
By: ~~Delegate Ross~~ **Delegates Ross, Healey, and Marriott**

Introduced and read first time: January 30, 2006

Assigned to: Ways and Means

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 14, 2006

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Education - Character Education Fund**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Character Education Fund; requiring the
4 Governor to include a certain amount in the State budget each fiscal year for the
5 Fund; establishing the grant eligibility requirements for the Fund; requiring the
6 State Department of Education to adopt criteria for ~~certifying~~ approving
7 character education programs, decide whether to ~~certify~~ approve a proposed
8 character education program by certain dates, make certain grant awards to
9 county boards of education with ~~certified~~ approved character education
10 programs by certain dates and in certain amounts, host ~~a certain conference~~
11 certain professional development activities annually, and establish certain
12 reporting requirements; requiring the Department to report to the Governor and
13 the General Assembly on or before certain dates; expressing the intent of the
14 General Assembly that the Department host ~~a certain conference~~ certain
15 professional development activities at a certain time; defining a certain term;
16 and generally relating to the Character Education Fund.

17 BY adding to
18 Article - Education
19 Section 7-425
20 Annotated Code of Maryland
21 (2004 Replacement Volume and 2005 Supplement)

22 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
23 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

1

Article - Education

2 7-425.

3 (A) IN THIS SECTION, "FUND" MEANS THE CHARACTER EDUCATION FUND.

4 (B) THERE IS A CHARACTER EDUCATION FUND IN THE DEPARTMENT.

5 (C) THE PURPOSE OF THE FUND IS TO ENCOURAGE COUNTY BOARDS TO FUND
6 AND IMPLEMENT CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

7 (D) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADMINISTER THE FUND.

8 (E) (1) THE FUND IS A SPECIAL, NONLAPSING FUND THAT IS NOT SUBJECT
9 TO § 7-302 OF THE STATE FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT ARTICLE.10 (2) THE TREASURER SHALL HOLD THE FUND SEPARATELY, AND THE
11 COMPTROLLER SHALL ACCOUNT FOR THE FUND.

12 (F) (1) THE FUND CONSISTS OF:

13 (I) MONEY APPROPRIATED IN THE STATE BUDGET TO THE FUND;

14 (II) INVESTMENT EARNINGS OF THE FUND; AND

15 (III) ANY OTHER MONEY FROM ANY OTHER SOURCE ACCEPTED FOR
16 THE BENEFIT OF THE FUND.17 (2) THE GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE ~~\$550,000~~ \$150,000 IN THE STATE
18 BUDGET EACH FISCAL YEAR FOR THE FUND.

19 (G) THE FUND MAY BE USED ONLY:

20 (1) TO PROVIDE MATCHING GRANTS TO COUNTY BOARDS TO
21 IMPLEMENT CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAMS ~~CERTIFIED~~ APPROVED BY THE
22 DEPARTMENT; AND23 (2) TO PAY UP TO \$50,000 ANNUALLY FOR ~~THE COSTS OF THE ANNUAL~~
24 ~~CONFERENCE ON CHARACTER EDUCATION BEST PRACTICES, INCLUDING GRANTS TO~~
25 ~~COUNTY BOARDS TO SEND INDIVIDUALS TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM~~
26 ADMINISTRATION, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO
27 COUNTY BOARDS.28 (H) (1) THE TREASURER SHALL INVEST THE MONEY OF THE FUND IN THE
29 SAME MANNER AS OTHER STATE MONEY MAY BE INVESTED.30 (2) ANY INVESTMENT EARNINGS OF THE FUND SHALL BE CREDITED TO
31 THE FUND.32 (I) EXPENDITURES FROM THE FUND MAY BE MADE ONLY IN ACCORDANCE
33 WITH THE STATE BUDGET.

1 (J) TO BE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE A GRANT FROM THE FUND, A COUNTY BOARD
2 SHALL SUBMIT A DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED CHARACTER EDUCATION
3 PROGRAM TO THE DEPARTMENT BY JUNE 1 PRECEDING THE SCHOOL YEAR IN WHICH
4 THE CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM WILL BE IMPLEMENTED.

5 (K) THE DEPARTMENT:

6 (1) SHALL ADOPT CRITERIA FOR ~~CERTIFYING~~ APPROVING CHARACTER
7 EDUCATION PROGRAMS;

8 (2) SHALL DECIDE WHETHER TO ~~CERTIFY~~ APPROVE A PROPOSED
9 CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM BY JULY 1 PRECEDING THE SCHOOL YEAR IN
10 WHICH A CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM WILL BE IMPLEMENTED;

11 (3) SHALL AWARD, BY JULY 1 PRECEDING THE SCHOOL YEAR IN WHICH
12 A CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM WILL BE IMPLEMENTED, A GRANT TO ~~EACH~~
13 ~~COUNTY BOARD WITH A CERTIFIED~~ THE THREE COUNTY BOARDS WITH THE
14 HIGHEST NUMBER OF STUDENT SUSPENSIONS IN THE STATE WITH AN APPROVED
15 CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM EQUAL TO THE LESSER OF:

16 (I) THE AMOUNT OF MONEY THE COUNTY BOARD HAS
17 APPROPRIATED FOR THE CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM; OR

18 (II) THE PRODUCT OF THE AMOUNT OF MONEY IN THE FUND AT
19 THE START OF THE FISCAL YEAR AND THE PERCENTAGE OF THE NUMBER OF
20 STUDENTS ENROLLED IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE STATE THAT ATTEND PUBLIC
21 SCHOOLS IN THE COUNTY;

22 (4) SHALL ESTABLISH, BY REGULATION, REPORTING REQUIREMENTS
23 FOR COUNTY BOARDS THAT RECEIVE GRANTS FROM THE FUND, INCLUDING A
24 REQUIREMENT THAT THE REPORTS PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION
25 REGARDING SCHOOLS IN THE REPORTING COUNTY:

26 (I) ACADEMIC SUCCESS RATES, AS MEASURED BY STANDARDIZED
27 TEST SCORES, COLLEGE ADMISSION RATES, AND OTHER INDICIA OF ACADEMIC
28 ACHIEVEMENT;

29 (II) TEACHER RETENTION RATES;

30 (III) SCHOOL DROPOUT RATES;

31 (IV) DISCIPLINARY REFERRAL RATES; AND

32 (V) LEVELS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL AND
33 STUDENT ACTIVITIES; AND

34 (5) SHALL ANNUALLY HOST ~~A CONFERENCE~~ PROFESSIONAL
35 DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ON CHARACTER EDUCATION BEST PRACTICES.

1 (L) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND TO THE
2 GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OR BEFORE ~~SEPTEMBER~~ NOVEMBER 1 OF EACH YEAR, IN
3 ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1246 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, ON THE
4 DISTRIBUTION OF GRANTS FROM THE FUND AND THE IMPACT OF THE GRANTS ON
5 CHARACTER EDUCATION IN THE STATE FOR THE PRIOR SCHOOL YEAR.

6 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That it is the intent of the
7 General Assembly that the State Department of Education host the first annual
8 ~~conference~~ professional development activities on character education best practices
9 in the fall of 2006.

10 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take
11 effect July 1, 2006.