

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2023 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

Senate Bill 271

(Senator Ready)

Education, Energy, and the Environment

Ways and Means

Education - Maryland Civic Excellence Program - Established

This bill establishes the Maryland Civic Excellence Program as a voluntary program in which local school systems may participate to recognize students and public schools that promote the civic readiness and civic engagement of students in public schools. The bill establishes minimum standards for a participating local school system to (1) award a student Seal of Civic Excellence and (2) designate a public school as a Center of Civic Excellence. Beginning with the 2024-2025 school year, participating local school systems must recognize students and schools that meet the requirements for the civic excellence program as specified. By July 1, 2024, and each July thereafter, each participating local school system must submit to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) a report on the program based on the most recently completed school year. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2023.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MSDE can accept reports from participating local school systems on the program using existing resources.

Local Effect: To the extent that a local school system chooses to participate and a local school wishes to be designated as a Center of Civic Excellence, local expenditures may increase and operations may be affected to achieve such designation. However, any expenditures or operational changes are discretionary. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: Each participating public school system must (1) award a student a Seal of Civic Excellence if the student applies and meets the criteria established by the local school system and (2) designate a public school as a Center of Civic Excellence if the school applies and meets the criteria adopted by the local school system.

Seal of Civic Excellence

At a minimum, a participating local school system's criteria for Seal of Civic Excellence must require a student to obtain four total points by earning at least one point from at least four of the following categories: (1) civic-based assessments; (2) social studies courses; (3) student services; (4) volunteer activities; (5) school-based extracurricular activities; (6) nonschool-based extracurricular activities; and (7) voter registration. The bill establishes criteria for earning points in each of the categories.

A local school system that determines a student has fulfilled the criteria under the program must (1) award the student a Seal of Civic Excellence; (2) record the award on the student's official high school transcript; and (3) recognize the award by attaching a cord, medal, or other insignia on the student's high school diploma.

Center of Civic Excellence

At a minimum, a participating local school system's criteria for a Center of Civic Excellence designation must require a public school to have at least 50% of the students in its graduating class who have earned a Seal of Civic Excellence.

A local school system that determines that a public school has fulfilled the criteria under the program must (1) designate the school as a Center of Civic Excellence and (2) recognize the designation by providing a banner, Governor's citation, or citation from MSDE.

Additional Comment: The Department of Legislative Services notes that the first annual report by participating school systems is due before the program begins.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Baltimore City Public Schools; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Frederick County Public Schools; St. Mary's County Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 26, 2023
rh/mcr Third Reader - March 17, 2023
Revised - Amendment(s) - March 17, 2023

Analysis by: Caroline L. Boice

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510