

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

Senate Bill 771

(Senator M. Washington)

Education, Energy, and the Environment

Ways and Means

Education - Initial Teacher Certification - Requirements

This bill repeals the requirement that a *teacher preparation program* include passing a nationally recognized portfolio-based assessment of teaching ability as a requirement for *graduation* beginning July 1, 2025. Further, the bill changes (1) the requirements to qualify for an initial teaching certificate beginning July 1, 2025, and (2) the certification requirements for a teacher who holds a professional license or certificate from another state. The bill also authorizes local school systems to establish rigorous comprehensive induction programs as part of a pathway to a teaching certificate. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2024.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Public four-year institutions of higher education higher education revenues and expenditures are likely not materially affected, as explained below. MSDE and the Professional Standards in Teacher Education Board can update teacher licensure regulations using existing resources. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) can *receive* induction program plans using existing resources; however, to the extent that plans must be reviewed or approved, additional staff may be necessary. No material effect on revenues.

Local Effect: Local school system expenditures likely increase to implement rigorous comprehensive induction programs. Further, the pool of teaching applicants may be larger. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: Beginning July 1, 2025, for initial teacher certification, graduates from *approved or alternative teacher preparation* programs must:

- meet one of the following criteria: (1) pass a nationally recognized, portfolio-based assessment of teaching ability; or (2) complete a local school system's rigorous teacher induction program, lasting either three years or the duration a teacher can hold a conditional certificate, whichever is less; *and*
- meet one additional qualification from the following: (1) pass a basic literacy skills assessment approved by MSDE; (2) hold a degree from a regionally accredited institution with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 or its equivalent; or (3) provide satisfactory documentation of effective evaluations from a local school system for three years.

In addition, an individual must (under current law) pass a subject specific exam and meet any other requirements set by the State Board of Education (SBE).

The bill also adds completion of a comprehensive induction program as an alternative pathway to certification for a teacher who graduates from an institution of higher education in another state or who holds a professional license or certificate from another state.

Local school systems, individually or together, may develop rigorous comprehensive induction programs. Before establishing a comprehensive induction program, one or more local school systems must submit a plan for the program to MSDE and AIB. A program must include a portfolio component that aligns with the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium standards. This component can count towards teacher preparation program coursework requirements. Completing a program exempts candidates from needing to pass a nationally recognized portfolio-based assessment of teaching ability.

The Basic Literacy Skills test and the subject-specified examinations must be *sufficiently rigorous* rather than at least as rigorous as the similar examination administered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

It is the intent of the General Assembly that the process for initial certification of qualified teachers and other school personnel educated or credentialed in other states be efficient and effective to encourage more teachers and other school personnel to live and work in the State.

The bill makes other conforming changes.

Current Law:

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Blueprint) legislation (including Chapter 771 of 2019, Chapters 36 and 55 of 2021, and Chapter 33 of 2022) established new programs, updated education funding formulas, and, among other provisions established requirements for teacher preparation programs and teacher certification.

Teacher Preparation Programs

A teacher preparation program is required to include specific instructional components such as basic research skills, differentiation of instruction, cultural competence, restorative approaches for student behaviors, identification and remediation of learning deficits, utilization of instructional materials including technology, core academic subjects, addressing social and emotional needs of students, classroom management, and training for virtual learning environments.

Additionally, the program must ensure that participants demonstrate competency in each of these components and provide training in understanding and teaching the Maryland curriculum frameworks. By July 1, 2025, a program must require a student to pass a nationally recognized, portfolio-based assessment of teaching ability to graduate.

Comprehensive Induction Programs

MSDE must develop guidelines for the establishment of comprehensive induction program for new teachers. MSDE must consult with local school systems and the Maryland Education Deans and Directors Council.

The guidelines must include provision concerning mentoring and professional development training and support and incorporate the framework of the Teacher Induction, Retention, and Advancement Pilot Program.

A mentor teacher for a teacher in an induction program must be a highly competent teacher selected by the local school system who will work to instill in the teacher the skills and knowledge for the next generation of teachers. After the career ladder system is well established, mentor teachers will be selected using criteria from the career ladder system.

Basic Literacy Skills Test

MSDE must evaluate the rigor of the Basic Literacy Skills test required for initial teacher certification. If found inadequate compared to the Massachusetts examination, MSDE must

create a new literacy examination of sufficient rigor. Individuals may take this literacy examination multiple times without limitation.

After implementing the literacy examination, MSDE must develop and administer challenging, subject-specific examinations tailored to the subjects and grade levels teachers will teach. These examinations must be as rigorous as those in Massachusetts, and individuals can take them multiple times without limitation. Before administering a subject-specific examination, MSDE must establish standards for it and provide them to approved teacher preparation programs at least a year in advance. Programs must then incorporate these standards into their curriculum in a timely manner.

Initial Certification

These requirements pertain to individuals who have completed a teacher preparation program approved by MSDE or an alternative program. Beginning July 1, 2025, to qualify for an initial certificate, an individual must (1) pass a nationally recognized, portfolio-based assessment of teaching ability; (2) pass a rigorous State-specific examination focused on reading instruction and content for their teaching grade level; and (3) fulfill any other SBE requirements. An individual who previously passed a portfolio-based assessment as a graduation requirement is exempt from retaking the assessment.

Additionally, teachers graduating from out-of-state institutions or holding licenses from other states must either pass a teaching ability examination within 18 months of local school system employment or hold an active National Board Certification (*under the bill*, they may complete a rigorous induction program as an alternative pathway).

MSDE must review and assess the effectiveness of the teaching skill assessments required for initial teacher certification. If revisions are needed, MSDE must submit a report to the General Assembly outlining recommendations for changing initial teacher licensure qualifications.

MSDE is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the impact of new teacher standards and assessments on the diversity of teacher candidates. Results of this assessment must be reported to AIB.

State Fiscal Effect:

Higher Education

Effective July 1, 2025, under current law, teacher candidates in Maryland must submit one of two nationally recognized portfolio-based assessments – either the Educative Teacher Performance Assessment or the Praxis Performance Assessment for Teachers – in order to

qualify for teaching positions. Both assessments entail a \$300 fee and are currently required by current legislation for graduation from teacher preparation programs in the State as of the same date. To the extent that institutions of higher education in the State were expecting to cover the cost of the portfolio assessments for their graduates, their expenditures are less under the bill. However, any such effect is likely minimal.

In addition, in response to the bill, Frostburg State University, Towson University, University of Maryland, College Park Campus, and the Universities at Shady Grove all expressed concern that removing the nationally recognized portfolio-based assessment as a graduation requirement could lead to a significant decline in enrollment in Maryland's teacher preparation programs. This concern arises from the possibility of out-of-state students opting for institutions where passing scores can be easily transferred back to their home states. However, the Department of Legislative Services notes that individuals unaffiliated with an institution can still take these assessments independently. Moreover, the greater flexibility for initial certification may attract more out-of-state candidates to Maryland. Therefore, any potential impact on higher education revenues and expenditures is expected to be minimal overall.

Maryland State Department of Education

Before establishing a comprehensive induction plan, a local school system must submit a plan for the program to MSDE and AIB. MSDE and AIB can receive the plans as required by the bill using existing resources.

However, to the extent that MSDE or AIB must review and approve these plans, additional staff may be required. MSDE advises that the requirement to align comprehensive induction plans with the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium Standards, requires the development of state technical assistance, policies and procedures for reviewing submissions, and a rubric to assess the alignment of the submission with the standards. MSDE believes this work requires a full-time Educational Specialist II as there is currently no position at MSDE dedicated to managing reviews of local induction programs.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: HB 945 (Delegate Ebersole, *et al.*) - Ways and Means.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Higher Education Commission; University System of Maryland; Baltimore County Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; Prince George's County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 21, 2024
js/mcr Third Reader - March 26, 2024
Revised - Amendment(s) - March 26, 2024

Analysis by: Caroline L. Boice

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510