

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2021 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 934 (Senator Peters)
 Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Public Schools - Purple Star Schools Program - Establishment

This bill establishes the Purple Star Schools Program administered by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to recognize public schools that provide strong services and supports for military-connected students and their families. To qualify as a Purple Star School, a public school must designate a staff liaison to perform specified duties, create an easily accessible webpage with pertinent resources, maintain a transition program led by students, offer professional development for staff on issues related to military-connected students and offer one of several specified initiatives. A public school may partner with the county board to fulfill certain requirements. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2021.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$46,500 in FY 2022, rising to \$58,600 in FY 2026 to hire one regular half-time employee to run the program as discussed below.

(in dollars)	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	46,500	53,000	54,500	56,500	58,600
Net Effect	(\$46,500)	(\$53,000)	(\$54,500)	(\$56,500)	(\$58,600)

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

Local Effect: To the extent a school wishes to be recognized as a Purple Star School, expenditures may increase and operations may be affected to achieve such recognition. However, any expenditure increases or operational changes can be managed with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary: A staff member's duties when designated as military liaison include (1) identifying military-connected students enrolled at the school, (2) serving as the point of contact between schools and military-connected students and families, (3) determining appropriate school services available to military-connected students, and (4) assisting in coordinating relevant school programs.

The web page required for recognition as a Purple Star School must include information regarding (1) relocation, enrollment, registration, and transfer of records at the school; (2) academic planning; and (3) counseling and other support services.

To be recognized as a Purple Star School, a school must offer one initiative relevant to military-connected students. The qualifying initiatives include (1) a resolution showing support for military-connected students and their families; (2) hosting events recognizing the Month of the Military Child or Military Family Month; or (3) a partnership with a local military installation that allows military members to be involved in the school in specified ways.

Current Law: All schools in Maryland currently participate in the Military Interstate Children's Compact. The compact provides technical assistance to schools in areas such as transitions, enrollment, immunizations, placement and attendance, and graduation of military-connected students and describes the supports and services recommended for them. Military facilities across the State have designated school liaison offices to help families with transitions and enrollment. All school systems have a person designated as the military point of contact who works with schools to ensure smooth transitions for military-connected children.

State Expenditures: MSDE advises that the bill will require hiring a part-time Education Program Specialist I beginning in fiscal 2022. MSDE notes that schools will have to apply to MSDE and qualify for the designation. Staff will therefore be needed to establish the program, including developing guidelines and related forms and documents to administer the program. After the guidance and other documents are developed and finalized, the part-time staff member will need to provide professional development to schools and school systems to raise awareness and explain the requirements of the program. In addition to those responsibilities, the part-time staff member will need to review school applications to determine if applicants meet the qualifications for becoming a Purple Star School. MSDE notes there will also be about a \$1,000 annual cost for banners, certificates, or some other recognition of the designation of a school as a Purple Star School. The Department of Legislative Services concurs that a part-time position is needed to administer the program. However, award supply costs can be covered with existing resources.

Accordingly, general fund administrative expenditures increase by \$46,529 in fiscal 2022 that accounts for a 90-day start-up delay from the bill's July 1, 2021 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one education program specialist to manage the program. It includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Regular Position	1
Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$41,193
One-time Start-up Costs	5,090
Operating Expenses	<u>246</u>
Total FY 2022 Expenditures	\$46,529

Out-years reflect annualization, elimination of one-time costs, and ongoing costs.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: HB 782 (Delegate Patterson) - Ways and Means.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Montgomery County Public Schools; Prince George's County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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an/rhh

Analysis by: Michael E. Sousane

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