

Department of Legislative Services  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
 First Reader

House Bill 997 (Delegate Wolek, *et al.*)  
 Ways and Means

**Green Schools - Model Professional Development Facilities - Designation**

This bill requires the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), in collaboration with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoor Education (MAEOE) and other relevant parties, to establish criteria for designating green schools as model professional development facilities. For fiscal 2026, the Governor must include \$5,000 in the annual budget bill for MAEOE to update its recertification application by September 1, 2025. The updated application must allow applicants to indicate their interest in obtaining a model professional development facility designation. MSDE must designate MAEOE to determine whether a school meets the criteria to obtain a model professional development facility designation, which may include the consideration of specified factors. The designation is valid for one year. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2024.**

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures increase by \$5,000 in FY 2026. DNR and MSDE can collaborate using existing resources; however, resources may be redirected from current priorities. Revenues are not affected. **This bill establishes a mandated appropriation for FY 2026.**

(in dollars)	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	0	5,000	0	0	0
Net Effect	\$0	(\$5,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0

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

**Local Effect:** Local school systems are not directly affected; however, a green school may choose to pursue the additional designation. Any impact is due to local decisions.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The criteria for designating a green school as a model professional development facility may include consideration of specified factors, including a school's experience providing guidance to educators and schools on how to transition their school to a green school.

**Current Law:** Chapters 739 and 740 of 2019, as amended by Chapter 524 of 2022, require the Governor to include in the State budget specified funding for MAEOE, in fiscal 2021 through 2028, for the purpose of increasing the number of green schools in the State. An annual evaluation of the impact of this funding must be conducted in calendar 2022 through 2029.

The mandated funding may be used by MAEOE to:

- support professional development, assist with student transportation to and from environmentally focused activities, or support school projects that incorporate specified environmental best practices;
- increase the number of environmental educators in the State who will provide green schools training and assist schools with becoming green schools;
- support statewide green school events;
- conduct an annual evaluation by an independent contractor of the impact of the funds provided under the bill on increasing the number of green schools in the State; and
- create an online application form for a school to apply for funding under the bill.

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## Additional Information

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

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education; Department of Budget and Management; Department of Natural Resources; Baltimore City Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 18, 2024  
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