

Department of Legislative Services  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2021 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
 First Reader

House Bill 1096 (Delegate Reilly)  
 Ways and Means

Public Schools – School Psychologist Recruitment Program

This bill establishes the School Psychologist Recruitment Program in the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to provide professional development programs to individuals who are, or are seeking to become, certified school psychologists in Maryland. The program must maintain a clearinghouse of school psychologist best practices and communicate and promote upcoming opportunities and available resources to certified school psychologists. The program must reimburse certified school psychologists for attending professional conferences, as specified. Annually, the program must select up to 1,000 individuals to grant aid in an amount equal to the certification fee charged by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). MSDE must adopt regulations to carry out the program. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2021.**

Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** MSDE general fund expenditures increase by *at least* \$228,800 in FY 2022 for personnel and one-time consulting costs to implement the program, as discussed below. Future years reflect elimination of one-time costs and ongoing personnel expenses. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	228,800	93,600	96,500	99,900	103,500
Net Effect	(\$228,800)	(\$93,600)	(\$96,500)	(\$99,900)	(\$103,500)

*Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease*

**Local Effect:** To the extent the program is successful at recruiting school psychologists, local school systems may benefit.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** Professional development offered under the program may include (1) virtual courses or webinars; (2) mentoring or peer collaboration programs; (3) provision of support materials; and (4) supporting unlicensed certified school psychologists in pursuing a license to practice psychology from the State Board of Examiners of Psychologists.

In order to be reimbursed for attending professional conferences, a certified school psychologist must submit application materials to the program that include information on the conference and receipts or other documentation of the expenses to be reimbursed. Subject to funding availability, the program must approve an applicant to receive reimbursement if (1) the application is complete and received within 180 days of the last day of the conference; (2) the amount requested does not exceed an amount determined in regulation; and (3) the applicant is eligible to receive reimbursement.

An individual who does not complete all the requirements for certification by NASP must reimburse the program for the full amount of aid given. This does not apply to an individual who completes all requirements for NASP certification but who does not receive certification. The program may provide aid to an individual for up to two applications for NASP certification.

**Current Law:** Under the Code of Maryland Regulations 13a.12.03.08, “school psychologist” means an individual who is certified to provide psychological services to children in a public or State-approved nonpublic school setting. The school psychologist supervises interns and psychometrists (individuals who work directly under the professional supervision of a school psychologist and who provide assistance in administering psychological tests and other related psychometric tasks). To qualify for MSDE certification as a school psychologist, an applicant must meet one of four sets of requirements:

- hold a master’s or higher degree in school psychology from a State-approved program and have qualifying scores on the State-approved test for school psychologist;
- hold a master’s or higher degree; complete a State-approved program in school psychology, culminating in at least a 1,200-hour internship in school psychology; and have qualifying scores on the State-approved test for school psychologist;
- hold a valid Nationally Certified School Psychologist certificate issued by the National School Psychology Certification Board; or
- hold a master’s or higher degree from an institution of higher education and hold a valid professional certificate in school psychology from another state (with

appropriate verification of at least 27 months of satisfactory performance as a school psychologist during the past seven years on the same basis for which application is being made for a comparable Maryland certificate).

Each school system must provide school psychological services. The School Psychology Program is a comprehensive continuum of services and activities based on psychological principles; the continuum of services and activities includes, but is not limited to, consultations, psychological counseling, psychological assessments, professional development, and program development. The goal of the program is to prevent or remediate educational, emotional, or behavioral problems by identifying, analyzing, and reporting psychoeducational needs through consultation, observation, or psychological and educational assessment. According to MSDE, comprehensive school psychological services are undertaken in concert with the activities of teachers, administrators, school counselors, and other school staff.

Chapter 552 of 2019 requires each local school system to submit an interim and final report on school psychologists in the local school system. The reports must include specified information including the current ratio of school psychologists to students in each public school and include strategies (including any additional State and local funding) to, by October 1, 2020, (1) have at least one school psychologist at schools with fewer than 700 students and (2) for schools with 700 or more students, have a ratio of at least one school psychologist for every 700 students. Each local school system must submit an interim report by July 1, 2020, and a final report by December 1, 2020.

**State Expenditures:** MSDE advises that the program requires one full-time staff member with experience/expertise in school psychologist certification requirements to, at a minimum, (1) provide professional development to individuals who are, or are seeking to become, certified school psychologists; (2) maintain a clearinghouse of school psychologist best practices; (3) communicate and promote upcoming opportunities and available resources to certified school psychologists; (4) reimburse certified school psychologists for attending professional conferences; (5) provide aid to specified individuals for NASP certification fees; and (6) adopt criteria, procedures, application forms, and regulations as required by the bill.

Additionally, MSDE advises that contractual expenses are required in fiscal 2022 only for consultants to create professional development programs (which the program must provide under the bill) and establish a best practices clearinghouse. Based on projects of similar size and scope, MSDE estimates that developing professional development programs costs approximately \$100,000 and creating a best practices clearinghouse costs approximately \$50,000.

Thus, MSDE general fund expenditures increase by *at least* \$228,812 in fiscal 2022, which accounts for a 90-day start-up delay from the bill's July 1, 2021 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one education program specialist to handle the duties specified above. It includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses, as well as one-time contractual costs to create professional development programs and establish a best practices clearinghouse.

	<u><b>FY 2022</b></u>	<u><b>FY 2023</b></u>
New Position	1.0	0.0
One-time Consultant to Develop Training Courses	\$100,000	-
One-time Consultant to Develop Clearinghouse	50,000	-
Salary and Fringe Benefits	73,231	\$92,980
One-time Staff Start-up Costs	5,090	-
Ongoing Staff Operating Expenses	<u>491</u>	<u>655</u>
<b>Minimum MSDE Expenditures</b>	<b>\$228,812</b>	<b>\$93,635</b>

Future year expenditures reflect a full salary with annual increases and employee turnover and ongoing operating expenses.

This analysis *does not* reflect the cost to (1) reimburse certified school psychologists for attending professional conferences or (2) provide aid to up to 1,000 individuals annually in an amount equal to the NASP certification fee. As both are required under the bill, MSDE general fund expenditures increase; however, the amount cannot be reliably estimated at this time.

Actual expenditures to reimburse for attending professional conferences are subject to funding availability under the bill and depend on the number of certified school psychologists who submit and qualify for reimbursement and the maximum amount of reimbursement allowed under MSDE regulations, as specified under the bill.

NASP offers a Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) credential to school psychologists that meet certain standards of graduate preparation, ethical and professional practice, and continuing professional development. Initial certification fees range from \$60 to \$210 for graduates of NASP-approved/accredited programs to between \$160 and \$360 for graduates from nonapproved programs. Each NCSP credential must be renewed every three years. Renewal fees are \$99 for members and \$199 for nonmembers. Under the bill, the program may provide aid to an individual for up to two applications for NASP certification. The program must select, consistent with the amount provided in the State budget for the program, up to 1,000 individuals annually to provide aid in an amount equal to the NASP certification fee. Thus, actual expenditures depend on the criteria for selection of recipients of aid developed by MSDE as specified under the bill, the number of school

psychologists seeking initial NASP certification, the number of certified school psychologists seeking to renew their credential, and the applicable certification fees.

*For illustrative purposes only*, if aid were provided to 1,000 individuals for initial certification at the student or first year in practice rate of \$60, general fund expenditures increase by \$60,000; if aid were provided to 1,000 individuals for initial certification at the member rate of \$110, expenditures increase by \$110,000; if aid were provided to 1,000 individuals for initial certification at the nonmember rate of \$210, expenditures increase by \$210,000; if aid were provided to 815 certified school psychologists (the number of total school psychological professionals as of October 2019) to renew their credential at the member rate of \$99, expenditures increase by \$80,685. If MSDE limits aid to twice per individual, expenditures for aid decrease over time.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Association of County Health Officers; Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Department of Health; Baltimore City Public Schools; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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