

**Department of Legislative Services**  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2025 Session

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

Senate Bill 408 (Senator King)  
 Education, Energy, and the Environment

**State Department of Education - Soccer Opportunities Program - Establishment**

This bill establishes the Soccer Opportunities Program in the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to increase opportunities for minority students to participate in soccer in their communities. A youth soccer nonprofit organization may submit an application, as specified, to MSDE to receive a grant for a program that is in furtherance of the purpose of the Soccer Opportunities Program and is composed of at least 50% minority players or at least 50% players who qualify to receive free lunch under the National School Lunch Program. The Governor must include at least \$100,000 annually for the program in the State budget, for fiscal 2027 to 2029. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.**

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures increase by \$100,000 annually, in FY 2027 through 2029. MSDE can review grant applications and administer the program using existing resources. Revenues are not affected. **This bill establishes a mandated appropriation for FY 2027 through 2029.**

(in dollars)	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	0	100,000	100,000	100,000	0
Net Effect	\$0	(\$100,000)	(\$100,000)	(\$100,000)	\$0

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

**Local Effect:** None. Grants are awarded only to nonprofit organizations.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The State Superintendent of Schools must develop and administer the program and, to the extent funds are available, must provide grants to eligible youth soccer nonprofit organizations, which must be recognized by the United State Soccer Federation as a member of the Maryland State Youth Soccer Association. A grantee must provide matching funds from non-State sources, and MSDE must ensure that the grant does not exceed 50% of the total annual cost of the grantee’s program. The State Superintendent must adopt regulations to carry out provisions of the bill.

**Current Law:** There is no such program under current law. However, the Lacrosse Opportunities Program has a similar structure. Chapter 706 of 2012 established the Lacrosse Opportunities Program in MSDE to increase opportunities for minority public school students to participate in lacrosse in their communities. Initially, only specified local education agencies (LEAs) were eligible to receive grants under the program. Chapter 551 of 2017 expanded eligibility for grants to include youth lacrosse nonprofit organizations in specified counties.

The State Superintendent of Schools must develop and administer the program and provide grants to eligible LEAs and youth lacrosse nonprofit organizations, to the extent funds are available. Only LEAs serving student populations at least 80% of which are “minority students,” and youth lacrosse nonprofit organizations in those counties, may receive grants under the Lacrosse Opportunities Program. For the purposes of the program, State regulations define “minority student” as a student who is an Alaska Native, American Indian, Asian American, African American, Hispanic American, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander. The Governor must include at least \$40,000 annually for the program in the State budget. MSDE has advised that in recent years, it has not received any requests for grants under the program.

The National School Lunch Program subsidizes public and participating nonprofit private schools of high school grade or lower and participating residential child care institutions for lunches served to children. Federal funds pass through MSDE to participating schools and institutions. Nearly half of all public school students in Maryland qualify for free lunch through the program.

---

## Additional Information

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 450 and SB 443 of 2024.

**Designated Cross File:** HB 358 (Delegate Martinez, *et al.*) - Ways and Means.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education; Department of Budget and Management; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 29, 2025  
rh/mcr

---

Analysis by: Scott P. Gates

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