

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 986 (Senator Hester, *et al.*)
 Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
 and Budget and Taxation

Public Schools – Agricultural Education and Grant Programs

This bill requires each local board of education, beginning in the 2021-2022 school year, to implement an agriculture science curriculum in at least one public high school in the county or at least one career and technology education (CTE) center in the county. In addition, each local board must implement an agricultural education program that meets specified requirements. Finally, the bill establishes a Maryland Agricultural Education Grant Program to increase access to agricultural education and requires the Governor to include \$785,000 in the annual State budget for the program beginning in fiscal 2022. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) may award grants to local boards of education, nonprofit organizations, and other entities for specified purposes. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2020.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$785,000 annually beginning in FY 2022. Revenues are not affected. **This bill establishes a mandated appropriation beginning in FY 2022.**

(in dollars)	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	0	785,000	785,000	785,000	785,000
Net Effect	\$0	(\$785,000)	(\$785,000)	(\$785,000)	(\$785,000)

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

Local Effect: Some local school system (*i.e.*, Allegany, Charles, Howard, and Somerset) expenditures increase, potentially significantly, to implement the specified agricultural curriculum in at least one high school or CTE center in each jurisdiction. Other local school system expenditures may increase to implement an agricultural education program that

meets the requirements of the bill; however, these costs cannot be reliably estimated. Costs for all local school systems may be partially offset by the grant program established by the bill. **This bill may impose a mandate on a unit of local government.**

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The agricultural education program must prepare students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices related to global agriculture, food, fiber, and natural resources systems. Further the program must prepare students for a wide range of opportunities in agricultural-related employment and higher education by providing instruction and developing skills in science, mathematics, technology, communications, leadership, and management.

MSDE must employ an individual to act as a content leader and administer the program. The grants may be for (1) compensating teachers for working extra duty days to enable students to participate in agricultural education programs and activities; (2) providing funding for students who are enrolled in agriculture education courses to pay dues and participate in the Maryland Future Farmers of America Association (FFA); (3) teacher development and training, including attendance at summer training conferences; and (4) maintaining existing agricultural education programs and implementing new MSDE-approved agricultural education programs.

Current Law: Chapter 230 of 2016 encourages each local board of education to implement an agriculture science curriculum in at least one public high school in the local school system or career and technology education center in the county. If offered, the curriculum must be selected from existing curricula developed by MSDE or developed by a county board and approved by MSDE.

With the advice of the State Superintendent of Schools, the State Board of Education establishes basic policy and guidelines for the program of instruction for public schools. Subject to State law and the bylaws, policies, and guidelines established by the State Board of Education, each local board of education must establish the curriculum guides and courses of study for schools in its jurisdiction.

According to regulations, each local school system must provide in public schools a comprehensive, multidisciplinary environmental education program infused within current curricular offerings and aligned with the Maryland Environmental Literacy Curriculum. As part of that curriculum, a student must make decisions that demonstrate understanding of natural communities and the ecological, economic, political, and social systems of

human communities and must examine how their personal and collective actions affect the sustainability of these interrelated systems.

Background: Chapter 672 of 2012 required the State Board of Education and the University of Maryland Extension, after consultation with local boards of education, specified local agriculture groups, and other organizations that promote education about agriculture, to create a task force by December 31, 2014, to explore options for incorporating the subject of agriculture, including sustainable agriculture and other agriculture issues, in all existing curricular areas. The task force completed a final report in May 2015, when authorization for the task force terminated.

The task force's final report included four recommendations:

- establish a free online interactive venue for students entitled the Maryland Agriculture Academy that , which includes multimedia resources and activities;
- provide a curriculum and professional learning resource system for educators on the integrated teaching of agriculture, aligned to Maryland content standards;
- expand the pipeline to agriculture careers and education through elementary and middle school programs; and
- expand the State's rigorous high school agricultural programs of study that lead to postsecondary credit and industry certification as well as increased readiness for entry into college and careers.

As of the 2018-2019 academic year, approximately 50 Maryland public high schools and CTE centers currently offer instruction in agricultural science. Of these, 32 offer the Curriculum for Agriculture Science Education (CASE); the other schools offer at least 1 of 10 other curricula available. Some schools and centers offer several different programs in agricultural science. In 2017, there were approximately 4,700 students enrolled in these programs. The Maryland Department of Agriculture reports that there are an estimated 83,600 jobs in agriculture and other resource-based industries.

MSDE currently provides three agriculturally related programs of study for use by the local boards of education: CASE; Environmental Studies/Natural Resources; and Horticultural Services/Certified Professional Horticulturalist. Other locally developed programs of study focusing on agricultural specialties are also offered in many counties. Further information about the MSDE-provided curricula can be found on MSDE's [website](#). MSDE advises that 20 out of 24 Maryland school systems currently provide the opportunity for students to participate in agriculture education through a CTE program of study. Allegany and Somerset counties no longer offer agriculture due to low enrollments in those programs. Charles and Howard counties also no longer offer these programs.

Maryland Agriculture Education Proposed Enhancements

Agricultural education has many afterschool and summer programs that are an integral component of the program, which means that agricultural education teachers must be available during times to supervise students. In addition, there is specialized training for agricultural education teachers. Thus, additional grant funding could be used to pay teachers for extra time and pay for agricultural education program training.

The [Maryland FFA Association](#) is the State agricultural youth leadership organization of almost 3,000 student members comprising 50 FFA chapters. The FFA mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education. The Maryland FFA offers judged career development events and leadership opportunities related to agriculture for members. To participate in these events, an individual must be an active member, which requires paying dues. Dues are set annually, but have been approximately \$10 in recent years.

State Expenditures: General fund expenditures increase by \$785,000 annually beginning in fiscal 2022. This estimate reflects the mandated appropriation for the program. The bill requires MSDE to employ an individual to act as a content leader for agricultural education and administer the program. MSDE advises that an agricultural content leader is currently employed by the department. Thus, this estimate does not reflect any additional costs for this position. MSDE may choose to use some of the funding mandated by the bill to support this position; however, this is not required by the bill. MSDE did not indicate that it would use the mandated funding for this purpose; thus, no offset in general fund expenditures is assumed in this estimate.

Local Fiscal Effect: Some local school system (*i.e.*, Allegany, Charles, Howard, and Somerset) expenditures increase, potentially significantly, to implement the specified agricultural curriculum in at least one high school or CTE center in each jurisdiction. These costs cannot be reliably estimated but may include hiring an agricultural education program teacher at an estimated cost of \$71,600 annually, compensating the teacher for working extra duty days, paying Maryland FFA dues, teacher development and training. Eligible costs may be partially offset by the grant program established and funded by the bill.

Other local school system expenditures may increase to implement an agricultural education program that meets the requirements of the bill. It is unknown how many local school systems have existing agricultural education programs that do not meet the requirements of the bill. Thus, the costs cannot be reliably estimated. Eligible costs may also be partially offset by the grant program established by the bill.

Small Business: A small business may potentially receive a grant under the program. Any impact is anticipated to be minimal.

Additional Comments: Nonprofits and other entities may receive State grant funding under the program.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: HB 1487 (Delegate Shoemaker, *et al.*) - Ways and Means and Appropriations.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Department of Agriculture; Department of Budget and Management; Maryland Future Farmers of America Association; Baltimore County Public Schools; St. Mary's County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 2, 2020
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