

**Department of Legislative Services**  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2019 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Third Reader**

Senate Bill 422  
 Finance

(Senator Benson, *et al.*)

Appropriations

**State Department of Education - Employment Categories and Practices**

This bill alters the employment categories of specified professional assistants within the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). The bill generally reclassifies special appointment positions within MSDE, except those who perform a significant policy role or provide direct support to a member of the executive service, to positions in the professional or skilled service under the State Personnel Management System (SPMS). By July 1, 2019, MSDE must determine which employment classifications at MSDE would ordinarily be described as being in the skilled or professional service. Beginning on July 1, 2019, all employees hired by MSDE in those classifications must be hired, promoted, or transferred in accordance with the requirements for skilled or professional employees under SPMS. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2019.**

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures increase by \$154,900 in FY 2020. Out-year expenditures reflect elimination of one-time start-up costs. Additional personnel costs associated with employee recruitment and collective bargaining, which may be offset partially by lower starting salaries of new employees, are not reflected below. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	154,900	146,200	151,900	157,900	164,100
Net Effect	(\$154,900)	(\$146,200)	(\$151,900)	(\$157,900)	(\$164,100)

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

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

## Analysis

**Current Law:** Most positions within MSDE are designated as “professional assistants,” a designation that does not exist anywhere else in State government. The State Board of Education must appoint all professional assistants nominated by the State Superintendent to MSDE, and they must be classified as being in the executive service, management service, or special appointments within SPMS. The State Superintendent may transfer professional assistants within MSDE as necessary, and they serve at the pleasure of the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent. Professional assistants can be removed in accordance with procedures set by the State Board. Unless otherwise specified, the State Superintendent must appoint and remove all clerical assistants and other nonprofessional MSDE personnel in accordance with statutory provisions that govern the skilled service, except for special appointments.

SPMS has four major employment categories designated in statute:

1. executive service, which consists of chief administrators of principal units or comparable positions, including deputy secretaries or assistant secretaries;
2. management service, which consists of positions that involve direct responsibility for the oversight and management of personnel and financial resources and that require the exercise of discretion and independent judgment;
3. professional service, which consists of positions that require advanced knowledge in a field of science or learning and that normally require a professional license, advanced degree, or both; and
4. skilled service, which consists of all other positions.

Classification of skilled, professional, management, and executive service positions in SPMS is the responsibility of the Secretary of Budget and Management. The Secretary must likewise establish the standards and procedures used to classify positions in the skilled, professional, management, and executive services and provide advice and guidance on their use.

The head of a principal unit may classify positions in the unit, in accordance with the Secretary’s established standards and procedures, if the Secretary chooses to delegate the classification authority. If the Secretary delegates the classification authority to the head of a principal unit, that person must prepare a position classification plan for the Secretary’s approval and classify all positions in accordance with the approved plan. The Secretary must conduct a position classification audit at least once every three years, but only if the classification activity was delegated to the head of a principal unit. The Secretary may conduct operational audits of classification practices and records in principal units once every three years.

A temporary employee is not classified in the skilled, professional, management, or executive service in SPMS.

Special appointments within SPMS are employees who:

- are appointed directly by the Governor to a position that is not provided for in the State Constitution;
- are appointed directly by the Board of Public Works;
- as determined by the Secretary of Budget and Management, perform a significant policy role or provide direct support to a member of the executive service;
- are assigned to the Government House (the Governor's residence);
- are assigned to the Governor's Office; or
- are in positions specified by law to be special appointments.

Collective bargaining laws do not apply to special appointments. Special appointments are the only positions in the Executive Branch that may be filled with regard to political affiliation, but most are not. Positions that may be filled with regard to political affiliation must be so designated and disclosed to the appointee.

**State Expenditures:** Beginning on July 1, 2019, all employees hired by MSDE in classifications that would ordinarily be described as being in the skilled or professional service must be hired, promoted, or transferred in accordance with the requirements for skilled or professional employees under SPMS.

MSDE estimates that 20 or fewer positions perform a significant policy role or provide direct support to a member of the executive service and, thus, would remain special appointment positions. However, MSDE estimates that the bill reclassifies approximately 869 positions currently classified as special appointments to professional service or skilled service within SPMS.

As a result of the reclassification, MSDE must change its recruitment process to adhere to SPMS's system of advertising on the State's JobAps application and follow a standard procedure rather than follow a more flexible process, which enables MSDE to recruit professional assistants using a variety of methods and platforms. MSDE is eligible to hire professional assistant employees up to salary step 15 without further approval, but as a result of the reclassification, MSDE would only be authorized to hire new employees up to salary step 9 unless special approval is requested. Thus, when MSDE experiences turnover, MSDE personnel costs could decrease from this salary limitation.

MSDE currently has the flexibility to post a position outside of JobAps when a better venue is available for special appointments, such as on MSDE's website and professional

organization mailing lists, but for skilled and professional services positions, MSDE must advertise on JobAps. MSDE has an applicant cap on JobAps of 11,739 applications, so MSDE must pay an average cost of \$0.28 per application if it goes over its cap. Between August 8, 2016, and August 7, 2017, MSDE went over its application cap by approximately 13,200 applications and paid an overage charge of approximately \$3,700. As a result of advertising exclusively on JobAps, MSDE estimates receiving up to 1,000 additional applications per opening and paying up to \$8,000 in overage charges in future years as MSDE experiences attrition. As MSDE will be receiving more applications, it needs a recruitment officer to handle the increased volume of applications and to establish the new recruitment process. The workload for the Recruitment and Exam Division of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) may also increase, but DBM can likely handle the additional workload with existing resources.

MSDE advises that employee relations activities will increase based on the change in employee status. For example, employees will have more rights to appeal a disciplinary action. Professional and skilled service employees will be covered under collective bargaining agreements, so an employee and labor relations officer is needed to assist in managing negotiations, investigate employee grievances, oversee appeals, and assist with the reclassification process.

Thus, general fund expenditures increase for MSDE by \$154,921 in fiscal 2020, which assumes that MSDE staff are in place as of July 1, 2019, concurrent with the effective date of the bill. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring two human resource administrators (one recruitment officer and one employee and labor relations officer). It includes salaries, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses (including JobAps overage charges). It does not include the additional personnel costs associated with the reclassification as those costs will depend on attrition rates. New employees could have lower starting salaries, but any such savings could be offset by potentially higher costs associated with collective bargaining agreements.

Positions	2.0
Salaries and Fringe Benefits	\$139,891
Operating Expenses	<u>15,030</u>
<b>Total FY 2020 State Expenditures</b>	<b>\$154,921</b>

Future year expenditures reflect full salaries with annual increases and employee turnover and ongoing operating expenses.

## **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** HB 643 of 2018 and SB 678 of 2018, identical bills as amended by the House Appropriations Committee and the Senate Finance Committee, respectively, passed the House and Senate, but were vetoed by the Governor for policy reasons. HB 499 of 2017, a similar bill, received a hearing in the House Appropriations Committee, but no further action was taken. Its cross file, SB 874, and another identical bill, SB 627 of 2017, each received a hearing in the Senate Finance Committee, but no further action was taken on any of them. In addition, similar bills were introduced in the 2016 session.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education; Department of Budget and Management; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 19, 2019  
mag/mcr Third Reader - March 14, 2019

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