

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2018 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 638 (Senator Conway, *et al.*)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**Teachers and Teacher Preparation Programs - Research-Based Reading
Instruction**

This bill requires the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board (PSTEB), by January 1, 2022, to require specified teaching candidates to successfully pass a written test of research-based reading instruction. This only applies to candidates applying for a certificate to teach students with disabilities, as a reading specialist, English language learners, as a reading teacher, or prekindergarten through sixth grade. PSTEB and the State Board of Education jointly must (1) select the test by January 1, 2019; (2) set the passing score at least as high as the level recommended by the test developer; and (3) set standards that include specified elements for the delivery of research-based reading instruction by teacher preparation programs in the State.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: PSTEB and the State Board of Education can implement the bill using existing resources. Public four-year institutions of higher education with teacher preparation programs can likely implement the bill using existing resources.

Local Effect: None, as discussed below.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The written test selected must include (1) foundations of teaching reading that include the identification of phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing of the English language; (2) identification of reading

difficulties; and (3) assessment of student literacy, including the foundations of teaching reading and reading comprehension.

The standards set must include (1) direct, systematic, explicit, recursive, multisensory instruction in specified topics and (2) ample practice in decodable texts designed to support application of explicit phonics instruction.

Current Law: PSTEB is a semi-autonomous board composed of 25 members. PSTEB and the State Board of Education share the authority to develop rules and regulations for the certification of teachers and other professional personnel and requirements for the preparation of teachers and other education personnel, excluding specified social workers.

Background:

Current Maryland Teacher Reading Preparation Requirements

In July 1998, the State Board of Education increased the number of reading credits for teachers at all educational levels. Certificate holders with certification in early childhood education, elementary education, and special education at those levels are required to complete 12 semester hours in reading. Certificate holders with certification in a secondary content area, special education at that level, and preK-12 disciplines are required to complete 6 semester hours in reading. A list of approved reading courses can be found on the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) [website](#).

Applicants or current certificate holders with certification in early childhood, elementary, or special education at the early childhood and elementary levels may test out of the reading requirement (12 semester hours) by meeting the qualifying score on the [Teaching Reading: Elementary Education](#) Praxis subject assessment.

Task Force Recommendations

In its final report, published in 2016, [The Task Force to Study the Implementation of a Dyslexia Education Program](#), which was established by Chapter 411 of 2015, made five specific recommendations regarding teacher preparation for reading, including revamping curricula in MSDE approved reading courses to include information specific to dyslexia and a structured literacy approach to teaching reading; and requiring a passing score on the reading instruction competency exam, [Teaching Reading: Elementary Education](#), to be certified in specified teaching areas.

Reading Coursework Revisions in Progress

MSDE advises that, since spring 2014, it has been facilitating two workgroups charged with the revision of the required reading courses for secondary content certification and early childhood/elementary certification. The secondary content certification workgroup completed the framework for course development and accompanying rubrics for the required secondary reading courses in September 2017, and guidance regarding the review and approval process was distributed in January 2018. MSDE is currently reviewing submissions by institutions of higher education for their secondary literacy programs. An early childhood/elementary certification workgroup is currently working with members of the workgroup to complete the framework and corollary rubrics, which will be used to facilitate the redesign of all courses and anticipates release of the final product in spring 2018.

Other States

According to the [Education Commission of the States](#), as of January 2015, 14 states required all early childhood and/or elementary teachers to pass a reading assessment. Six states (California, Mississippi, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Virginia) required a state-developed or unspecified test or reading instruction. Five states (Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, North Carolina, and Wisconsin) require the [Foundations of Reading Test](#). Three states require the [Praxis Teaching Reading Test](#). As of February 2017, the Foundations of Reading Test costs test takers \$139 per test and the Praxis Teaching Reading Test costs test takers \$146.

Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading

[The Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading](#) developed by the Center for Effective Reading Instruction can be found on the center's website. The standards were refined and [posted](#) for public comment at dyslexiaida.org on December 18, 2017.

Teacher Candidate Assessments

MSDE advises that teacher candidates completing programs leading to certification are currently required to take a battery of assessments including, at a minimum, a basic skills assessment, a content assessment, and a pedagogy assessment. Each of these assessments cost approximately \$100 to \$200. Those educators who are dually certified are required to take further assessments. In addition to the cost of assessments, teacher candidates must also cover the cost of required internships (\$100-\$300) and, in some cases, must pay to complete a rubric-based assessment, such as the [edTPA](#) (\$300). Currently, the two largest teacher preparation programs in Maryland require the edTPA as a graduation requirement.

Teacher Preparation Programs in the State

[According to MSDE, as of December 2017](#), the following 11 public institutions of higher education had teacher preparation programs: Bowie State University; Coppin State University; Frostburg State University; Morgan State University; Salisbury University; St. Mary's College of Maryland; Towson University; University of Maryland, College Park Campus; University of Maryland Baltimore County; University of Maryland Eastern Shore; and University of Maryland, University College. In addition, the following 12 independent institutions of higher education had teacher preparation programs: Notre Dame of Maryland University; Goucher College; Hood College; Johns Hopkins University; Loyola University Maryland; Maryland Institute College of Art; McDaniel College; Mount St. Mary's University; Peabody Institution of the Johns Hopkins University; Stevenson University; Washington Adventist University; and Washington College.

State Fiscal Effect: Public four-year institutions of higher education with teacher preparation programs can likely include the required coursework regarding the delivery of research-based reading instruction using existing resources. However, institutions may need to make adjustments to current coursework.

Local Fiscal Effect: Local school systems may have a smaller pool of certified teachers from which they may recruit due to the additional testing requirement and the coursework requirement. This is not expected to have a fiscal impact on local school systems; however, some local school systems trying to fill positions in critical shortage areas may need to have classes taught by conditionally certified teachers or long-term substitutes. It is unknown by how much the pool of certified teachers will be limited by the reading assessment requirement due to the cost or the inability to pass; however, it is not anticipated to be significant. The bill is not anticipated to materially affect teacher salaries or the ability of local school systems to hire teachers.

Additional Comments: An additional assessment requirement will increase certification costs for specified teaching candidates. It is assumed that the additional coursework required by teacher preparation programs will not increase student costs.

Independent four-year institutions of higher education with teacher preparation programs can likely include the required coursework regarding the delivery of research-based reading instruction using existing resources. However, institutions may need to make adjustments to current coursework.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 1486 of 2017, a similar bill, was referred to interim study by the House Ways and Means Committee.

Cross File: HB 493 (Delegate Stein, *et al.*) - Ways and Means.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 20, 2018
md/rhh

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