

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 548
Ways and Means

(Delegate Stein)

Career and Technology Education - Training in Soft Business Skills

This bill alters the purposes and requirements for career and technology education (CTE) programs in the State, including repealing a requirement that they include work experience, and requires CTE programs to integrate specified soft business skills into the academic curriculum. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2020.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill's provisions are consistent with existing federal requirements.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: CTE programs in public schools must offer a sequence of academic and occupational courses and career development opportunities to adequately prepare students to secure gainful employment, excel in their careers, and pursue lifelong learning.

The soft business skills that are to be integrated into the academic curriculum include:

- employee and employer relationships and responsibilities;
- general business etiquette;
- social and emotional awareness in the workplace;

- group work skills, including accountability, consensus building, and conflict resolution;
- appropriate professional oral and written communication skills;
- public presentation and customer service skills;
- project planning; and
- use of common business tools, including e-mail, spreadsheets, word processors, and presentation software.

Current Law/Background: CTE programs in public schools must offer a sequence of academic and occupational courses, career development, and work experience to prepare students to begin careers, and to pursue lifelong learning.

The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act is the 2018 reauthorization of the federal Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins), which was last overhauled in 2006. The new Perkins law provides approximately \$1.2 billion in formula grants to states to implement CTE programs in their secondary schools and postsecondary institutions. The new law allows states to set their own goals for CTE programs, requires them to make progress toward those goals, and makes other changes to federal CTE law. Generally, Perkins requires states to develop sequences of academic and CTE coursework, called programs of study, that prepare students for postsecondary degrees or industry-recognized credentials. Many of the programs of study – which range from plumbing and culinary arts to aerospace engineering and cybersecurity – include or encourage apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship opportunities.

In federal fiscal 2019, Maryland received \$18.0 million in Perkins Title I grants to support CTE programs in secondary schools and postsecondary institutions. Of that amount, \$15.3 million (85%) was distributed to local governments and the remaining 15% was designated for statewide activities and administration. Of the \$15.3 million distributed to local governments, 65% was used for secondary school programs and 35% was spent on postsecondary programs. Perkins funds are used for a variety of purposes at the local level, including teacher professional development, equipment, and program development and administration.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has developed several dozen programs of study grouped within 10 career clusters. Each program of study includes a sequence of four courses that begin in either grade 10 or 11 and prepares students for either further study or industry certification; students that complete the course sequence by high school graduation are considered “CTE completers.” In the 2017-2018 school year, public secondary schools had 29,512 “CTE concentrators,” which are generally defined as students who have completed at least three or more credits in a single CTE program area.

MSDE advises that federal statute includes in the definition of a CTE program a requirement that it address “employability skills.” In MSDE’s CTE program guidelines, employability skills are defined as skills that are essential for job success but are not necessarily linked to specific occupational knowledge. They include interpersonal, communication, thinking, technology, and learning skills. MSDE has developed unit plans to specifically address employability skills.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Baltimore County Public Schools; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; St. Mary’s County Public Schools; U.S. Department of Education; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 12, 2020
mr/rhh

Analysis by: Michael C. Rubenstein

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510