

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
 Third Reader - Revised

Senate Bill 904

(Senator Zucker, *et al.*)

Education, Energy, and the Environment

Ways and Means

Education - Public Schools - Professional Development

This bill requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), by July 1, 2027, to design and develop a new system of in-person professional development in public schools for paraeducators and other education support professionals (ESPs) that is paid and occurs during weekday school hours. In designing the system, MSDE must consult with local boards and nonprofit organizations with experience supporting ESPs, including the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA). The General Assembly finds that paraeducators and other ESPs benefit from in-person training and expresses intent that such training be expanded to at least two days of high-quality professional development during each school year. The bill may not be construed to diminish obligations under collective bargaining agreements or employment benefit programs that establish greater requirements. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$250,000 in FY 2027 for one-time contractual services. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	250,000	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$250,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

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

Local Effect: To the extent local school systems choose to provide training for paraeducators and ESPs, local school system expenditures increase. *For illustrative purposes*, if local school systems provide the training, statewide payroll costs for required training days may total approximately \$8.9 million annually, with potential additional costs. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: There is no relevant current law regarding local school system professional development or training for paraeducators and ESPs.

Collective Bargaining

A “public school employee” means a noncertificated individual who is employed for at least nine months per year on a full-time basis by a public school employer. In Baltimore City, a public school employee includes a noncertificated employee who does not work for at least nine months per year. A “noncertificated employee,” in Montgomery County, means only a full-time employee, but is otherwise not defined in State law.

Public school employees may form, join, and participate in the activities of employee organizations of their own choice to be represented on all matters that relate to salaries, wages, hours, and other working conditions. In general, and subject to specified exceptions, each county may not have more than three bargaining units for public school employees, and each unit may not include both supervisory and nonsupervisory employees, as defined in statute.

State Expenditures: The bill requires MSDE to design and develop a new system of in-person professional development in public schools for paraeducators and other ESPs that is paid and occurs during weekday school hours by July 1, 2027. In designing the system, MSDE must consult with local boards of education and nonprofit organizations, including MSEA. MSDE lacks the expertise in-house to develop the professional development program and requires a full-time consultant (\$250,000) in fiscal 2027 to meet the July 1, 2027 deadline. Ongoing administration of the framework is assumed to be handled with existing resources.

Local Expenditures: The bill states that it is the intent of the General Assembly that each local board provide two paid days of in-person professional development annually during weekday school hours to each paraeducator and ESP. To the extent local school system choose to provide training, local school system expenditures increase. *For illustrative purposes*, if local school systems choose to provide the training, based on 46,884 ESP positions statewide, and using one large school system’s estimated payroll cost of approximately \$95 per employee per day, statewide payroll expenditures could increase by approximately \$4.5 million per day, or approximately \$8.9 million annually for two days of training. Estimated costs range from \$22,800 (Kent County) to \$1.9 million

(Montgomery County) per local school system based on the number of ESPs. Actual costs depend on the actual number of paraeducators and ESPs and actual ESP daily pay rates. This estimate reflects payroll costs only.

Additional costs may be incurred for substitute coverage or operational adjustments during school hours, training materials, specialized trainers, scheduling coordination, and administrative oversight. Actual costs will vary by jurisdiction based on employee compensation levels, existing contractual obligations, and whether the required training represents additional compensated time or reallocation of existing workdays. Statewide costs may be significant.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: HB 1254 (Delegate Feldmark) - Ways and Means.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Baltimore City Public Schools; Baltimore County Public Schools; Frederick County Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; Prince George's County Public Schools; St. Mary's County Public Schools; Wicomico County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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Analysis by: Caroline L. Boice

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