

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 546
Ways and Means

(Delegate Wolek, *et al.*)

Education, Energy, and the Environment

Primary and Secondary Education - Educator Professional Development -
Course on Well-Being and Flourishing

This bill requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), by July 1, 2027, to make available a continuing professional development course for all school personnel and administrators on educator well-being and flourishing that meets specified requirements. To fulfill this requirement, MSDE may develop a course, adapt an existing course, or make available an existing course developed by a third party. However, MSDE is only required to provide a course if it can do so at no cost or at a comparable cost to similar courses that it provides, as determined by MSDE. The course must consist of instruction on understanding the eight dimensions of well-being identified by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, including social, environmental, physical, emotional, spiritual, occupational, intellectual, and financial well-being. The course may be offered synchronously or asynchronously and must be made available at a rate comparable to other professional development courses that offer the same number of professional development points (PDPs). **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026, and terminates June 30, 2031.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MSDE can make available an existing course that meets the requirements of the bill using existing resources. If that course becomes unavailable, MSDE is only required to provide a course if it can be offered at no cost to MSDE or at a cost comparable to that of similar courses. Although it is unclear what a comparable course costs, it is assumed that general fund expenditures are not materially affected. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: Local school system finances are not affected, as the bill does not require local school systems to develop, provide, or mandate participation in the course.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: According to regulations, to renew an Initial Professional, Professional, or Advanced Professional license for successive five-year terms, educators must complete at least 90 PDPs as part of an individual professional development plan. The 90 PDPs must include content or pedagogy related to the educator’s license, English as a Second Language, strategies for teaching students with disabilities, and culturally responsive teaching. Educators working in a Maryland school system must have their proposed plan approved by their supervisor. Certain specialties have additional requirements; for example, school counselors must complete one semester hour of coursework, or its equivalent, in topics such as depression, trauma, violence, youth suicide, and substance abuse. PDPs may be earned through college credit, continuing professional development credits, continuing education units, professional conferences, curriculum development, publication of a book or article, mentorship, micro-credentials, or other approved professional development activities. An educator who earns a National Board Certificate may present it as a substitute for PDP requirements when renewing a Maryland educator license.

State Expenditures: MSDE currently offers a [comprehensive, established alternative course](#), developed by the Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development. This course covers critical areas such as mental health, well-being, social emotional learning, staff burnout, and related topics that align with the objectives outlined in the bill. Georgetown provides a certificate of completion and offers continuing education credits for completion. MSDE advises that it can continue to make this course available in alignment with the bill’s requirements using existing resources and without additional cost.

The bill requires MSDE to provide a course only if it can be offered at no cost to the department or at a cost comparable, as determined by MSDE, to the cost of providing a similar course. Although it is unclear what a comparable course would cost, this requirement limits potential expenditures; accordingly, it is assumed that general fund expenditures are not materially affected.

If the existing course becomes unavailable, or no longer aligned with statutory requirements, MSDE may elect to develop, administer, or procure a course, which may result in an increase in general fund expenditures. If MSDE elects to develop a course internally, expenditures may include staff or consultant time for instructional design, curriculum development, and content creation; development of enrollment and tracking systems for PDPs; and administrative oversight across multiple divisions, including Educator Effectiveness, Student Support and Federal Programs, and Information

Technology. If MSDE instead adapts or licenses a third-party course, expenditures could include procurement, licensing fees, contractual services, and integration into existing professional development systems. However, any such costs are expected to be limited given the bill's cost constraint.

The magnitude of any expenditure increase depends on the implementation strategy selected by MSDE and whether synchronous delivery requiring compensated staff time is utilized. The bill does not require educators to complete the course; rather, it requires MSDE to make the course available. There is no impact after fiscal 2031, as the bill terminates June 30, 2031.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See SB 350 and HB 457 of 2025.

Designated Cross File: SB 726 (Senator Feldman) - Education, Energy, and the Environment.

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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