

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2017 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

House Bill 1486  
Ways and Means

(Delegate Stein)

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Teachers and Teacher Preparation Programs - Research-Based Reading  
Instruction

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This bill requires the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board (PSTEB), by January 1, 2019, to require specified teaching candidates to successfully pass a written test of research-based reading instruction that includes specified elements. This only applies to candidates applying for a certificate to teach students with disabilities, as a reading specialist, as a reading teacher, or kindergarten through fifth grade. PSTEB and the State Board of Education must jointly set standards that contain specified elements for the delivery of research-based reading instruction by teacher preparation programs in the State.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** PSTEB can require specified teaching candidates to successfully pass a written test of research-based reading instruction using existing resources. PSTEB and the State Board of Education can jointly set standards and passing scores using existing resources. Public four-year institutions of higher education with teacher preparation programs can likely include any additional required coursework regarding the delivery of research-based reading instruction using existing resources.

**Local Effect:** None. However, local school systems may have a slightly smaller pool of certified teachers from which they may recruit for specified positions due to the additional testing requirement and any additional required coursework. This is not anticipated to materially affect teacher salaries or the ability of local school systems to hire teachers.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** Specifically, the written test must include (1) foundations of teaching reading; (2) basic rules of phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics of the English language; (3) identification of reading difficulties; (4) development of reading comprehension; and (5) reading assessment.

PSTEB and the State Board of Education jointly must set the passing score for the written test at a level at least as high as the level recommended by the developer of the test.

Specifically, the standards set by PSTEB and the State Board of Education for research-based reading instruction in teacher preparation programs must include direct systematic intensive instruction in phonemic awareness, sound-symbol word attack skills (phonics), vocabulary development, and development of comprehension skills. In addition, the standards must include ample practice in decodable texts designed to foster reading fluency.

**Current Law:** PSTEB is a semi-autonomous board composed of 25 members. PSTEB and the State Board of Education share the authority to develop rules and regulations for the certification of teachers and other professional personnel and requirements for the preparation of teachers and other education personnel, excluding specified social workers.

**Background:** In July 1998, the State Board of Education increased the number of reading credits for teachers at all educational levels. Certificate holders with certification in early childhood education, elementary education, and special education at those levels are required to complete 12 semester hours in reading. Certificate holders with certification in a secondary content area, special education at that level, and PreK-12 disciplines are required to complete 6 semester hours in reading. A list of approved reading courses can be found on the Maryland State Department of Education [website](#).

Applicants or current certificate holders with certification in early childhood, elementary, or special education at the early childhood and elementary levels may test out of the reading requirement (12 semester hours) by meeting the qualifying score on the [Teaching Reading: Elementary Education Praxis II assessment](#).

According to the [Education Commission of the States](#), as of January 2015, 14 states required all early childhood and/or elementary teachers to pass a reading assessment. Six states (California, Mississippi, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Virginia) required a state-developed or unspecified test or reading instruction. Five states (Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, North Carolina, and Wisconsin) require the [Foundations of Reading Test](#). Three states require the [Praxis Teaching Reading Test](#). As of February 2017, the Foundations of Reading Test costs test takers \$139 per test and the

Praxis Teaching Reading Test costs test takers \$146. It is unknown if either of these assessments meet the requirements of the bill. It is also unknown what test PSTEB and the State Board of Education will require.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) advises that teacher candidates completing programs leading to certification are currently required to take a battery of assessments including, at a minimum, a basic skills assessment, a content assessment, and a pedagogy assessment. Each of these assessments cost approximately \$100 to 200. Those educators who are dually certified are required to take further assessments. In addition to the cost of assessments, teacher candidates must also cover the cost of required internships (\$100-\$300) and in some cases, must pay to complete a rubric-based assessment such as the [edTPA](#) (\$300). Currently, the two largest teacher preparation programs in Maryland require the edTPA as a graduation requirement. At a minimum, a teacher candidate who is working to become certified in one area will pay approximately \$500 and may pay upwards of \$1,000 during their preparation on tests and internships alone. An additional assessment requirement will increase certification costs for teaching candidates.

[According to MSDE, as of January 2017](#), the following 11 public institutions of higher education had teacher preparation programs: Bowie State University; Coppin State University; Frostburg State University; Morgan State University; Salisbury University; St. Mary's College of Maryland; Towson University; University of Maryland, College Park Campus; University of Maryland, Baltimore County; University of Maryland Eastern Shore; and University of Maryland, University College. In addition, the following 12 independent institutions of higher education had teacher preparation programs: Notre Dame of Maryland University; Goucher College; Hood College; Johns Hopkins University; Loyola University Maryland; Maryland Institute College of Art; McDaniel College; Mount St. Mary's University; Peabody Institution of the Johns Hopkins University; Stevenson University; Washington Adventist University; and Washington College.

**State Fiscal Effect:** Public four-year institutions of higher education with teacher preparation programs can likely include the required coursework regarding the delivery of research-based reading instruction using existing resources. However, institutions may need to make adjustments to current coursework.

**Local Fiscal Effect:** Local school systems may have a smaller pool of certified teachers from which they may recruit due to the additional testing requirement and the coursework requirement. This is not expected to have a fiscal impact on local school systems, however, some local school systems trying to fill positions in critical shortage areas may need to have classes taught by conditionally certified teachers or long-term substitutes. It is unknown by how much the pool of certified teachers will be limited by the reading assessment requirement due to the cost or the inability to pass; however, it is not anticipated

to be significant. The bill is not anticipated to materially affect teacher salaries or the ability of local school systems to hire teachers.

**Additional Comments:** An additional assessment requirement will increase certification costs for specified teaching candidates. It is assumed that the additional coursework required by teacher preparation programs will not increase student costs.

Independent four-year institutions of higher education with teacher preparation programs can likely include the required coursework regarding the delivery of research-based reading instruction using existing resources. However, institutions may need to make adjustments to current coursework.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education; Education Commission of the States; Pearson Education, Inc.; Educational Testing Service; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 6, 2017  
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