

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2023 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Third Reader**

Senate Bill 121 (Senator Rosapepe)  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Ways and Means and Economic Matters

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**More Opportunities for Career-Focused Students Act of 2023**

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This bill generally requires local school systems to assist high school students in preparing for admission to registered apprenticeship programs in a manner similar to how they assist students in preparing for admission to postsecondary institutions. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2023.**

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. The bill pertains only to local school boards.

**Local Effect:** For any local school boards that do not currently cover the costs associated with students taking apprenticeship entrance exams and industrial certification exams, any increase in expenditures to cover those costs is expected to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources. Local school boards can otherwise implement the bill with existing resources. No effect on local revenues.

**Small Business Effect:** Potential meaningful.

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**Analysis**

**Bill Summary:** To help high school students prepare to apply for admission to registered apprenticeship programs, local school systems must:

- with regard to college and career readiness software “platforms” that help align students’ strengths and interests to postsecondary goals and careers, consider the pursuit of a vocational certificate, industry certification, or apprenticeship program as the equivalent of pursuing postsecondary education;

- allow students, parents, or guardians to choose to authorize release of a student’s personal information and platform results to registered apprenticeship programs or specified employers from within the platform;
- in the same manner in which public high schools inform students of postsecondary educational options, inform students of employment and skills training opportunities available through registered apprenticeships and specified employers; and
- if the local school system pays for any student to take specified college admissions or college preparatory exams, pay for a student to take specified apprenticeship entrance or industrial certification exams.

**Current Law:** For an overview of registered apprenticeship programs in the State, please see the **Appendix – Apprenticeship**.

**Small Business Effect:** Small businesses that rely on apprentice labor may have a broader pool of applicants from which to choose.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See SB 318 and HB 652 of 2022.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 18, 2023  
km/clb Third Reader - February 10, 2023

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## Appendix – Apprenticeship

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Generally, apprenticeship is a voluntary, industry-sponsored system that prepares individuals for occupations typically requiring high-level skills and related technical knowledge. Apprenticeships are sponsored by one or more employers and may be administered solely by the employer or jointly by management and labor groups. An apprentice receives supervised, structured, on-the-job training under the direction of a skilled journeyman and related technical instruction in a specific occupation. Apprenticeships are designed to meet the workforce needs of the program sponsor. Many industry sponsors use apprenticeship as a method to train employees in the knowledge necessary to become a skilled worker. This also means the number of apprenticeships available is dependent on the current workforce needs of the industry and the capacity and willingness of employers to supervise them.

Apprenticeships are available to individuals age 16 and older; an employer, however, may set a higher entry age. By law, individuals must be age 18 to apprentice in hazardous occupations. Apprenticeships last from one to six years, although most are three to four years, and involve a minimum of 144 hours of classroom instruction per year and at least 2,000 hours per year of on-the-job training. A national apprenticeship and training program was established in federal law in 1937 with the passage of the National Apprenticeship Act, also known as the Fitzgerald Act. The purpose of the Act was to promote national standards of apprenticeship and to safeguard the welfare of apprentice workers.

Along with [26 other states and the District of Columbia](#), Maryland has chosen to operate its own apprenticeship programs under the federal law. The Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL) within the Maryland Department of Labor is responsible for the daily oversight of State apprenticeship programs. More specifically, DWDAL approves new apprenticeship programs as well as changes to current programs and ensures compliance with State and federal requirements. The approval process involves assessing the appropriateness of an apprenticeship program in a proposed industry, the education that will be provided to the apprentice, the current staffing level of the entity proposing the program to determine whether adequate supervision can be provided, recruitment and retention efforts, and the overall operations of the entity. The Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council serves in an advisory role for legislation and regulations, recommending changes to update apprenticeship laws.

As of December 2021, there were 11,404 apprentices registered, and there were 3,833 participating employers. During calendar 2021, the State added 23 new apprenticeship programs.