

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2026 Session

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

Senate Bill 903 (Senator Carozza, *et al.*)  
Education, Energy, and the Environment

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**Education - Engagement Policies and School Compact (Maryland Public  
Education Parental Partnership Act)**

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This bill requires each local board of education, by the 2027-2028 school year, to develop or amend a comprehensive parent and family engagement policy in consultation with parents, publish it online, review and revise it annually, and annually certify compliance to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). The policy must establish a framework for school-level parent-school compacts and build capacity for meaningful parental engagement. Beginning in the 2028-2029 school year, each public school must also develop a parent-school compact. The compact must define the responsibilities of schools, parents, and students; be developed collaboratively; be written in plain language; include provisions for communication, curriculum access, and educator qualifications; and be reviewed annually at a parent meeting. Each school must post the compact online and annually certify compliance to its local board. MSDE must provide guidance and technical assistance and may adopt regulations. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** MSDE can fulfill all the requirements of the bill with existing resources, including providing guidance, training, and technical assistance to local boards of education or public schools, collecting annual certifications of compliance with the bill, and adopting regulations related to the bill's requirements. No effect on revenues.

**Local Effect:** Expenditures increase beginning in FY 2027 to the extent that school systems need to hire staff to assist with the development of a comprehensive parent and family engagement policy and parent-school compact, conduct training for schools, and develop a system to track compliance with the bill. However, a reliable estimate is not available, as discussed below. No effect on revenues. **This bill may impose a mandate on a unit of local government.**

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## **Analysis**

### **Bill Summary:**

#### *Parent and Family Engagement Policy*

The parent and family engagement policy is meant to provide parents with an opportunity to participate in the decisions of the local board of education and superintendent that pertain to the education of students within the local school system and assist parents and public schools in collaborating on the education of students enrolled in each public school.

The parent and family engagement policy must:

- be established in consultation with the parents of students enrolled in the local school system;
- establish a framework for a parent-school compact to be used by each public school in the local school system in accordance with the bill, including general procedural rules for the creation of the compact;
- provide technical assistance to parents seeking to participate in the development of the parent-school compact, including by providing translation services and training;
- build capacity in each school for substantive parental engagement, including by providing training, materials, and support for school staff who seek to engage parents;
- coordinate and integrate the family and parent engagement strategies adopted as part of the policy with other relevant federal and state laws and policies;
- provide an opportunity, at least once a year, for parents to evaluate the policy for effectiveness and contribute feedback to improve the policy; and
- be revised at least once a year to remove barriers to parental involvement and address the needs of parents seeking to assist in the education of their children.

The parent and family engagement policy must be documented in writing and published on the website of the local board.

If the local board of education has an existing parent and family engagement policy, including a policy established in accordance with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, the local board may amend that policy to meet the requirements of the bill.

## *Parent-school Compact*

The purpose of the parent-school compact is to clearly define the responsibilities and roles of school staff, parents, and students in the education of each student, including:

- the local board's and school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction aligned to the state standards and curricular frameworks in a supportive and effective learning environment;
- the ways parents are responsible for supporting their student's learning and academic progress, including monitoring attendance, homework assistance and completion, and participation in extracurricular activities;
- a parent's right to know the qualifications and credentials of the educators teaching or providing educational or other services to their student, including timely notification that an assigned teacher of four or more weeks holds a conditional teaching license or is teaching a subject matter for which the teacher does not hold a license; and
- the school's responsibility to provide meaningful opportunities for ongoing communication between a student's parents and teachers (including, to the extent practicable, in the language that the parent speaks) through annual parent-teacher conferences, frequent reports on student academic progress, and regular opportunities for the parent to meet with school staff.

In developing a compact, the school and parents must ensure it (1) follows the comprehensive parent and family engagement policy developed by the local board and (2) is developed using a collaborative process; and is written using plain and clear language understandable to all parents, including to the extent practicable, the language the parents speak.

Each school must convene an annual meetings for patents to (1) review and discuss the terms and content of the compact; (2) update parents on the school's academic programs and curriculum used for various academic subjects, including opportunities for parents to review curricular materials; and (3) inform parents of the assessments used to measure student and school progress and the expected levels of proficiency in reported subjects. During the annual meeting, the school must provide parents with training materials to assist parents seeking to improve student achievement and offer parents meaningful opportunities to provide feedback on the terms of the compact, including proposing amendments to the compact. The annual meeting must, to the extent practicable, hold discussions in languages spoken by parents and be scheduled at a convenient time for parents and consider flexible modes of meetings in order to maximize participation. The school must seek to maximize participation of parents with diverse needs in the annual meeting, including the parents of

(1) students with disabilities; (2) English language learners; (3) homeless children; and (4) students with federal visas.

If a school has an existing compact, the school may amend the compact to meet the requirements of the bill; a compact adopted in accordance with the requirements of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act may fulfill these requirements.

### **Current Law:**

#### *School Instruction – Generally*

With the advice of the State Superintendent of Schools, the State Board of Education (SBE) establishes basic policy and guidelines for the program of instruction for public schools. Subject to State law and the regulations, bylaws, policies, and guidelines established by SBE, each local board of education must establish the curriculum guides and courses of study for schools in its jurisdiction. Policies, rules, and regulations for the graduation of students from Maryland public schools are established by local boards of education and SBE.

The State Standards and Frameworks defines what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. Using the standards and frameworks, local school systems develop curriculums. Teachers then develop lesson plans to teach the curriculum.

#### *Language Access Requirements*

Each local board of education must take reasonable steps to provide equal access to public services for individuals with limited English proficiency. Reasonable steps to provide equal access include the provision of oral language services for parents and guardians with limited English proficiency, which must be through face-to-face, in-house oral language services if in-person contact is on a weekly or more frequent basis and the translation of vital documents ordinarily provided to the public into any language spoken by any limited English proficient population that constitutes at least 3% of the overall population within the county as measured by the U.S. Census.

#### *Every Student Succeeds Act*

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act was amended to require Title I, Part A recipients to develop a parent and family engagement policy. Local school systems that receive funds under the law must jointly develop with, agree on with, and distribute to parents and family members a written parent and family engagement policy. At the school level, each Title I recipient must also jointly develop with, and distribute to, parents and family members of participating

children a written parent and family engagement policy, agreed on by such parents. Furthermore, as a component of the school-level parent and family engagement policy, each school must jointly develop with parents a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State's high standards.

**Local Expenditures:** While some local school systems already meet many of the bill's requirements or can implement them with existing resources, others report that the bill would have a meaningful operational and fiscal impact. Among the local school systems that responded to requests for information on the bill's potential effect, Frederick and Wicomico counties indicated that additional resources would be needed for implementation. In particular, Frederick County reports that beyond revising existing system policies and regulations and drafting a parent-school compact, the school system would need to provide extensive training to ensure that schools understand their obligations under both the compact and the bill, as well as develop a new system to track and monitor compliance with the bill's requirements. Accordingly, some school systems may incur increased expenditures beginning in fiscal 2027 to hire staff to help develop a parent and family engagement policy and a parent-school compact, and to create systems for monitoring compliance with the bill's requirements. However, none of the responding school systems were able to provide enough information to produce a reliable estimate of those costs.

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### Additional Information

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See SB 948 and HB 1385 of 2025.

**Designated Cross File:** HB 1334 (Delegate Miller, *et al.*) - Ways and Means.

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

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Analysis by: Andrew Stover

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