

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Joint Resolution 7 (Delegate Beck)
Ways and Means

Parents and Teachers of Maryland School Children - Bill of Rights

This joint resolution adopts a bill of rights for parents and teachers of Maryland school children. Several provisions of the bill of rights include: (1) requiring the State to provide a high-quality education program for all children; (2) ensuring that upon graduation, each student will have earned a diploma which indicates that the student has met all education standards; (3) basing student promotion solely on academic performance; (4) enabling parents to request an alternative teacher or school if their child is not performing as well as the parent might hope; (5) establishing a pay for performance plan for teachers; (6) providing for school choice program that includes private and parochial schools; and (7) providing for the establishment of charter schools.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Significant increase in State expenditures as discussed below. Revenues would not be affected.

Local Effect: Significant increase in local expenditures as discussed below. Revenues would not be affected.

Small Business Effect: Minimal effect on small businesses as discussed below.

Fiscal Analysis

State Effect: Because a joint resolution is an expression of legislative intent only, compliance is not required and State finances are not directly affected. However, to fully implement this joint resolution, State expenditures could increase significantly.

High Quality Educational Program/High School Graduation Requirement

This joint resolution requires the State to provide a high quality educational program for all children and to ensure that children who have taken a pre-college curriculum would not require remedial instruction before proceeding into, or during, baccalaureate studies. These two provisions could require the State to provide a significant increase in funding to local school systems.

In addition, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is already in the process of developing a High School Assessments Program (HSAP) which will include a test to assess individual student performance. Once the program is fully implemented, successful completion of the HSAP test will become a State graduation requirement. In August, MSDE entered into a \$779,000 one-year contract with The College Board to develop the HSAP test format and identify staff development needs to assist teachers in training students for success.

MSDE will award a second contract in the spring of 1997 for HSAP test development. Initial implementation of the program will begin in 2001 and the HSAP test will be required for students graduating in the year 2004.

Local Effect: To fully implement this joint resolution would not only require a significant increase in local funding but it would have a significant programmatic effect on local school systems as discussed below.

Parental Authority to Request New Teachers or Schools

This resolution allows a parent to request a different teacher or school if the student is not progressing as well as the parent might hope. This could prove burdensome for school districts, both fiscally and administratively. For example, a parent whose child receives all A's and one B could request another teacher in the one subject that the child did not score an A in. With over 47,000 teachers in the State, allowing the transfer of students to different teachers based solely on a parent's request could create tremendous administrative and instructional difficulties in the State's public schools.

Disruptive Student Provision

During the 1994-95 school year there were 85,276 suspensions involving 51,082 students (some students had multiple suspensions). In addition, there were 22,900 altercations involving school employees and students that resulted in a student's suspension, of which 1,600 were student assaults on teachers and 21,300 were student assaults on other students. To handle such incidents, school systems are already required to develop alternative instructional programs for disruptive students. Many counties, such as Dorchester, have developed specialized alternative programs for disruptive students. These programs tend to

cost between \$10,000 and \$25,000 per student. If local school districts had to remove every child who creates a disturbance from the classroom, local expenditures could increase significantly.

Small Business Effect: Approximately 166,500 students attended 1,113 non-public schools in Maryland in 1995, representing 17% of all students. Many of these schools are small businesses and would be affected by the provision that establishes pilot programs to test school choice options. If the pilot programs would require the State to provide financial support for private schools, then these schools may be able to either reduce their tuition rates or expand their current educational programs. In both cases, private schools may be able to attract additional students.

Information Source(s): Department of Fiscal Services, Maryland State Department of Education

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