

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

House Bill 803  
Ways and Means

(Delegate Miller, *et al.*)

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Public Schools - Career Ladder - Teacher Classroom Teaching Time

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This bill increases the required percentage of working time that a teacher on level one, two, or three of the career ladder for educators must spend teaching in the classroom from 60% to 80%. The eight-year phase-in of this requirement in current law that begins July 1, 2025, remains unchanged. **This bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** None. The bill does not change formulas for State aid to education, and local school systems pay the portion of pension costs for local school system employees that is affected by the bill.

**Local Effect:** To the extent that local school systems hire fewer educators due to the increased required classroom time, local school system personnel expenditures decrease. Local school system revenues are not affected.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law:**

*Career Ladder for Educators*

Under Chapter 36 of 2021, as amended, a four-level career ladder was required to be implemented by each local board of education by July 1, 2024. Level one is a State-certified teacher. Level two is a teacher pursuing a master's degree, 30 credits of a

State board-approved program of study, or national board certification (NBC). Level three is a teacher who has an NBC or, if NBC or a comparable assessment is not available in the teacher's content area, a master's degree in that area; level three includes an assistant principal. Level four is a teacher on the teacher leadership track or administrative track of the career ladder, each of which is further divided into tiers. If a teacher achieves level three or four on the career ladder by being an NBC teacher, the teacher must retain NBC status in order to remain at that level.

As of fall 2025, all 24 local school systems have submitted Levels 1 through 3 of their career ladder plans and received approval from the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB). Four local school systems are piloting Level 4 of the career ladder during the 2025-2026 school year, with authorization to continue pilots in 2026-2027. The AIB and the Maryland State Department of Education are reviewing pilot results and developing guidance and criteria for future submissions in consultation with local school systems and employee representatives.

Minimum salary increases are required as specified beginning in fiscal 2023 for certain accomplishments associated with movement up the career ladder. Teachers with NBC may receive salary increases (of \$10,000) and an additional amount (\$7,000) if they teach in a low-performing school. To receive additional increases associated with moving up the career ladder, the local board must have established a career ladder that has been approved by AIB. Salary increases associated with each recertification of NBC are subject to collective bargaining, with the State share of those increases capped as specified. The costs associated with these salary increases are shared between the State and local government through a new wealth-equalized formula. The State must provide the cost of fees for initially attaining and renewing NBC to each teacher who pursues an NBC, including one retake of each NBC assessment. Local boards must pay one-third of the cost of the NBC fees to the State for each teacher pursuing an NBC.

Local boards were also required to demonstrate to AIB by July 1, 2024, that teachers in the jurisdiction received at least a 10% salary increase over the preceding five-year period. By fiscal 2027, all teachers must receive a salary of at least \$60,000.

### *Classroom Work Time*

Chapter 36 established an average teaching time of 60% of total working time for all teachers to be phased in over eight years beginning in fiscal 2026 as well as additional average teaching percentage targets as teachers ascend the career ladder. The phase-in must begin with newly licensed teachers and teachers in specified low-performing or high-poverty schools. Chapter 36 also expressed the General Assembly's intent that as the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (the Blueprint) is implemented and teachers are provided

with additional collaborative time, the student-to-teacher ratio in public schools will be reduced.

### *Collaborative Time Per Pupil Amount*

Beginning in fiscal 2026, the collaborative time *per-pupil* amount must be allocated to schools within each local school system in accordance with Title 6, Subtitle 10 of the Education Article and the system's AIB-approved collaborative time implementation plan. The funding phases in over eight years and, once fully implemented, increases annually based on the inflation adjustment. Funding amounts for collaborative time are *not* linked to the number of teachers or the phase-in of the classroom work time percentage.

**State/Local Fiscal Effect:** Nationally and in Maryland, according to AIB, teachers typically spend 80% of their time in the classroom and 20% on individual planning. However, the Blueprint requires (statutorily) that on average 60% of teacher's working time be spent in the classroom, thus increasing the nonteaching time from 20% to 40% to support collaborative time to analyze student data, identify struggling students, implement interventions, and provide one-on-one or small-group support. This is phased in over eight years, beginning in the 2025-2026 school year (fiscal 2026). Local school systems were required to submit implementation plans to MSDE by July 1, 2025.

In 2025, a preliminary analysis by MSDE of teacher contracts for 2024-2025 estimates that teachers currently receive 14% to 19% of the student instructional day or 13% to 22% of their contractual day as planning time. These figures vary by district, grade level, and scheduling structure and do not account for meetings, professional development, or noninstructional duties. Based on these estimates, classroom time currently accounts for 78% to 87% of a teacher's contractual day.

Therefore, increasing the required amount of working time spent in the classroom from 60% to 80% may reduce the number of teachers that local school systems need to hire beginning about July 1, 2026 (fiscal 2027). However, any such decrease cannot be reliably estimated as the amount and pace of any such reduction is at the discretion of each local school system. Therefore, local school system expenditures, and any related retirement costs (paid by local school systems) for those teachers may decrease in fiscal 2026 and beyond.

Generally counties advise the bill aligns with current practice; however, Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) advises that requiring assistant principals to teach 80% of their scheduled time would necessitate the creation of additional full-time positions to maintain current operational and administrative functions. FCPS estimates that 109 new "Dean of Students and Instruction" positions would be needed beginning in fiscal 2027, at an initial cost of approximately \$16.3 million annually, with costs increasing in future years. FCPS

further notes that additional administrative work is required to revise schedules, bargaining agreements, job descriptions, and certification processes. The Department of Legislative Services advise that FCPS can likely adjust schedules using existing resources.

**Additional Comments:** Although the bill reduces mandated collaborative time for teachers, it does not reduce the associated per-pupil funding for collaborative time also established by the Blueprint.

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### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. HB 732 of 2025.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Accountability and Implementation Board; Maryland State Department of Education; Department of Budget and Management; Baltimore City Public Schools; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; Frederick County Public Schools; Wicomico County Public Schools; St. Mary's County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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