

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2015 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Revised**

Senate Bill 624 (Senator Currie, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Ways and Means

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**Task Force to Study the Expansion of Career and Technical Education in  
Maryland**

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This bill establishes the Task Force to Study the Expansion of Career and Technical Education (CTE) in Maryland. The State agencies represented on the task force must provide staff for the task force. The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by January 1, 2016.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2015, and terminates June 30, 2016.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for the State agencies represented on the task force are assumed to be shared, minimal, and absorbable within existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

**Local Effect:** Community colleges and local boards of education can provide representation on the task force with existing resources.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Bill Summary:** State agencies represented on the task force are the (1) Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation; (2) Department of Business and Economic Development; (3) Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE); and (4) Governor's Workforce Investment Board. The task force must study and make recommendations concerning policies and practices that:

- ensure that the skills taught in CTE programs at Maryland high schools and community colleges reflect the actual needs of the labor market;
- promote collaboration by identifying additional incentives that could be provided for secondary schools, institutions of higher education, employers, and industry partners to work together to ensure that all CTE programs offer students high-quality learning opportunities;
- promote accountability by requiring that the State’s CTE programs show through common definitions and related performance measures that they are improving academic outcomes and enabling students to build technical and job skills;
- encourage the use of “career academies” of the type recommended by the Obama Administration that combine college preparatory and career and technical curriculums united by a career theme – including health care, business and finance, or science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) – that make education more relevant to students through personalized and contextual learning while at the same time preparing them for continuing education and successful careers;
- examine cross-agency State collaboration that supports work-based learning and the development of a pathway for students to pursue education, training, and a career along a chosen path in combination with career academies;
- assess the coordination of resources across State agencies to provide funding for career pathway education;
- examine the concept of grades 9 through 14 career pathways to increase career and postsecondary options for young people;
- develop and promote policies that connect and align secondary schools in the State with community and technical colleges and industry certification programs, especially in STEM, in growing sectors of the economy;
- examine ways to accelerate learning through dual enrollment/dual credit programs so that more high school students, particularly disadvantaged students, can graduate from high school while making progress toward postsecondary degrees, certifications, and careers;

- better integrate academic and CTE programs and elevate the profile of these programs as a means to improve high school graduation rates and employment rates, reduce crime, and improve overall economic development and community and individual well-being;
- provide incentives for employer engagement in work-based learning;
- embed work-based learning in the curriculum, thereby expanding the number of students who participate;
- establish more robust career information and college accessibility as well as the availability of financial aid for students by linking online resources and appropriate counseling by teachers, mentors, and school-based counselors; and
- lead to the development of a model blueprint for a system of data metrics for career pathway systems that would reorient existing education and workforce services toward a structure that focuses on workforce needs of employers and on the education and training needs of individuals as they pursue their career paths.

**Current Law/Background:** CTE programs in public schools must (1) offer a sequence of academic and occupational courses, career development, and work experience to prepare students to begin careers and to pursue lifelong learning and (2) integrate academic knowledge and occupational competence to enable students to develop the critical thinking, problem solving, employability, and technical skills required to meet the workforce preparation and economic development needs of the twenty-first century.

The Division of Career and College Readiness in MSDE distributes funds for CTE programs with specific training programs in secondary schools, community colleges, State agencies, and other institutions and businesses. In partnership with statewide industry advisory groups, the department has identified 10 career clusters that represent core business functions in Maryland, such as health and biosciences, information technology, and hospitality and tourism. Business partners also identified multiple career pathways within each cluster. Students can explore a wide range of career options within each cluster and apply academic and technical skills to a career area.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Business and Economic Development; Maryland State Department of Education; Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 9, 2015  
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