

Chapter 776

(Senate Bill 191)

AN ACT concerning

Prince George's County — ~~Property Tax Credit~~ — Public School Employees
Property Tax Credit and Office of Integrity and Compliance

PG 503–24

FOR the purpose of authorizing the governing body of Prince George's County to grant, by law, a property tax credit against the county property tax imposed on dwellings that are owned by certain eligible employees of the Prince George's County Public School System; providing for the maximum amount of the credit; authorizing the governing body of Prince George's County to provide, by law, for certain matters relating to the credit; requiring the Prince George's County government to submit a certain report concerning the credit to certain persons on or before a certain date; providing that the Office of Integrity and Compliance is an independent unit within the school system; specifying the independent nature and contractual relationship of the Integrity and Compliance Officer and other employees within the Office; and generally relating to ~~a property tax credit in Prince George's County for certain eligible employees~~ Prince George's County Public School System employees and the Office of Integrity and Compliance.

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

Article – Education

Section 4–404(b)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2022 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Education

Section 4–404(c), (d), and (e)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2022 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

BY adding to

Article – Tax – Property

Section 9–318(j)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2019 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Education

4-404.

(b) This section applies only in Prince George's County.

(c) (1) There is an Office of Integrity and Compliance in the local school system.

(2) **THE OFFICE IS AN INDEPENDENT UNIT WITHIN THE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM.**

(3) (i) The County Council of Prince George's County shall select [and], appoint, AND CONTRACT WITH an Integrity and Compliance Officer.

(ii) The County Council shall select the Integrity and Compliance Officer solely on the basis of professional ability and personal integrity, without regard to political affiliation.

(iii) The Integrity and Compliance Officer must be qualified professionally by experience or education in auditing, government operations, or financial management.

(d) (1) The term of the Integrity and Compliance Officer is 4 years beginning on the date of appointment.

(2) An individual may not serve as Integrity and Compliance Officer for more than three terms.

(3) The Integrity and Compliance Officer continues to serve until a successor is appointed.

(4) If a vacancy occurs for the Integrity and Compliance Officer, the County Council shall appoint an Interim Integrity and Compliance Officer to serve for the remainder of the unexpired term.

(5) The County Council may remove the Integrity and Compliance Officer only through a majority vote of the County Council for neglect of duty, malfeasance, conviction of a felony, or other good cause.

(6) **THE INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE OFFICER SHALL SERVE AS AN INDEPENDENT EMPLOYEE WITHIN THE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM.**

(7) The Integrity and Compliance Officer shall discharge the duties of office on a full-time basis and with no secondary employment of any nature during the Integrity and Compliance Officer's term.

(e) (1) The Office shall:

(i) Assist the County Council and the local school system by providing independent evaluation and recommendations regarding opportunities to:

1. Preserve the local school system's reputation; and

2. Improve the effectiveness, productivity, or efficiency of local school system programs, policies, practices, and operations;

(ii) Ensure public accountability by preventing, investigating, and reporting instances of fraud, waste, and abuse of property or funds of the local school system;

(iii) Examine, evaluate, and report on the adequacy and effectiveness of the systems of internal controls and their related accounting, financial, technology, and operational policies; and

(iv) Report noncompliance with and propose ways to improve employee compliance with applicable law, policy, and ethical standards of conduct.

(2) (I) THE OFFICE MAY EMPLOY STAFF IN ORDER TO EXECUTE THE DUTIES OF THE OFFICE.

(II) STAFF EMPLOYED BY THE OFFICE SHALL SERVE UNDER THE SUPERVISION AND DIRECTION OF THE INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE OFFICER.

(3) In developing recommendations, the Office may:

(i) Conduct administrative investigations, budgetary analyses, and financial, management, or performance audits and similar reviews;

(ii) Provide management advisories; and

(iii) Utilize the assistance from any other government agency or private party to complete a project initiated by the Office.

[(3)] (4) When applicable, the Integrity and Compliance Officer shall comply with generally accepted government auditing standards.

[(4)] (5) (i) Except as provided in subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, the Integrity and Compliance Officer shall publish on the Office's website, in a readily available location:

1. [Periodic reports] A REPORT AT LEAST ONCE EVERY 2 YEARS, BEGINNING IN FISCAL YEAR 2025, that [summarize] SUMMARIZES the activities, findings, recommendations, and accomplishments of the Office; and

2. Any official written comments or responses offered by the local school system administration with any report published by the Office.

(ii) The Integrity and Compliance Officer:

1. May not disclose any record, report, or related information that is protected from disclosure under the Public Information Act;

2. May provide an oral report if appropriate under generally accepted government auditing standards; and

3. Shall establish and follow procedures for safeguarding the identity of confidential sources and protecting privileged and confidential information.

[(5)] (6) If reasonable grounds exist to believe that a serious violation of federal, State, or local law has occurred, the Integrity and Compliance Officer shall report the allegation to:

(i) An appropriate law enforcement agency;

(ii) The State Ethics Commission; or

(iii) Any other agency with jurisdiction to enforce the law.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Tax – Property

9–318.

(J) (1) (i) IN THIS SUBSECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(ii) “DWELLING” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 9–105 OF THIS TITLE.

(iii) 1. “ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEE” MEANS AN EMPLOYEE OF THE PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM WHO HAS BEEN A FULL–TIME EMPLOYEE FOR AT LEAST 2 YEARS AND OWNS A DWELLING IN PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY.

2. “ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEE” DOES NOT INCLUDE INDIVIDUALS WHO SUPPLY GOODS OR SERVICES TO THE PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM ON A CONTRACTUAL BASIS.

(2) THE GOVERNING BODY OF PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY MAY GRANT, BY LAW, A PROPERTY TAX CREDIT UNDER THIS SUBSECTION AGAINST THE COUNTY PROPERTY TAX IMPOSED ON A DWELLING THAT IS OWNED BY AN ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEE WHO:

(I) DID NOT RESIDE IN THE COUNTY BEFORE PURCHASING THE DWELLING FOR WHICH THE CREDIT IS CLAIMED; AND

(II) IS OTHERWISE ELIGIBLE FOR THE CREDIT AUTHORIZED UNDER § 9–105 OF THIS TITLE.

(3) FOR ANY TAXABLE YEAR, THE CREDIT UNDER THIS SUBSECTION MAY NOT EXCEED THE LESSER OF:

(I) \$2,500; OR

(II) THE AMOUNT OF THE PROPERTY TAX IMPOSED ON THE DWELLING.

(4) THE GOVERNING BODY OF PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY MAY ESTABLISH, BY LAW:

(I) SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (3) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THE AMOUNT OF THE CREDIT UNDER THIS SUBSECTION;

(II) THE DURATION OF THE CREDIT;

(III) ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES TO QUALIFY FOR THE CREDIT;

(IV) PROCEDURES FOR THE APPLICATION AND UNIFORM PROCESSING OF REQUESTS FOR THE CREDIT; AND

(V) ANY OTHER PROVISION NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT THIS SUBSECTION.

SECTION ~~2~~ 3 AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, on or before the date that is 5 years after the effective date of a local law passed by the Prince George’s County Council that establishes the tax credit authorized by Section 2 of this Act, the Prince George’s County government shall submit a report, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State

Government Article, that states the number of Prince George's County Public School System employees who received the tax credit authorized by Section 2 of this Act in the preceding 5 years to the Prince George's County Delegation, the Prince George's County Senators, the Prince George's County Council, and the Prince George's County Executive.

SECTION ~~2~~ 4 AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June 1, 2024, ~~and~~ Section 2 of this Act shall be applicable to all taxable years beginning after June 30, 2024.

Approved by the Governor, May 16, 2024.