

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 438 (Delegate Pasteur, *et al.*)

Ways and Means and Government,
Labor, and Elections

Adult Prison School Board Model Development Committee

This bill establishes the Adult Prison School Board Model Development Committee to (1) develop a comprehensive plan, with specified elements, for a school board system to oversee correctional education for individuals subject to the criminal and juvenile justice systems, and (2) conduct a fiscal mapping project for correctional education that examines funding models for the proposed board. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must provide staff for the committee. The committee must submit an interim report of findings and recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly on or before June 1, 2027, and a final report on June 1, 2028. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2026, and terminates June 30, 2028.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: No effect in FY 2026. General fund expenditures increase by \$111,500 in FY 2027 and \$98,800 in FY 2028 for contractual staff. Any expense reimbursements for committee members are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	111,500	98,800	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$111,500)	(\$98,800)	\$0	\$0	\$0

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The bill specifies commission membership and requires that members serve without compensation, though members are entitled to reimbursement for expenses under standard State travel regulations.

The comprehensive plan must include (1) educational standards aligned with educational standards for school systems in the State, and (2) a recommendation for the school board to be made up of individuals who are residents of the State and who represent various State agencies and professional backgrounds as specified.

The fiscal mapping project must examine the needs and options necessary to sustain a school board system, including (1) examining funding sources; (2) determining funding levels required for specified purposes; and (3) developing an independent relationship with the Department of Budget and Management to establish and manage capital and operating budgets.

Current Law: Chapters 945 and 946 of 2024 and Chapter 110 of 2025 established and subsequently extended the [Prison Education Delivery Reform Commission](#), staffed by the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy. The commission must (1) convene an advisory stakeholder group, as specified; (2) work with the advisory stakeholder group, including conducting roundtable discussion forums seeking public input in all geographic regions of the State; (3) develop an education-focused statewide framework of policies to invest in strategies to increase public safety and reduce recidivism of adult offenders, using a data-driven approach; (4) research best practices for the primary, secondary, postsecondary, and career or vocational education of those who are subject to the criminal and juvenile justice systems; (5) identify measures to mitigate risk factors that contribute to adult contact with the criminal justice system, with a focus on education; (6) evaluate current workforce programs and their effectiveness, as specified; and (7) request technical assistance from specified organizations. Members may not receive compensation. The commission completed an [interim report](#) of its work thus far in June 2025. Under Chapter 110, the commission must submit an interim report of its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly by June 1, 2028, and a final report by January 1, 2029.

In October 2025, the commission approved a set of recommendations for 2026, including (1) creating a plan for a school board system to oversee adult correctional education that includes various State agencies and (2) conducting a fiscal mapping project for correctional education with an interdepartmental strategic plan.

Correctional Education Council

The Correctional Education Council is under the joint jurisdiction of the Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor) and the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. The council must develop and recommend an educational and workforce training program for adult correctional institutions in the State. These programs must meet the special needs and circumstances of the inmates in each correctional institution.

The Correctional Education Council must also adopt regulations for a mandatory education program for inmates who fail to attain specified minimum educational standards as well as regulations for a mandatory workforce skills training program. Further, the council must advocate and promote the interests of educational programs and workforce skills training opportunities in correctional institutions and regularly review these programs to ensure that educational and training needs of inmates are being met.

Workforce Development and Adult Learning

MD Labor's Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL) oversees Correctional Education throughout Maryland's State correctional facilities. DWDAL's Office of Correctional Education (OCE) provides career training opportunities "behind the fence." Offerings vary by institution but include training in automotive skills, barbering, construction, and welding. All occupational courses lead to a portable, industry-recognized credential that contributes to an incarcerated individual's employability after release. In addition to occupational programming, OCE oversees academic and transitional courses throughout Maryland's correctional facilities. Academic programming includes GED preparation ahead of earning a Maryland high school diploma and English as a second language courses. Prior to release, incarcerated individuals may complete transitional courses to ease their reentrance to society. These offerings include classes in parenting, employment readiness, financial literacy, and life skills.

MD Labor provides services to returning citizens through the Re-entry Navigator Initiative. Re-entry Navigators are a team of employment specialists located within the American Job Centers across the State who connect justice-involved job seekers with businesses by planning with prerelease individuals and supporting post-release job seekers. The navigators also continually establish a network of employer contacts who are interested in hiring their clients. More information on the Re-entry Navigator Initiative can be found on MD Labor's [website](#).

Education of Children by the Department of Juvenile Services

Chapter 147 of 2021 transferred the Juvenile Services Education Program from the
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Maryland State Department of Education to the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) and established the Juvenile Services Education Board to oversee the program. Through the program, DJS oversees and provides comprehensive educational services to all juveniles placed in a DJS-operated detention and residential facility.

State Expenditures: Despite the bill’s June 1, 2026 effective date, it is assumed that State finances are not affected in fiscal 2026.

Given the State’s fiscal difficulties, agency budgets have been constrained. Thus, the requirement to staff the committee and develop the interim and final reports may not be absorbable within the existing budgeted resources of MSDE. Instead, general fund expenditures may increase for one contractual position to support the work of the committee and conduct research related to the comprehensive plan and fiscal mapping project required by the bill.

General expenditures increase by \$111,518 in fiscal 2027 and \$98,760 in fiscal 2028, which accounts for a 30-day start-up delay from the bill’s June 1, 2026 effective date and completion of the committee’s final report at the end of fiscal 2028. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one contractual support position in fiscal 2027 and 2028 to conduct research related to the comprehensive plan and fiscal mapping projects required by the bill. It includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses; the fiscal 2028 estimate also reflects the termination of one-time costs.

	FY 2027	FY 2028
Contractual Position	1.0	1.0
Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$101,683	\$95,955
Operating Expenses	<u>9,835</u>	<u>2,805</u>
Total State Expenditures	\$111,518	\$98,760

This estimate does not include any health insurance costs that could be incurred for specified contractual employees under the State’s implementation of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Additional Comments: MD Labor advises that, as the bill requires the Adult Prison School Board Model Development Committee’s interim and final reports to be submitted a year before the respective interim and final reports for the Prison Education Delivery Reform Commission, the committee may not be able to consider the work and recommendations of the commission in its reports, potentially resulting in a conflict between the recommendations issued by the two entities.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Information Technology; Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Maryland Department of Labor; Maryland Higher Education Commission; Maryland State Department of Education; Office of the Correctional Ombudsman; Department of Legislative Services

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