

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

House Bill 993 (Delegate Conaway)  
Ways and Means and Judiciary

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Education - Public Middle Schools - Course on Consequences of a Felony  
Murder Conviction

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This bill requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to develop curriculum standards for a course on the consequences of a conviction for felony murder for students in grades 6 through 8 in public schools. Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, each local board of education must develop and implement a course on the consequences of a conviction for felony murder that is based on SBE standards and that must be taught at least once to students in grades 6 through 8. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.**

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) can develop the required standards using existing resources, although resources may be temporarily diverted from other projects. Revenues are not affected.

**Local Effect:** Local school system expenditures increase in FY 2026 to develop local curriculums for a course on the collateral consequences of a conviction for felony murder. Beginning in FY 2027 (2026-2027 school year) local school system expenditures increase to implement the course. Revenues are not affected. **This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.**

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Bill Summary:** “Consequences of a conviction for felony murder” is defined as the legal penalties that take away an individual’s freedom, rights, and access to programs or services after a conviction for murder in the first degree under Title 2 of the Criminal Law Article.

SBE may adopt regulations to implement the bill.

**Current Law:** With the advice of the State Superintendent of Schools, SBE establishes basic policy and guidelines for the program of instruction for public schools. Subject to State law and the regulations, bylaws, policies, and guidelines established by SBE, each local board of education must establish the curriculum guides and courses of study for schools in its jurisdiction. Policies, rules, and regulations for the graduation of students from Maryland public schools are established by local boards of education and SBE.

MSDE advises that at the middle school level the [State Standards and Frameworks in Social Studies](#) do not include the content required by the bill; however, opportunities to learn about criminal law and the criminal justice system are directly addressed in [High School United States History](#) and [American Government](#).

**State Expenditures:** MSDE advises that developing the content standards on the consequences of a conviction for felony murder for grades 6 through 8 has no material fiscal impact; however, there is an operational impact. To develop the standards, MSDE staff must convene and staff a workgroup of diverse stakeholders to develop new guidelines. MSDE will be expected to conduct research, organize and facilitate meetings, develop materials, and write the standards. MSDE will also be expected to provide ongoing technical assistance to the local school systems on the newly established standards. This may temporarily divert resources from other projects.

The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) notes that the standards must be developed with sufficient time for local school systems to develop local curriculums based on the standards before the beginning of the 2026-2027 school year.

**Local Expenditures:** The bill requires local school systems to develop and implement a course on the consequences of a conviction for felony murder, beginning in the 2026-2027 school year. This course must be taught at least once to students in grades 6 through 8. To allow adequate time for curriculum development and staff training, it is assumed that SBE finalizes the necessary standards before the end of fiscal 2026 (June 30, 2026). As a result, local school system expenditures for curriculum development are expected to increase in both fiscal 2026 and 2027. However, the exact costs cannot be fully determined, as they depend on the standards set by SBE. Multiple counties anticipate increased expenditures for curriculum development, instructional materials, and teacher professional development. Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Frederick County Public Schools, and Prince George's County Public Schools estimate curriculum development costs alone ranging from \$19,400 to \$500,000.

Beginning in fiscal 2027, local school system expenditures increase further to implement the new course. Implementation costs vary based on local conditions, including teacher

availability and the specific standards developed by SBE. DLS notes that requiring local school systems to add a new course may necessitate adjustments to existing middle school curricula. St. Mary's County Public Schools projects the need for eight full-time social studies teachers, with an estimated annual cost of approximately \$650,000. Prince George's County Public Schools anticipates spending approximately \$20,000 per year on professional development for existing teachers. Additionally, school systems have expressed concerns regarding scheduling constraints, teacher availability, and the feasibility of securing appropriate instructional materials. Further guidance on course requirements and curriculum standards are necessary to refine cost estimates and support effective implementation.

**Additional Comments:** In December 2021, DLS produced a report entitled "[\*Collateral Consequences of a Criminal Conviction.\*](#)"

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### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 8801 of 2023.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education; Baltimore City Public Schools; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Baltimore County Public Schools; Frederick County Public Schools; Prince George's County Public Schools; St. Mary's County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 20, 2025  
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