

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2019 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

House Bill 705  
Ways and Means

(Delegate Stein)

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**Career and Technology Education - Training in Soft Business Skills**

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This bill requires career and technology education programs in public schools to provide training in specified soft business skills. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2019.**

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. The bill's provisions are consistent with existing federal requirements.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Bill Summary:** The soft business skills include:

- employee and employer relationships and responsibilities;
- social awareness in the workplace, including diversity and inclusion;
- business etiquette, including appropriate language, addressing others appropriately, conflict resolution, and building consensus;
- basic business communications, including public speaking, business writing, and email;
- basic use of business tools, including word processing and spreadsheet software; and
- requirements for advancement in the workplace.

**Current Law/Background:** The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act is the 2018 reauthorization of the federal Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins), which was last overhauled in 2006. The new Perkins law provides approximately \$1.2 billion in formula grants to states to implement career and technical education (CTE) programs in their secondary schools and postsecondary institutions. The new law allows states to set their own goals for CTE programs, requires them to make progress toward those goals, and makes other changes to federal CTE law. Generally, Perkins requires states to develop sequences of academic and CTE coursework, called programs of study, that prepare students for postsecondary degrees or industry-recognized credentials. Many of the programs of study – which range from plumbing and culinary arts to aerospace engineering and cybersecurity – include or encourage apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship opportunities.

In federal fiscal 2018, Maryland received \$17.0 million in Perkins Title I grants to support CTE programs in secondary schools and postsecondary institutions. Of that amount, \$14.4 million (85%) was distributed to local governments and the remaining 15% was designated for statewide activities and administration. Of the \$14.4 million distributed to local governments, 65% was used for secondary school programs and 35% was spent on postsecondary programs. Perkins funds are used for a variety of purposes at the local level, including teacher professional development, equipment, and program development and administration.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has developed several dozen programs of study grouped within 10 career clusters. Each program of study includes a sequence of four courses that begin in either grade 10 or 11 and prepares students for either further study or industry certification; students that complete the course sequence by high school graduation are considered “CTE completers.” Almost one-quarter of the class of 2017 (22.5%) completed a CTE program of study, and more than half of those also completed the requirements for admission to the University System of Maryland (*i.e.*, “dual completers”).

MSDE advises that federal statute includes in the definition of a CTE program a requirement that it address “employability skills.” In MSDE’s CTE program guidelines, employability skills are defined as skills that are essential for job success, but are not necessarily linked to specific occupational knowledge. They include interpersonal, communication, thinking, technology, and learning skills. MSDE has developed unit plans to specifically address employability skills.

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## **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Association of Counties; Maryland State Department of Education; Baltimore City Public Schools; Baltimore County Public Schools; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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