

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2012 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Revised**

Senate Bill 293

(Senator Miller, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Ways and Means

**Education - Core Content Areas - Accountability Program**

This bill requires the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Schools to implement assessment programs in reading, language, mathematics, science, and social studies that include written responses. Assessments must be administered annually beginning with the 2014-2015 school year. At the middle school level, the assessment program must be a statewide, comprehensive, grade band program that measures the learning gains of each public school student towards achieving mastery of the standards set forth in the State's adopted curricula or the common core curricula. At the high school level, the assessment program must be a statewide, standardized, end-of-course assessment that is aligned with and that measures each public school student's skills and knowledge of the State's adopted curricula.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2012.

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** The FY 2013 State budget includes \$3.5 million in general funds to reinstate the Maryland high school assessment (HSA) for government in FY 2013 and begin developing the essay portion for implementation for FY 2014. The FY 2013 funding is contingent on the enactment of this bill or SB 293. Future years reflect the elimination of one-time costs after FY 2014. If the State Board of Education determines that an assessment does not adequately measure the skills and knowledge set forth in the State's adopted curricula, general fund expenditures will increase by an additional \$3.4 million in FY 2016 for each State-specific assessment that must be developed.

(\$ in millions)	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	3.5	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Net Effect	(\$3.5)	(\$2.0)	(\$2.0)	(\$2.0)	(\$2.0)

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

**Local Effect:** Local school systems can implement the required assessments using existing resources; however, time and resources may be diverted from other priorities.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** “Grade band assessment” is defined as one assessment of a middle school student’s knowledge in a core academic subject area during grades six through eight.

The assessment program required by the bill must:

- provide information needed to improve public schools by enhancing the learning gains of students and academic mastery of the skills and knowledge set forth in the State’s adopted curricula or common core curricula;
- inform the public annually of the educational progress made at the school, local school system, and State levels; and
- provide timely feedback to schools and teachers in order to adapt the instructional program and make placement decisions for students.

The bill also requires each local school system’s comprehensive master plan and master plan update to include, among other existing requirements, a description of how the local board of education intends to ensure and measure the academic proficiency of students in the core academic subject areas of reading, language, mathematics, science, and social studies at various points in the education continuum of the students.

The State board and the State Superintendent must also assist each local board of education to establish educational goals and objectives that conform to the statewide educational objectives for science and social studies.

After the 2014-2015 school year, the State Board of Education must determine whether the assessments at the middle school and high school levels adequately measure the skills and knowledge set forth in the State’s adopted curricula for the core content areas of reading, language, mathematics, science, and social studies. If the State Board of Education determines that an assessment does not adequately measure the skills and knowledge set forth in the State’s adopted curricula for a core content area, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must develop a State-specific assessment in that core content area to be implemented in the 2016-2017 school year.

If the State Board of Education has not adopted an assessment to measure the common core curricula before July 30, 2014, the middle school assessments and the evaluation of the middle school assessments may not be implemented until the first day of school in the school year that follows the adoption of an assessment to measure the common core curricula by the State board.

If funding is not provided in the fiscal 2013 State budget in an amount sufficient to administer the Maryland high school assessment for government, the Governor must include an appropriation in the fiscal 2014 State budget in an amount sufficient to administer the Maryland high school assessment for government.

Finally, MSDE must survey a statewide representative sample of public schools and public school teachers annually to measure:

- the amount of instructional time spent on social studies and science instruction in elementary schools;
- the availability and use of appropriate instructional resources and teaching technology in social studies and science classrooms;
- the availability and use of appropriate professional development for social studies and science teachers; and
- the number of secondary school social studies and science classes that are taught by teachers who are certified and who are not certified in the subjects being taught.

MSDE must compile the results of the survey and publish the results on the department's website.

**Current Law:** The State board, the State Superintendent of Schools, each local board of education, and each public school must implement a program of education accountability for the operation and management of the public schools. Under the accountability program, the State board and the State Superintendent must assist each local board of education to establish educational goals and objectives that conform with statewide educational objectives for subject areas including reading, writing, and mathematics. With the assistance of its local board of education, each public school must survey current student achievement in reading, language, mathematics, and other areas to assess its needs.

Each public school must establish as the basis for its assessment of its needs, project goals and objectives that are in keeping with the goals and objectives established by its local board and the State board. With the assistance of its local board, the State board,

and the State Superintendent, each public school must develop programs to meet its needs on the basis of the priorities it sets.

Each local board of education is required to develop and implement a comprehensive master plan that describes the goals, objectives, and strategies that will be used to improve student achievement and meet State performance standards and local performance standards in each segment of the student population. The plan must be updated annually, and is required to include specified elements.

**Background:** The government HSA was not administered in Maryland during the 2011-2012 school year because \$1.3 million in funding for conducting the test was not included in the fiscal 2012 State budget. The elimination of the government HSA did not change the requirement that every student in Maryland earn one credit in a local, State, and national government course (American Government). HSAs in algebra, biology, and English were conducted and continue to be graduation requirements at least in part because the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires each state to administer and report results for tests in those subjects. NCLB also requires that students be tested annually in mathematics and reading in grades 3 through 8 and that students be tested in science at least once during grades 3 through 5 and again in grades 6 through 9.

Since social studies assessments are not an NCLB requirement, schools are spending less time teaching the subject. In a 2005 survey, half of the surveyed Maryland elementary teachers noted a reduction in social studies time, as did one-quarter of middle school teachers. Additionally, 7 in 10 elementary school principals – and nearly 9 in 10 elementary school teachers – said social studies is not a high-priority subject in their schools. Even when social studies is taught, 66% of elementary school principals and 53% of teachers responded that students were pulled out of social studies classes to participate in other subjects (most often reading or math remediation).

In November 2004, the State Superintendent convened the Maryland Social Studies Task Force to study social studies instruction in the State. One of the recommendations of the task force was to develop statewide social studies assessments as described in the bill to ensure that, in the era of NCLB, adequate time is devoted to social studies.

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a state-led effort to establish a shared set of clear educational standards that states can voluntarily adopt. The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) has partnered with 23 states (including Maryland) and the District of Columbia to develop an assessment system aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) that is anchored in college and career readiness; provides comparability across states; has the ability to assess and measure higher-order skills such as critical thinking, communications, and problem solving; and provides truly useful information for educators, parents, and students alike.

Maryland became a governing state for the project in the spring of 2010, and the State board adopted the CCSS in June 2010. Leaders from Maryland's K-12 and higher education communities are engaged in the development of PARCC's proposal for common, next-generation assessments. Assessments tied to CCSS are under development and expected to be completed by the 2014-2015 school year.

**State Expenditures:** Contingent on the enactment of this bill or SB 293, the fiscal 2013 State budget includes \$3.5 million in general funds to reinstate the government HSA in fiscal 2013 and begin developing the essay portion for implementation in fiscal 2014. If this funding is not sufficient to administer the HSA for government, additional funding will be mandated for fiscal 2014. After the first year, costs for the government HSA will decrease to \$2.0 million annually.

If the State Board of Education determines that one of the common core assessments does not adequately measure the skills and knowledge set forth in the State's adopted curricula, general fund expenditures will increase by an additional \$3.4 million in fiscal 2016 for each State-specific assessment that must be developed to replace an inadequate assessment.

MSDE can survey a representative sample of public schools and public school teachers about social studies and science classes and publish the results on the department's website using existing resources.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

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

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