

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 15
(Senator Jackson)

Education, Energy, and the Environment

Baltimore County - Inspector General - Authority Over Baltimore County Public Schools

This bill authorizes the Baltimore County Council to enact a local law that grants the Baltimore County Inspector General (IG) the same authority over Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) that the IG has over a department of county government, beginning in 2027. The bill further specifies that it is the intent of the General Assembly that if the Baltimore County Council adopts a local law to grant the Baltimore County IG authority over BCPS, that local law must take effect at the beginning of the next following term of office of the IG.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Baltimore County expenditures may increase by a significant amount to the extent that the IG is granted jurisdiction over BCPS. Expenditures for BCPS may likewise increase to comply with investigations under IG's expanded scope. Local revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: In Chapter 329 of 2020, the General Assembly similarly authorized the Montgomery County Council to enact a local law that grants the Montgomery County IG the same authority over the Montgomery County Board of Education (and public schools

located in Montgomery County) that the inspector general has over a department of county government.

The Baltimore County IG's purpose as established in local law is to provide (1) increased accountability and oversight in the operations of the county government by identifying fraud, waste and abuse in the county government and (2) ways to promote efficiency, accountability, and integrity in government. The Baltimore IG's fiscal [2025 annual report](#) notes the office does not currently have jurisdiction over BCPS.

Local Expenditures: Assuming the Baltimore County Council authorizes the IG to oversee the public school system, local expenditures may increase due to the expansion of the Baltimore County IG's jurisdiction and responsibilities. Since the school district receives a significant amount of funding (representing about \$2.8 billion in operating and capital expenditures in fiscal 2026), expanding the Baltimore County IG's jurisdiction to encompass the public school system is likely a significant undertaking that may require additional resources and staff, a shift in current activities to focus on the school system, resulting in less resources for existing activities, or a combination of increased resources and a shift in existing oversight activities.

For fiscal year 2025, the Baltimore County IG had a budget of \$874,483 and operated with six full-time employees. Assuming the IG maintains some (or all) of its current oversight activities, Baltimore County may need to increase funding for the IG for work related to the public school system. Due to the sizeable expansion from its current mission, Baltimore County anticipates hiring three additional investigators, one management analyst, and one administrative assistant to handle the expanded responsibilities associated with potential new authority over BCPS. Baltimore County estimates that these additional positions will cost over \$0.75 million annually. Actual costs to Baltimore County will depend on the number of investigations into BCPS the IG chooses to conduct and on the extent to which the IG may instead shift *existing* staff and resources investigate matters relating to BCPS.

Additionally, BCPS may require additional expenditures to comply with investigations conducted by the Baltimore County IG under an expanded authority. Exact costs to comply with an investigation are unknown and will depend on the level of reporting required by a given investigation.

Any increase in expenditures for Baltimore County or BCPS take effect only after Baltimore County enacts a local law providing such authority and after the next term of office for the Baltimore IG in accordance with the intent language in the bill. The Baltimore County IG holds office for a term of four years commencing at the time of their appointment and until their successor qualifies.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: HB 89 (Delegate Nawrocki) - Ways and Means.

Information Source(s): Baltimore County; Department of Legislative Services

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sj/hlb

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