

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

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

Senate Bill 648 (Senator Hettleman)  
Education, Energy, and the Environment

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**Local School Systems - Educator Screening - Educator Identification  
Clearinghouse (School Personnel Vetting and Hiring Transparency Act)**

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This bill requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to register each local school system in the State as an associate member of a national membership organization that provides access to the Educator Identification Clearinghouse and to pay any applicable fees and dues associated with the membership. Each local school system must utilize the clearinghouse through the national membership organization to screen each individual who receives, on or after October 1, 2026, an offer of employment for an educator position that requires a license. In addition, each local school system must ensure that each individual who receives such an offer (1) applies for the appropriate license after the offer of employment and before the start of employment and (2) obtains the appropriate license before any interaction with children. Nothing in the bill may be construed to impair or affect existing statutory prohibitions against hiring or retaining individuals convicted of specified crimes, including child sexual abuse. **The bill takes effect on July 1, 2026.**

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Beginning in FY 2027, MSDE general fund expenditures increase annually by approximately \$28,600 for subscription fees. Revenues are not affected.

**Local Effect:** Expenditures decrease minimally (\$2,400 or less) each year beginning in FY 2027 for local school systems that currently use and pay for the clearinghouse. Local school systems can otherwise screen applicants through the clearinghouse using existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## Analysis

**Current Law:** MSDE advises that the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) is the only national membership organization that meets the bill's criteria, and MSDE is already a member. Associate membership in NASDTEC may be granted to institutions of higher education, local school systems, schools, organizations, or individuals ineligible for Jurisdictional Membership, as specified. Annual dues for an associate member are \$500. In addition to the membership dues, there is an annual subscription fee based on the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers in the district, as shown in **Exhibit 1**.

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### Exhibit 1 Local School System Clearinghouse Fee Schedule

<u>FTE Teachers</u>	<u>Membership Dues</u>	<u>Subscription Fee</u>	<u>Total Annual Fee</u>
< 300	\$500	\$100	\$600
300 - 599	500	200	700
600 - 999	500	300	800
1000 - 1999	500	400	900
2000 - 2999	500	500	1,000
3000 - 3999	500	600	1,100
4000 -9,999	500	700	1,200
>9,999	500	.12 per FTE teacher	

FTE: full-time equivalent

Note: Only one local school system (Montgomery County) pays total fees exceeding \$1,200; it pays \$2,400 annually.

Source: National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification

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### *Hiring Prohibition for Individuals Convicted of Sexual Crimes or Crimes of Violence*

A local board of education may not knowingly hire or retain any individual who has been convicted of specified crimes, including child sexual abuse. Further, a local school system contract must provide that a contractor or subcontractor for the local school system may not knowingly assign an employee to work on school premises with direct, unsupervised, and uncontrolled access to children, if the employee has been convicted of specified crimes, including child sexual abuse.

**State Expenditures:** Based on the current NASDTEC fee schedule for local school system associate memberships, general fund expenditures increase by an estimated \$28,596 beginning in fiscal 2027 for MSDE to pay all membership and subscription fees. Future costs depend on the NASDTEC fee schedule and the number of FTE teachers in each of the 24 local school systems each year. MSDE advises that costs may increase minimally each year if the number of teachers increase or fees increase.

**Local Expenditures:** Expenditures decrease minimally (\$2,400 or less per school system) for school systems already using NASDTEC, as they will no longer have to pay annual subscription and membership fees. Several local school systems report using the NASDTEC clearinghouse, including Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Frederick County Public Schools, and Montgomery County Public Schools.

**Additional Comments:** The [NASDTEC Educator Identification Clearinghouse](#) is the national collection point for professional educator discipline actions taken by the 50 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. Department of Defense Educational Opportunity schools, and Guam. NASDTEC, through the clearinghouse, maintains a database of all disciplinary actions reported by NASDTEC members and disseminates this information to all participating NASDTEC jurisdictions. The goal of the clearinghouse is to provide each NASDTEC member state/jurisdiction with a notification of an action taken against the certificate/license of an educator by other member states/jurisdictions and in doing so, to protect the interests of children served by the professional education community within the United States and beyond.

Once an educator's misconduct case is final and the results made public, the prosecuting jurisdiction reports to the clearinghouse information on the adverse action taken against a license or certificate, including public reprimands and denials. The clearinghouse organizes the data and makes it accessible to NASDTEC members who can then compare the information to their current lists of licensed educators and applicants. In addition, the clearinghouse enables its members to maintain a comprehensive database, so every licensure applicant in a given jurisdiction can be checked against records in the clearinghouse. While the presence of a name in the database does not necessarily preclude an individual from successfully obtaining a license in a jurisdiction, it does provide the governing agency a safety net enabling officials to review the nature of the adverse action before issuing the certificate or license.

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### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See SB 845 and HB 1025 of 2025.

**Designated Cross File:** HB 856 (Delegate Ebersole) - Ways and Means.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education; 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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 22, 2026  
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