

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 807 (Delegate Lehman, *et al.*)
Ways and Means

Education - Teacher Preparation Programs - English Language Learner Teacher
Competency Requirements

This bill requires a teacher preparation program to include specified training in English language learner-related teacher competencies, including incorporating those competencies throughout the curriculum. Beginning in the 2028-2029 academic year, a teacher preparation program must also require at least one three-credit course in teaching English language learners. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Public four-year institutions of higher education and Baltimore City Community College (BCCC) may realize operational and fiscal impacts related to implementation of the required three-credit course; the magnitude of these impacts varies by institution and is expected to be absorbable at most, but potentially not all, institutions, as discussed below. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) can absorb any additional administrative responsibilities within existing resources.

Local Effect: Local community colleges may realize operational and fiscal impacts related to curriculum updates and alignment of Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) programs with the new English language learner training requirements; the magnitude of these impacts varies by institution and is expected to be absorbable at most institutions.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law:

Teacher Preparation Programs

A teacher preparation program is required to include specified instructional components, including basic research skills and data use; differentiation of instruction and demonstration of cultural competence for students of diverse racial, ethnic, *linguistic*, and economic backgrounds (emphasis added); restorative approaches for student behaviors; identification and remediation of learning deficits; use of high-quality instructional materials, including technology; core academic subjects; methods for addressing students' social and emotional needs, including trauma-informed approaches; classroom management skills; and training for effective instruction in virtual learning environments.

In addition, a teacher preparation program must require program participants to demonstrate competency in each instructional component and provide training in the knowledge and skills required to understand and teach the Maryland curriculum frameworks.

Standard Number of Credits for Degrees

The standard number of credits required for a baccalaureate degree from a public senior higher education institution is 120 credit hours. This standard does not apply if a degree program is defined as a five-year baccalaureate program or if professional accreditation or certification requirements necessitate additional credit hours that cannot be completed within 120 credits. In addition, a governing board of a public institution of higher education, in consultation with MHEC, may approve additional exceptions to the standard credit-hour requirement. Teacher preparation programs are subject to separate statutory limits on total credit hours.

Teacher Preparation Program Approval and Accreditation

An institution of higher education may not offer an undergraduate or graduate program that certifies a recipient to teach unless the institution is approved to operate by MHEC and either holds national accreditation for teacher education or is approved by MSDE. An institution may elect whether to seek national accreditation or approval by MSDE. In determining whether an accrediting agency is recognized, MSDE and MHEC must consider whether the agency uses national professional standards comparable to those used by MSDE for program approval.

MSDE, in conjunction with accrediting agencies, must provide technical assistance to institutions seeking national accreditation or MSDE approval and is responsible for specified accreditation-related costs, including accreditation fees and a portion of site visit expenses. The Governor must provide sufficient funds in MSDE's annual budget to cover these costs.

Associate of Arts in Teaching

According to Maryland regulations, an institution may award an AAT degree aligned with the first two years of a bachelor's program in teacher education. Students who complete the AAT and meet specified GPA and basic skills assessment requirements are eligible to transfer up to 70 credit hours into in-State public and participating independent four-year teacher education programs without further review. Community colleges also offer Associate of Arts transfer pathways into teacher education across multiple prekindergarten through grade 12 certification areas.

State/Local Expenditures: Maryland's public four-year institutions offering approved [teacher preparation programs](#) include Bowie State University; Coppin State University; Frostburg State University; Morgan State University (MSU); St. Mary's College of Maryland; Salisbury University; Towson University; the University of Maryland, Baltimore County; the University of Maryland, College Park Campus; and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES). In addition, all 16 of the State's community colleges, including BCCC and the local community colleges, offer an AAT degree pathway that transfers into four-year teacher preparation programs.

Institutions may incur increased expenditures associated with curriculum revisions and development of the required standalone three-credit course in teaching English language learners. While full implementation begins in the 2028-2029 academic year (fiscal 2029), planning and curriculum redesign activities may result in incremental costs in prior fiscal years. Potential costs include curriculum mapping and course development; faculty workload adjustments or overload compensation; professional development in English language learner instruction; instructional materials; and, at certain institutions, limited faculty hiring or contractual support. Community colleges may incur similar costs related to alignment of AAT pathways and associated articulation agreements. For example, UMES advises that it may need to hire faculty with expertise in English language learner instruction, and MSU anticipates increased costs associated with course development and staffing adjustments.

The magnitude of any fiscal impact varies by institution, depending on existing course offerings, faculty capacity, and current integration of English language learner competencies. Although some institutions anticipate incremental staffing or redesign costs, most institutions are expected to accommodate the requirement within existing budget

structures through routine curriculum revision processes and reallocation of faculty workload; however, higher education expenditures may increase at some of the smaller institutions that cannot adjust staffing as easily as larger institutions. Any fiscal impact is likely mitigated by delaying the requirement until the 2028-2029 academic year (fiscal 2029), allowing institutions time to reallocate existing staffing resources.

Although some institutions note the potential for increased tuition revenue from adding another required course, the bill does not increase the credit hours required for graduation. Therefore, a more likely scenario is that the required course replaces an existing course, resulting in no additional revenue.

Additional Comments: The Maryland Independent College and University Association (MICUA) advises that the bill may result in operational and fiscal impacts for participating independent institutions, including costs associated with development and staffing of the required standalone three-credit course and potential adjustments to program sequencing. MICUA indicates that these changes may require additional faculty instructional hours and course sections at certain institutions. However, as with public institutions, the magnitude of any impact is expected to vary by campus and is likely manageable within existing institutional resources in most cases.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Higher Education Commission; University System of Maryland; Morgan State University; Maryland Independent College and University Association; Department of Legislative Services

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