

SENATE BILL 904

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6lr3485
CF HB 1254

By: **Senators Zucker, Brooks, and King**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2026

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Education – Public Schools – Service Contracts and Professional Development**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring a county board of education that seeks to enter into a service
4 contract to submit to the State Department of Education certain information to
5 justify the need for the service contract, and to submit a certain plan of assistance
6 for employees adversely affected by the service contract; requiring, on or before a
7 certain date, the Department to design and develop a new system of professional
8 development for paraeducators and other education support professionals; requiring,
9 on or before a certain date, each county board to provide the new system of
10 professional development to each paraeducator and education support professional
11 employed in a public school in the county; and generally relating to public school
12 service contracts and professional development.

13 BY adding to
14 Article – Education
15 Section 6–132 and 6–133
16 Annotated Code of Maryland
17 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 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 **6–132.**

22 **(A) IN THIS SECTION, “SERVICE CONTRACT” MEANS A PROCUREMENT**
23 **CONTRACT FOR SERVICES THAT WILL BE PROVIDED TO A PUBLIC SCHOOL.**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 **(B) A COUNTY BOARD THAT SEEKS TO ENTER INTO A SERVICE CONTRACT**
2 **SHALL SUBMIT TO THE DEPARTMENT THE INFORMATION REQUIRED UNDER THIS**
3 **SECTION.**

4 **(C) THE COUNTY BOARD SHALL SUBMIT A DEMONSTRATION THAT THE**
5 **COUNTY BOARD HAS TAKEN FORMAL AND POSITIVE STEPS TO CONSIDER**
6 **ALTERNATIVES TO THE SERVICE CONTRACT, INCLUDING REORGANIZATION AND**
7 **REEVALUATION OF SERVICES AND PERFORMANCE.**

8 **(D) (1) THE COUNTY BOARD SHALL SUBMIT CALCULATIONS THAT:**

9 **(I) COMPARE THE COST OF THE SERVICE CONTRACT WITH THE**
10 **COST OF USING SCHOOL EMPLOYEES; AND**

11 **(II) SHOW THE SAVINGS TO THE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM, OVER**
12 **THE DURATION OF THE SERVICE CONTRACT, OF AT LEAST 20% OF THE CONTRACT,**
13 **EXCLUSIVE OF ANY SAVINGS ATTRIBUTABLE TO A REDUCTION IN EMPLOYEE PAY OR**
14 **FRINGE BENEFITS.**

15 **(2) IN CALCULATING THE COST COMPARISON REQUIRED UNDER THIS**
16 **SUBSECTION, THE COUNTY BOARD SHALL INCLUDE:**

17 **(I) DIRECT COSTS, INCLUDING FRINGE BENEFITS;**

18 **(II) INDIRECT OVERHEAD COSTS, INCLUDING THE**
19 **PROPORTIONAL SHARE OF EXISTING ADMINISTRATIVE SALARIES AND BENEFITS,**
20 **RENT, EQUIPMENT COSTS, UTILITIES, AND MATERIALS, BUT ONLY TO THE EXTENT**
21 **THAT THOSE COSTS:**

22 **1. ARE ATTRIBUTABLE SOLELY TO THE SERVICE IN**
23 **QUESTION; AND**

24 **2. WOULD NOT EXIST IF THE SERVICES WERE NOT**
25 **PERFORMED BY SCHOOL EMPLOYEES;**

26 **(III) ANY CONTINUING OR TRANSITIONAL COSTS THAT WOULD**
27 **BE DIRECTLY ASSOCIATED WITH CONTRACTING FOR THE SERVICES, INCLUDING**
28 **UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION AND THE COST OF TRANSITIONAL SERVICES; AND**

29 **(IV) ADDITIONAL COSTS OF PERFORMANCE OF SERVICES BY**
30 **COUNTY BOARD EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING SALARIES AND BENEFITS OF ADDITIONAL**
31 **STAFF AND THE COST OF ADDITIONAL SPACE, EQUIPMENT, AND MATERIALS NEEDED**
32 **TO PERFORM THE SERVICES.**

(E) (1) THE COUNTY BOARD SHALL SUBMIT A FORMAL PLAN OF ASSISTANCE FOR ALL SCHOOL EMPLOYEES WHO WILL BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY THE SERVICE CONTRACT.

(2) THE PLAN OF ASSISTANCE SHALL INCLUDE:

(I) EFFORTS TO PLACE AFFECTED EMPLOYEES IN VACANT POSITIONS IN THE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM;

(II) PROVISIONS IN THE SERVICE CONTRACT, IF FEASIBLE, FOR THE HIRING BY THE CONTRACTOR OF DISPLACED EMPLOYEES; AND

(III) ADVANCE NOTIFICATION TO THE AFFECTED EMPLOYEES.

(F) (1) A SERVICE CONTRACT SHALL BE SUBJECT TO A DEPARTMENT AUDIT TO DETERMINE COMPLIANCE WITH PROJECTED COST SAVINGS UNDER SUBSECTION (D) OF THIS SECTION.

(2) AUDIT FINDINGS FROM AN AUDIT CONDUCTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION SHALL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC.

6-133.

(A) (1) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS THAT PARAEDUCATORS AND OTHER EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS BENEFIT FROM IN-PERSON TRAINING AS PART OF THE HIRING AND ONBOARDING PROCESS.

(2) IT IS THE INTENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY THAT IN-PERSON TRAINING FOR PARAEDUCATORS AND OTHER EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS BE EXPANDED IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO AT LEAST 2 DAYS OF HIGH-QUALITY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DURING EACH SCHOOL YEAR.

(B) (1) SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPHS (2) AND (3) OF THIS SUBSECTION, ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2027, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL DESIGN AND DEVELOP A NEW SYSTEM OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR PARAEDUCATORS AND OTHER EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS THAT IS PAID AND OCCURS DURING WEEKDAY SCHOOL HOURS.

(2) THE NEW SYSTEM OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SHALL INCLUDE:

(I) TRAINING TO FACILITATE PARAEDUCATORS AND TEACHERS WORKING AS A TEAM TO IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES;

(II) TRAINING FOR EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS ON HOW TO:

1. COLLABORATE WITH TEACHERS AND PARAEDUCATORS TO IMPROVE STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND BEHAVIOR;

2. IMPROVE STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY; AND

3. IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS, INCLUDING SCHOOL BUILDINGS, SCHOOL BUSES, PLAYGROUNDS, ATHLETIC FIELDS, SCHOOL CAFETERIAS, AND SCHOOL HEALTH FACILITIES;

(III) TRAINING FOR PARAEDUCATORS ON SAFE PHYSICAL RESTRAINT;

(IV) TRAINING FOR EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS ON CRISIS PREVENTION AND DE-ESCALATION; AND

(V) JOB SKILLS TRAINING APPROPRIATE FOR SPECIFIC EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL GROUPS.

(3) WHEN DESIGNING AND DEVELOPING THE SYSTEM OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIRED UNDER THIS SUBSECTION, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL CONSULT WITH COUNTY BOARDS AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS WITH EXPERIENCE IN SUPPORTING EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS, INCLUDING THE MARYLAND STATE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION.

(C) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2027, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ISSUE GUIDANCE TO EACH COUNTY BOARD THAT DESCRIBES THE SYSTEM OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DEVELOPED AND DESIGNED UNDER THIS SECTION.

(D) ON OR BEFORE JUNE 30, 2028, EACH COUNTY BOARD SHALL PROVIDE THE SYSTEM OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DESIGNED BY THE DEPARTMENT UNDER THIS SECTION TO EACH PARAEDUCATOR AND EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL WHO IS EMPLOYED IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN THE COUNTY.

(E) THIS SECTION MAY NOT BE CONSTRUED TO DIMINISH THE OBLIGATION OF A COUNTY BOARD TO COMPLY WITH A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT OR AN EMPLOYMENT BENEFIT PROGRAM THAT ESTABLISHES GREATER REQUIREMENTS THAN IMPOSED UNDER THIS SECTION.

1 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
2 1, 2026.