

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2014 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 883
 Ways and Means

(Delegate A. Miller, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene - Study of Safe and Healthy School Hours for Maryland Public Schools

This bill requires the Office of Public Health Services (OPHS) in the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) to conduct a study of safe and healthy school hours for Maryland public schools. In conducting the study, OPHS must review the science on the sleep needs of children and adolescents, including the effects of sleep deprivation on academic performance and benefits of sufficient sleep; review and study how other school systems have implemented alternative school day starting times and how various activities in those school systems were impacted and scheduled around the changes; and make recommendations regarding whether public schools should implement a starting time of no earlier than 8:00 a.m. OPHS must consult with specified entities and individuals and report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 31, 2014.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2014.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$35,000 in FY 2015 for DHMH to hire a consultant to conduct the required study and reviews and prepare a report of findings and recommendations within a six-month period.

(in dollars)	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	35,000	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$35,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

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

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Public schools must be open for at least 180 days and 1,080 school hours during a 10-month period. However, under certain conditions (a natural disaster, civil disaster, and severe weather conditions), the State Board of Education may permit a local board of education to make adjustments to the length of the school year and exceptions to the 10-month period limit. In case of emergency, the State Board of Education may open schools on holidays. Local school systems have authority over opening and closing hours for public schools.

Background: A February 2013 study by the Transportation Division of Anne Arundel County Public Schools indicates that several Maryland counties have opening times before 8:00 a.m. for all or some high schools and for several middle schools, but that an opening time before 8:00 a.m. for elementary schools is much less common. The report also discusses the link between bus routes and schedules and school opening and closing times, and indicates that a significant change in opening times may result in substantial additional transportation costs and (assuming the length of the school day is largely unchanged) will reduce after-school hours available to students for athletics, extracurricular activities, employment, additional schooling, and homework.

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), sleep loss causes problems with memory and attention, complex thought, motor responses to stimuli, performance in school or on the job, and controlling emotions. NIH also indicates that the amount of sleep that an individual will need each day changes considerably over the course of a lifetime, and reports that the recommended amount of sleep for school-aged children is at least 10 hours per day and 9-10 hours a day for teenagers.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 1462 of 2013 passed the House, but received an unfavorable report from the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee.

Cross File: SB 14 (Senator Reilly - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs) is listed as a cross file, but the bills are not identical.

Information Source(s): Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 27, 2014
spg/rhh Revised - House Third Reader - March 26, 2014

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