

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2013 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 1338
Ways and Means

(Prince George's County Delegation)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Prince George's County Juvenile Court and School Safety Workgroup
PG 306-13

This bill establishes the Prince George's County Juvenile Court and School Safety Workgroup, which is to be staffed by the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS). The Prince George's County Executive must designate two co-chairs of the workgroup.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2013, and terminates December 31, 2014.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for DJS are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing resources.

Local Effect: Prince George's County can handle the bill's requirements using existing budgeted resources.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The workgroup must:

- review and analyze school arrest and referral data collected by DJS and the Prince George's County School System and based on that data, identify the most common offenses for which students are arrested and referred to juvenile court;
- recommend interagency policies to reduce the number of school-based arrests and referrals for certain misdemeanor offenses to DJS and the juvenile court by

diverting more youth to school- and community-based programs, with the goal to decrease the overrepresentation of African American youth in the juvenile justice system;

- recommend strategies to more fully use current resources and expand school- and community-based support services for youth who exhibit behavior problems in school;
- recommend a criteria-based, decisionmaking process for referring students to school- or community-based programs and services instead of to the juvenile justice system for misdemeanor-type delinquent acts involving offenses identified by the workgroup;
- recommend criteria for diversion programs developed for juveniles who have been charged with less serious delinquent acts and who the juvenile court believes would benefit from community alternatives instead of probation or commitment to DJS;
- hold at least two public meetings before October 1, 2013, during which the workgroup seeks testimony from the public and juvenile advocacy groups; and
- develop a collaborative action plan to reduce the number of school-based arrests and referrals to the juvenile court.

By December 15, 2013, the workgroup must report its findings, action plan, and recommendations to the Prince George's County Delegation.

A member of the task force may not receive compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations, as provided in the State budget.

Background: According to DJS, 4,446 complaints were filed in Prince George's County in fiscal 2012. Less than 1% of the complaints were from a school referral. For almost 40% of the complaints, an intake officer authorized the filing of a petition alleging delinquency for formal processing in juvenile court.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Prince George's County, Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of Juvenile Services, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 4, 2013
ncs/kdm Revised - House Third Reader - March 25, 2013

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