

**Department of Legislative Services**  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2026 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Third Reader - Revised**

Senate Bill 529

(Senator Harris)

Education, Energy, and the Environment

Ways and Means and Appropriations

**Southern Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway Program Workgroup -  
 Establishment**

This bill requires the University System of Maryland (USM) to develop, in consultation with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), recommendations for a Southern Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway Program and a teacher preparation pathway in Southern Maryland. Further, it requires USM to convene a Southern Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway Program Workgroup to develop those recommendations, as specified. By June 30, 2029, USM must report on the program workgroup’s recommendations, as specified. For each of fiscal 2028 and 2029, the Governor must include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$125,000 to support the development of those recommendations. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026, and terminates June 30, 2030.**

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** USM higher education expenditures may increase minimally in FY 2027. General fund expenditures increase by \$125,000 in FY 2028 and 2029; USM higher education revenues and expenditures increase by corresponding amounts. **This bill establishes a mandated appropriation for FY 2028 and 2029.**

(in dollars)	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
Higher Ed Rev.	\$0	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	\$0	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$0	\$0
Higher Ed Exp.	\$-	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$0	\$0
Net Effect	(\$-)	(\$125,000)	(\$125,000)	\$0	\$0

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

**Local Effect:** Specified personnel can participate in the workgroup using existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## **Analysis**

**Bill Summary:** USM must develop recommendations for a Southern Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway Program and a teacher preparation pathway in Southern Maryland to:

- create a structured, credit-bearing pathway for high school students to begin preparation to teach primary and secondary education;
- expand access to and ensure the affordability of higher education for all high school students, including students who are historically underrepresented in higher education and from rural areas of the State;
- build a strong and diverse teacher pipeline to serve the State’s public primary and secondary schools; and
- serve as a model to be replicated for regional implementation statewide.

The bill establishes the membership of the Southern Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway Program Workgroup.

By June 30, 2029, USM must report to MSDE, MHEC, the Governor, and the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee on the program workgroup’s recommendations for the program and the teacher preparation pathway in Southern Maryland, including (1) the structure of the teacher preparation pathway; (2) an implementation plan; and (3) any legislative or regulatory changes necessary for successful implementation. USM must also report on the use of State funds to develop the program workgroup’s recommendations for the program and the teacher preparation pathway in Southern Maryland.

### **Current Law:**

#### *Dual Enrollment*

A public institution of higher education may not charge tuition to a dually enrolled student. Generally, however, a public school system must pay 75% of the cost of tuition for a public institution of higher education for its students. If there is an agreement before July 1, 2020, between a public school and a public institution of higher education in which the public institution charges less than 75% of tuition to a dually enrolled student, the local board must pay the cost of tuition under the existing agreement. The Blueprint for

Maryland's Future – Revisions (Chapter 55 of 2021) expanded dual enrollment to include noncredit courses leading to an industry-recognized certificate or license.

### *Teacher Academy of Maryland*

[The Teacher Academy of Maryland](#) (TAM) is a statewide Career and Technical Education high school educator pipeline program offered by nearly all local school systems, including Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties. TAM is designed to introduce students to teaching as a profession and prepare them for postsecondary teacher education programs; however, it is not a teacher certification or degree-granting program and is not inherently a dual enrollment program. TAM operates pursuant to memoranda of understanding between local school systems and institutions of higher education, which may provide benefits such as articulated credit, transfer pathways, or scholarships; these benefits vary by institution. TAM does not articulate to a single teacher certification area and instead serves as a general educator pipeline into multiple postsecondary teacher preparation pathways.

### *Associate of Arts in Teaching*

According to Maryland regulations, an institution may award an Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) degree aligned with the first two years of a bachelor's program in teacher education. Students who complete the AAT and meet specified GPA and basic skills assessment requirements are eligible to transfer up to 70 credit hours into in-State public and participating independent four-year teacher education programs without further review. Community colleges also offer Associate of Arts transfer pathways into teacher education across multiple prekindergarten through grade 12 certification areas.

**State Expenditures:** The bill requires an appropriation of \$125,000 in both fiscal 2028 and 2029 to USM to support development of the program workgroup's recommendations for the Southern Maryland Early College Teacher Pathway Program and the associated teacher preparation pathway. Under the bill, USM must develop the recommendations in consultation with MSDE and MHEC, convene and staff the program workgroup, and submit a report by June 30, 2029, on program structure, implementation, and any legislative or regulatory changes needed.

USM advises that supporting the workgroup requires staffing, administration, coordination, consultant services, reporting, and use of facilities at the USM Southern Maryland regional higher education center. Accordingly, USM higher education expenditures may increase in fiscal 2027 to begin to develop recommendations and convene the workgroup. However, USM advises that it can likely implement the bill with existing resources initially and in-kind contributions from the university, including staff time, project management, and use of facilities. Otherwise, the bill's required

appropriations totaling \$250,000 over the two years are likely sufficient to cover additional expenses such as travel, materials, and consultant services.

Because the bill does not implement the program, no additional impacts are assumed. Any impacts associated with the workgroup end by June 30, 2030, when the bill terminates; however, most costs are expected to conclude by June 30, 2029, upon submission of the required report.

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### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

**Designated Cross File:** HB 479 (Delegate Patterson, *et al.*) - Ways and Means and Appropriations.

**Information Source(s):** Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties; Accountability and Implementation Board; Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Higher Education Commission; University System of Maryland; Department of Budget and Management; Department of Legislative Services

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