

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 463 (Senator Carter)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Education - Noncertificated Public School Employees - Employee of the Year Award

This bill establishes a Public School Employee of the Year Award to be annually awarded to an eligible noncertificated employee by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Each year, beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, each local school system must nominate a public school employee to be considered for the award. MSDE must convene a panel of judges that includes principals, teachers, and parents to select finalists for the award. From the group of finalists, the panel must select an individual to receive the award. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2019.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase minimally beginning in FY 2020 to implement the bill as specified; however, these expenses can be handled with existing resources. As explained below, implementing a modest award recognition program increases expenditures by approximately \$10,000 annually. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: Local school systems can annually nominate a noncertificated employee for the award using existing resources; however, resources may be diverted from existing projects.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The purpose of the award is to provide recognition to public school employees who provide essential services to public schools in the State and contribute to a positive instructional environment.

Criteria for the award may include attendance, quality of work, job performance and productivity, work ethic and attitude toward work, community service or involvement, and leadership skills. MSDE must adopt regulations to implement the requirements of the bill.

Current Law: A “public school employee” as referenced in the bill means a noncertificated individual who is employed for at least nine months in a year on a full-time basis by a public school employer. Those restrictions do not apply to a noncertificated employee in Baltimore City. Not included in the definition are management personnel, a confidential employee, or any individual designated to act in a negotiating capacity for collective bargaining purposes.

Background:

Certificated and Noncertificated Staff

Public schools employ both certificated and noncertificated staff. According to regulations, certificated staff have a professional certificate and include teachers, principals, administrators, school counselors, library media specialists, pupil personal workers, reading specialists, school psychologists, certain therapists, and school social workers. Noncertificated staff include teacher aides, library aides, assistant counselors, computer aides, extra-curricular activity aides, psychological assistants, secretaries, clerks, bus drivers, and support staff. Noncertificated staff also include bus drivers and other transportation workers as well as support staff. Local school systems employ over 13,500 aides and over 25,100 transportation workers and support staff. All of these employees contribute to the education or educational environment of public school students through their direct student involvement, getting students to school safely, or maintaining the building.

Teacher of the Year Program

According to MSDE, the Teacher of the Year program is a national program coordinated by the Council of Chief State School Officers. MSDE advises that the program is supported through long-standing private sponsorships. The Teacher of the Year program costs approximately \$192,000 annually, which includes \$98,000 in stipends for the 23 nominees and the winner and \$94,000 in award ceremony expenses.

State Expenditures: General fund expenditures increase minimally to convene the panel of judges required by the bill and provide certificates of award to the nominees and winner; these expenses are absorbable within MSDE's existing budget. Although the bill does not require an awards program beyond the designation of the awardee, if MSDE were to develop a program similar to the Teacher of the Year program, MSDE advises that a modest awards program with plaques, a luncheon, and reimbursement of expenses for nominees and awardees to attend the recognition luncheon will cost approximately \$10,000 annually. If MSDE chooses to implement the bill in this manner, these costs may be incurred. MSDE further advises that in addition to those costs, a full-time staff specialist is required to manage the awards program. The Department of Legislative Services advises that an additional staff member is not required.

Local Expenditures: Local school systems can annually nominate a noncertificated employee for the award using existing resources; however, resources may be diverted from existing projects. Developing a program comparable to the Teacher of the Year program would increase expenditures and divert more staff time from existing projects. Baltimore City Public Schools advises that the Teacher of the Year program requires advertising, holding information sessions, producing and distributing materials, and conducting interviews with prospective finalists, with costs incurred for meetings, travel, and professional development.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Baltimore City Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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Analysis by: Caroline L. Boice

Direct Inquiries to:

(410) 946-5510

(301) 970-5510