

## Senate Bill 84

Date: January 26, 2024  
Committee: Senate Finance  
Bill Title: Teacher Degree Apprenticeship  
Re: Letter of Information

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SB84 adds to the Labor and Employment Article to establish the *Teacher Apprenticeship Startup Grant Program (Program)* within the Maryland Department of Labor (MDL). Under the *Program*, MDL must award a grant to a Registered Apprenticeship sponsor, which develops and launches a Registered Apprenticeship program for certain teaching occupations in Maryland. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2025, MDL must award a grant for up to \$500,000 under the *Program*.

MDL's Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL), operating as the State Apprenticeship Agency, works in tandem with the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council (MATC) to oversee, administer, and support all Registered Apprenticeship programs in Maryland. The Department recognizes the shortage of teachers throughout State school districts and the critical need to bolster this workforce. (Projections indicate that Maryland will have a need for an average of 7,953 *new* preschool, primary, secondary, and special education teachers every year through 2030. In December 2023 alone, traditionally a slower month for job postings, there were 3,857 postings in the Maryland Workforce Exchange for education occupations).

**MDL is committed to exploring opportunities to increase the number of skilled professional educators, including through Registered Apprenticeship. However, as written, the Department has two concerns with SB84: 1) *mandated* requirements for the progression of the teacher apprenticeship pathway, and 2) the unfunded expenditures required of MDL.**

First, sections D-E of SB84 create requirements for teacher apprenticeship programs that typically would be at the discretion of the Registered Apprenticeship Sponsor and the approval of MATC/DWDAL. While the Department is generally supportive of the bill's outlined components, *requiring them via legislation* removes the flexibility for Sponsors to develop individualized programming that meets the needs of industry and jobseekers. Additionally, as proposed, SB84 limits the State Apprenticeship Agency (DWDAL) and MATC's current oversight authority to determine what qualifies as an effective apprenticeship program.

Second, the legislation does not provide a new investment; rather, it states that MDL may use *existing* State or Federal funds to support the grant program. MDL cannot currently identify any existing unencumbered funding sources that would cover the costs associated with SB84. Assuming the maximum value of the grant will be awarded, the bill creates an unfunded



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expenditure of \$500,000 for MDL in FY25. When combined with staffing expenses to manage and implement the grant, the fiscal impact for FY25 is \$640,618.

The Department respectfully asks the Senate Finance Committee to consider this information in their evaluation of the bill and is available to respond to questions.

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