

HOUSE BILL 540

F1

5lr1223

By: **Delegate Wolek**

Introduced and read first time: January 22, 2025

Assigned to: Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Maryland Green Schools – Website, Outreach, and Designations**
3 **(Green Schools Stewardship Act)**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring the Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoor
5 Education to update, by a certain date, and maintain a certain website; requiring the
6 Association to conduct certain outreach efforts with a certain frequency; requiring
7 the Department of Natural Resources, in collaboration with the State Department of
8 Education and in consultation with other relevant parties, to establish criteria for
9 designating green schools in the State as green schools mentor schools; requiring
10 county boards of education to prominently display a link to a certain website on the
11 county board’s website and circulate certain information; and generally relating to
12 green schools.

13 BY adding to
14 Article – Education
15 Section 7–117.1
16 Annotated Code of Maryland
17 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

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

20 **Article – Education**

21 **7–117.1.**

22 **(A) (1) THE GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET BILL**
23 **AN APPROPRIATION IN THE FOLLOWING AMOUNTS TO THE MARYLAND**
24 **ASSOCIATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND OUTDOOR EDUCATION:**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (I) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2027, \$70,000; AND

2 (II) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2028, \$40,000.

3 (2) THE APPROPRIATIONS MADE UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS
4 SUBSECTION MAY BE USED BY THE MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL
5 AND OUTDOOR EDUCATION ONLY TO:

6 (I) UPDATE AND MAINTAIN ITS MARYLAND GREEN SCHOOLS
7 WEBSITE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION;

8 (II) CONDUCT OUTREACH ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH
9 SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION; AND

10 (III) UPDATE ITS AWARD APPLICATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH
11 SUBSECTION (D) OF THIS SECTION.

12 (B) (1) THE MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND
13 OUTDOOR EDUCATION SHALL UPDATE ITS MARYLAND GREEN SCHOOLS WEBSITE
14 BY MARCH 1, 2027, TO CONTAIN THE INFORMATION LISTED UNDER THIS
15 SUBSECTION.

16 (2) THE WEBSITE SHALL INCLUDE A NOVICE SECTION DEDICATED TO
17 INTRODUCING SCHOOLS TO THE CONCEPT OF BECOMING A GREEN SCHOOL,
18 INCLUDING:

19 (I) EXAMPLES OF SIMPLE GREEN ACTIVITIES THAT:

20 1. ARE ALIGNED WITH THE MARYLAND
21 ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY STANDARDS; AND

22 2. AWARDED GREEN SCHOOLS HAVE COMPLETED OR
23 ARE COMPLETING IN THE STATE, INCLUDING CORRESPONDING PHOTOGRAPHS AND
24 ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY STANDARDS FOR THE ACTIVITIES; AND

25 (II) ACTIVITIES, PROGRAMMING, PEDAGOGY, AND OTHER
26 INITIAL ACTIONS THAT WILL ENCOURAGE SCHOOLS TO BEGIN GREEN ACTIVITIES AT
27 THEIR SCHOOL.

28 (3) THE WEBSITE SHALL INCLUDE AN ON-RAMP SECTION DEDICATED
29 TO HELPING SCHOOLS TRANSITION FROM STAND-ALONE GREEN ACTIVITIES TO
30 MORE COMPLICATED GREEN ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF
31 OUTLINED PLANS FOR BECOMING AN AWARDED GREEN SCHOOL, INCLUDING:

1 **(I) EXAMPLES OF MORE COMPLICATED GREEN ACTIVITIES AND**
2 **PROJECTS, INCLUDING ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS THAT HAVE SUSTAINABILITY**
3 **ASPECTS OR INVOLVE MULTIYEAR IMPLEMENTATION, THAT SCHOOLS HAVE**
4 **COMPLETED OR ARE COMPLETING IN THE STATE AND CORRESPONDING**
5 **PHOTOGRAPHS AND ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY STANDARDS FOR THE ACTIVITIES**
6 **AND PROJECTS; AND**

7 **(II) STEP-BY-STEP GUIDANCE ON HOW TO CREATE A PLAN FOR**
8 **BECOMING AN AWARDED GREEN SCHOOL.**

9 **(4) THE WEBSITE SHALL INCLUDE AN APPLICATION SECTION**
10 **DEDICATED TO SCHOOLS THAT ARE READY TO APPLY TO BECOME AN AWARDED**
11 **GREEN SCHOOL, INCLUDING:**

12 **(I) TIMELINES WITH MILESTONES AND DEADLINES;**

13 **(II) BLANK SAMPLE APPLICATIONS;**

14 **(III) APPLICATION GUIDELINES FOR EACH SECTION OF THE**
15 **APPLICATION;**

16 **(IV) EXAMPLES OF APPROVED GREEN SCHOOL APPLICATIONS**
17 **FROM:**

18 **1. URBAN, SUBURBAN, AND RURAL AREAS OF THE**
19 **STATE; AND**

20 **2. EACH COUNTY;**

21 **(V) RECORDED WEBINARS ON HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY**
22 **COMPLETE THE APPLICATION;**

23 **(VI) NAMES AND E-MAIL ADDRESSES OF TEACHERS AND STAFF**
24 **AT AWARDED GREEN SCHOOLS WHO CAN BE CONTACTED FOR GUIDANCE OR**
25 **INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR GREEN SCHOOL PRACTICES;**

26 **(VII) AN UP-TO-DATE LIST OF FUNDING SOURCES SCHOOLS CAN**
27 **APPLY TO FOR ASSISTANCE WITH GREEN SCHOOL-RELATED EFFORTS, INCLUDING**
28 **FUNDS AVAILABLE THROUGH:**

29 **1. INDIVIDUALS;**

- 1 **2. FOUNDATIONS;**
- 2 **3. NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS; AND**
- 3 **4. GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS;**

4 **(VIII) FOR EACH FUNDING SOURCE LISTED UNDER ITEM (VII) OF**
5 **THIS PARAGRAPH:**

- 6 **1. A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE FUNDING SOURCE**
7 **MAY BE USED;**
- 8 **2. THE AMOUNT OF THE FUNDING SOURCE; AND**
- 9 **3. DEADLINES FOR EACH FUNDING SOURCE;**

10 **(IX) NAMES AND CONTACT INFORMATION OF INDIVIDUALS WHO**
11 **CAN ASSIST WITH QUESTIONS REGARDING APPLYING FOR GRANTS FOR GREEN**
12 **SCHOOL-RELATED EFFORTS; AND**

13 **(X) PLANNED OR SCHEDULED GREEN SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL**
14 **DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES.**

15 **(5) (I) EACH SECTION OF THE WEBSITE REQUIRED UNDER**
16 **PARAGRAPHS (2), (3), AND (4) OF THIS SUBSECTION SHALL INCLUDE CONTACT**
17 **INFORMATION OF INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY**
18 **SPECIALISTS, EXPERTS FROM FACILITIES AWARDED THE MARYLAND GREEN**
19 **CENTER AWARD, AND GREEN LEADERS, WHO CAN:**

20 **1. FOR THE NOVICE SECTION, ADVISE SCHOOLS ON**
21 **START-UP GREEN ACTIVITIES AND FUNDING AND GRANT OPPORTUNITIES**
22 **AVAILABLE FOR GREENING THE SCHOOL;**

23 **2. FOR THE ON-RAMP SECTION, ADVISE SCHOOLS ON**
24 **HOW TO CREATE MORE COMPLICATED GREEN ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS THAT WILL**
25 **SUPPORT AND CONTRIBUTE TO A FUTURE APPLICATION FOR BECOMING AN**
26 **AWARDED GREEN SCHOOL; AND**

27 **3. FOR THE APPLICATION SECTION, PROVIDE**
28 **ASSISTANCE WITH THE APPLICATION PROCESS.**

29 **(II) THE CONTACT INFORMATION UNDER SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF**
30 **THIS PARAGRAPH SHALL INCLUDE:**

1 1. THE NAME, TELEPHONE NUMBER, AND DIRECT
2 E-MAIL ADDRESS FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL LISTED;

3 2. FOR THE NOVICE SECTION, THE TYPES OF ACTIVITIES
4 AND FUNDING AND GRANT OPPORTUNITIES EACH INDIVIDUAL LISTED CAN ASSIST
5 WITH;

6 3. FOR THE ON-RAMP SECTION, THE TYPES OF
7 ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS EACH INDIVIDUAL LISTED CAN ASSIST WITH; AND

8 4. FOR THE APPLICATION SECTION, THE PORTION OF
9 THE APPLICATION PROCESS EACH INDIVIDUAL LISTED CAN ASSIST WITH.

10 (C) THE MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND OUTDOOR
11 EDUCATION SHALL REGULARLY:

12 (1) CONDUCT IN-PERSON INFORMATION SESSIONS AT SCHOOLS TO
13 INFORM COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS, SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, AND
14 PARENTS ABOUT THE GREEN SCHOOL PROGRAM AND THE MARYLAND GREEN
15 SCHOOLS WEBSITE UPDATED UNDER SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION; AND

16 (2) CONTACT SCHOOLS IN THE STATE TO GAUGE A SCHOOL'S
17 INTEREST IN AND CAPACITY FOR STARTING GREEN ACTIVITIES.

18 (D) (1) (I) THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, IN
19 COLLABORATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT AND IN CONSULTATION WITH THE
20 MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND OUTDOOR EDUCATION AND
21 OTHER RELEVANT PARTIES, SHALL ESTABLISH CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATING GREEN
22 SCHOOLS IN THE STATE AS GREEN SCHOOLS MENTOR SCHOOLS.

23 (II) THE CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATING A GREEN SCHOOL AS A
24 GREEN SCHOOLS MENTOR SCHOOL MAY INCLUDE CONSIDERATION OF:

25 1. A SCHOOL'S EXPERIENCE PROVIDING GUIDANCE TO
26 EDUCATORS AND SCHOOLS ON HOW TO TRANSITION THEIR SCHOOL TO A GREEN
27 SCHOOL;

28 2. A SCHOOL'S EXPERIENCE WITH PROVIDING A BROAD
29 SET OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS;

30 3. THE TYPE OF ACTIVITIES OR PROJECTS IN WHICH A
31 SCHOOL IS ENGAGED;

1 4. **THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS A SCHOOL ENGAGES**
2 **WITH WHEN CONDUCTING GREEN ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS;**

3 5. **HOW GREEN ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS CONDUCTED**
4 **BY A SCHOOL ALIGN WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS SET BY THE STATE;**
5 **AND**

6 6. **THE PERCENTAGE OF A SCHOOL'S STAFF THAT IS**
7 **ENGAGED IN NATURE-BASED LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND THEIR RELEVANT**
8 **EXPERTISE.**

9 (2) **(I) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL DESIGNATE THE MARYLAND**
10 **ASSOCIATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND OUTDOOR EDUCATION TO DETERMINE**
11 **WHETHER A SCHOOL MEETS THE CRITERIA ESTABLISHED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF**
12 **THIS SUBSECTION TO OBTAIN A GREEN SCHOOLS MENTOR SCHOOL DESIGNATION.**

13 **(II) A GREEN SCHOOLS MENTOR SCHOOL DESIGNATION IS**
14 **VALID FOR 1 YEAR.**

15 (3) **THE MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND**
16 **OUTDOOR EDUCATION SHALL UPDATE ITS AWARD APPLICATION BY SEPTEMBER 1,**
17 **2026, TO ALLOW APPLICANTS TO INDICATE THEIR INTEREST IN OBTAINING A GREEN**
18 **SCHOOLS MENTOR SCHOOL DESIGNATION.**

19 **(E) EACH COUNTY BOARD SHALL:**

20 (1) **PROMINENTLY DISPLAY A LINK ON THE COUNTY BOARD'S**
21 **WEBSITE TO THE MARYLAND GREEN SCHOOLS WEBSITE UPDATED UNDER**
22 **SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION; AND**

23 (2) **WITHIN THE FIRST 2 WEEKS OF THE FIRST AND THIRD QUARTER**
24 **OF EACH SCHOOL YEAR, CIRCULATE INFORMATION TO TEACHERS AND STAFF**
25 **ABOUT:**

26 **(I) THE GREEN SCHOOL PROGRAM;**

27 **(II) THE MARYLAND GREEN SCHOOLS WEBSITE UPDATED**
28 **UNDER SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION; AND**

29 **(III) THE TIME AND LOCATION OF ANY IN-PERSON INFORMATION**
30 **SESSIONS PROVIDED UNDER SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION.**

1 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
2 1, 2025.