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BILL: HB 1025

TITLE: Local Education Agencies - Educator Screening - NASDTEC
Clearinghouse (School Personnel Vetting and Hiring Transparency Act)

DATE: March 3, 2025

POSITION: Favorable with Amendments

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four local school superintendents, **supports** House Bill 1025 **with a requested amendment to remove the requirement to retroactively screen all current educators using this clearinghouse.**

This bill requires that each local school system become an associate member of the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) and use its Educator Identification Clearinghouse to screen all current and prospective educators, beginning July 1, 2025.

While the administrative costs for NASDTEC are minimal and, as indicated in the fiscal note, many Maryland school systems are already members, we oppose the bill's requirement that systems retroactively screen all current educators. For systems with thousands of employees, this requirement is unreasonable, especially due to the existing and extensive security clearances and background checks required for school employees.

While the NASDTEC is a national collection point for professional educator discipline actions, it is a self-reporting database that should be seen as one tool, but not the epitome in the employment vetting process.

For the Committee's information, below is information PSSAM solicited from the 24 LEAs last fall regarding background and clearance tools; approximately 16 school systems provided feedback. The survey did not include the following methods as they are currently required by law:

- Fingerprinting: State and FBI results (note: these include a criminal check, but also the Adam Walsh Background Clearance Request form (DHR/SSA 1279A (03/2017 edition))
- Form I-9 (by paper and by E-Verify where available)
- Md. Code, Educ. §6-113.2 Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct review ("HB 486 review")
- Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) TEACH database review

Other screening tools used, not listed above included:

- MD Judiciary Case Search as an additional inquiry when applicable
- CJIS fingerprinting
- Workday Recruiting
- MSDE Disqualified Substitute List and Department of Social Services for any claims of child abuse
- AppliTrack (Unified Talent/PowerSchool)
- Talent Ed (PowerSchool) (an application and form tracking system that can be used to keep forms such as 6-113 requirement)
- Frontline
- Basic Google search
- Drug testing; Internal database review

In addition, it was reported by one school system that the MSDE-managed TEACH portal cross references data from the NASDTEC system; but PSSAM has been unable to verify this at this time.

As you can see, Maryland school systems take their responsibility to ensure the safety of students and staff very seriously, as well as ensuring the validity of teaching credentials.

Therefore, PSSAM **supports** House Bill 1025 but kindly requests **an amendment to remove the requirement that school systems retroactively screen all current educators using the NASDTEC.**