

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 1150 (Senator Hershey)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Primary and Secondary Education - Computer Health and Safety Guidelines and Procedures

This bill requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), in consultation with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH), to (1) develop computer health and safety guidelines and procedures to be implemented in every county and (2) develop a process to monitor the implementation of computer health and safety guidelines and procedures in every county. Each local board of education must implement the computer health and safety guidelines and procedures.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2016.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. MSDE, in consultation with DHMH, can develop the computer health and safety guidelines and procedures to be implemented in every county using existing resources.

Local Effect: The exact impact on local school systems will be determined by the guidelines and procedures developed by MSDE; however, as discussed below, it is assumed that any costs will be minimal and absorbable within local school system budgets.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law/ Background: Extended use of computers is associated with certain health hazards including carpal tunnel syndrome, eye strain, and back problems. Many of these

problems can be prevented or alleviated by taking breaks from working at a computer, stretching, and designing ergonomically correct workstations.

Local Fiscal Effect: It is assumed that MSDE will be cognizant of the potential costs when developing the guidelines and procedures since there are many affordable ways to reduce the hazards associated with the extended use of computers such as limiting the amount of time spent working on a computer, taking breaks, and stretching. In addition, many design principles of an ergonomically correct workstation can be implemented at minimal expense, such as adjusting monitor heights. Since affordable options are available, it is assumed that MSDE guidelines and procedures will not require local school systems to install fully customizable workstations, which can be very expensive. Thus, it is assumed that any costs will be absorbable within local school system budgets.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: Although listed as a cross file, HB 1524 (Delegates Arentz and Angel - Rules and Executive Nominations) is not identical.

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

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kb/rhh

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