

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2017 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

House Bill 1123  
Ways and Means

(Delegate Platt)

---

**Education - Prekindergarten - Program Applications**

---

This bill prohibits a county board of education, prekindergarten program site, or prekindergarten registration site from limiting the number of prekindergarten applications accepted in one day.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2017.

---

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** It is anticipated that the bill's requirements can be handled with existing budgeted resources, based on the assumption discussed below.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

---

**Analysis**

**Current Law/Background:** Chapter 288 of 2002, the Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act, required each local school system to make publicly funded prekindergarten available to economically disadvantaged four-year-old children in the State. To qualify as economically disadvantaged, a child must be from a family whose income is at or below 185% of federal poverty guidelines. If vacancies remain after economically disadvantaged children have been enrolled, local school systems may make prekindergarten available to other children that exhibit a lack of readiness for school. The State provides funding to school systems to support the program through the State compensatory education formula.

Chapter 2 of 2014 expanded prekindergarten services to additional eligible four-year-old children from families whose income is at or below 300% of federal poverty guidelines by establishing a competitive grant program to provide funding to qualified public and private prekindergarten providers. Since fiscal 2015, the State budget has included \$4.3 million for the expansion program. In 2014, Maryland was also awarded a federal grant that provides \$15 million annually through fiscal 2019 to continue the expansion of public prekindergarten. In its grant application, the State committed to matching funds of \$3,672,000 in fiscal 2018 and \$7,344,000 in fiscal 2019 to provide access to high-quality prekindergarten to families with incomes *between 200% and 300%* of federal poverty guidelines. Pursuant to Chapters 683 and 684 of 2016, the Governor must include an appropriation in the budget for the amount that the State committed to fund as the State match to the federal grant in addition to the amount required under current law for the State Prekindergarten Expansion Grant Program. The proposed fiscal 2018 budget contains a total of \$16.0 million in federal funds and \$8.0 million in State funds to support public prekindergarten expansion.

According to data provided by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), there were approximately 31,100 public school prekindergarten students in the State during the 2015-2016 school year. According to MSDE, 52,908 four-year-old children were enrolled in prekindergarten (all types) during the 2014-2015 school year (the latest information readily available). Approximately half of the children were in public prekindergarten programs, with the remainder in private child care centers (40.9%) or family child care homes (8.8%).

**Local Fiscal Effect:** The bill's requirements can be handled with existing budgeted resources. The Department of Legislative Services notes that, for purposes of this estimate, it is assumed that county boards, prekindergarten program sites, and prekindergarten registration sites will still have the flexibility to determine other procedures regarding prekindergarten registration (*e.g.*, hours of operation for registration sites) which may indirectly limit the number of applications that may be accepted in a day but will not be able to specifically establish daily application limits.

---

## Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Baltimore City; Caroline, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties; Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Association of Boards of Education; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 2, 2017  
fn/rhh

---

Analysis by: Jennifer K. Botts

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510