

HOUSE BILL 838

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HB 509/06 – W&M

71r0792

By: **Delegates Ross, Barkley, Barnes, Bronrott, George, Heller, Hubbard, Huckler, Ivey, Kach, Kaiser, Levi, McDonough, Minnick, Niemann, Ramirez, Rice, Simmons, Stukes, Taylor, Vaughn, Waldstreicher, and Walker**

Introduced and read first time: February 9, 2007
Assigned to: Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

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

16 BY adding to
17 Article – Education
18 Section 7–426
19 Annotated Code of Maryland
20 (2006 Replacement Volume)

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



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

3 **Article – Education**

4 **7-426.**

5 (A) IN THIS SECTION, “FUND” MEANS THE CHARACTER EDUCATION
6 FUND.

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

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

10 (D) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADMINISTER THE FUND.

11 (E) (1) THE FUND IS A SPECIAL, NONLAPSING FUND THAT IS NOT
12 SUBJECT TO § 7-302 OF THE STATE FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT ARTICLE.

13 (2) THE TREASURER SHALL HOLD THE FUND SEPARATELY, AND
14 THE COMPTROLLER SHALL ACCOUNT FOR THE FUND.

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

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

18 (II) INVESTMENT EARNINGS OF THE FUND; AND

19 (III) ANY OTHER MONEY FROM ANY OTHER SOURCE
20 ACCEPTED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE FUND.

21 (2) THE GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE \$250,000 IN THE STATE
22 BUDGET EACH FISCAL YEAR FOR THE FUND.

23 (G) THE FUND MAY BE USED ONLY:

1 **(1) TO PROVIDE MATCHING GRANTS TO COUNTY BOARDS TO**
2 **IMPLEMENT CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAMS APPROVED BY THE**
3 **DEPARTMENT; AND**

4 **(2) TO PAY UP TO \$25,000 ANNUALLY FOR THE COSTS OF THE**
5 **ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON CHARACTER EDUCATION BEST PRACTICES,**
6 **INCLUDING GRANTS TO COUNTY BOARDS TO SEND INDIVIDUALS TO THE ANNUAL**
7 **CONFERENCE.**

8 **(H) (1) THE TREASURER SHALL INVEST THE MONEY OF THE FUND IN**
9 **THE SAME MANNER AS OTHER STATE MONEY MAY BE INVESTED.**

10 **(2) ANY INVESTMENT EARNINGS OF THE FUND SHALL BE**
11 **CREDITED TO THE FUND.**

12 **(I) EXPENDITURES FROM THE FUND MAY BE MADE ONLY IN**
13 **ACCORDANCE WITH THE STATE BUDGET.**

14 **(J) TO BE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE A GRANT FROM THE FUND, A COUNTY**
15 **BOARD SHALL SUBMIT A DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED CHARACTER**
16 **EDUCATION PROGRAM TO THE DEPARTMENT BY JUNE 1 PRECEDING THE**
17 **SCHOOL YEAR IN WHICH THE CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM WILL BE**
18 **IMPLEMENTED.**

19 **(K) THE DEPARTMENT:**

20 **(1) SHALL ADOPT CRITERIA FOR APPROVING CHARACTER**
21 **EDUCATION PROGRAMS;**

22 **(2) SHALL DECIDE WHETHER TO APPROVE A PROPOSED**
23 **CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM BY JULY 1 PRECEDING THE SCHOOL YEAR**
24 **IN WHICH A CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM WILL BE IMPLEMENTED;**

25 **(3) SHALL AWARD, BY JULY 1 PRECEDING THE SCHOOL YEAR IN**
26 **WHICH A CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM WILL BE IMPLEMENTED, A GRANT**
27 **TO THE FIVE COUNTY BOARDS WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF STUDENT**
28 **SUSPENSIONS DURING THE 2005 – 2006 SCHOOL YEAR AS REPORTED BY THE**
29 **DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION WITH AN APPROVED CHARACTER EDUCATION**
30 **PROGRAM EQUAL TO THE LESSER OF:**

1 **(I) THE AMOUNT OF MONEY THE FIVE ELIGIBLE COUNTY**
2 **BOARDS HAVE APPROPRIATED FOR THE CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM; OR**

3 **(II) THE PRODUCT OF THE AMOUNT OF MONEY IN THE**
4 **FUND AT THE START OF THE FISCAL YEAR AND THE PERCENTAGE OF THE**
5 **NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF THE ELIGIBLE**
6 **FIVE COUNTIES IN THE STATE THAT ATTEND ELIGIBLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE**
7 **COUNTY;**

8 **(4) SHALL ESTABLISH, BY REGULATION, REPORTING**
9 **REQUIREMENTS FOR COUNTY BOARDS THAT RECEIVE GRANTS FROM THE FUND,**
10 **INCLUDING A REQUIREMENT THAT THE REPORTS PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING**
11 **INFORMATION REGARDING SCHOOLS IN THE REPORTING COUNTY:**

12 **(I) ACADEMIC SUCCESS RATES, AS MEASURED BY**
13 **STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES, COLLEGE ADMISSION RATES, AND OTHER INDICIA**
14 **OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT;**

15 **(II) TEACHER RETENTION RATES;**

16 **(III) SCHOOL DROPOUT RATES;**

17 **(IV) DISCIPLINARY REFERRAL RATES; AND**

18 **(V) LEVELS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL AND**
19 **STUDENT ACTIVITIES; AND**

20 **(5) SHALL ANNUALLY HOST THE CONFERENCE ON CHARACTER**
21 **EDUCATION BEST PRACTICES.**

22 **(L) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND TO THE**
23 **GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OR BEFORE NOVEMBER 1 OF EACH YEAR, IN**
24 **ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1246 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, ON THE**
25 **DISTRIBUTION OF GRANTS FROM THE FUND AND THE IMPACT OF THE GRANTS**
26 **ON CHARACTER EDUCATION IN THE STATE FOR THE PRIOR SCHOOL YEAR.**

27 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That it is the intent of the
28 General Assembly that the State Department of Education host the first annual
29 Conference on Character Education Best Practices in the fall of 2007.

1 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
2 July 1, 2007.