freestate Challenge Academy and Job Corps are alternative education programs under this exemption. Therefore, a student who is 16 years old can legally withdraw from school to attend one of these programs. School systems should advise students that they will have to re-enroll in school if they stop attending the program while still within the compulsory attendance age, unless they satisfy one of the other exemptions to the compulsory attendance law. (Please note that the compulsory school attendance age will rise to age 18 on July 1, 2017.) If you have any questions or require additional information regarding this matter, please contact Mr. John McGinnis, Specialist for Pupil Personnel and Social Work at 410-767-0295 or email John.mcginnis@maryland.gov.