

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Enrolled - Revised

Senate Bill 661

(Senator Washington)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Ways and Means

Primary and Secondary Education - Community Schools - Established

This bill establishes community schools in the State and specifies the purpose and requirements of a community school. The bill defines a “community school” as a public school that establishes a set of strategic partnerships between the school and other community resources that promote student achievement, positive learning conditions, and the well-being of students, families, and the community. A local school system (LSS) or an existing public school may form a school-community partnership for the planning and implementation of a community school. An LSS must review and approve a community school; a community school may not be implemented without LSS approval. An LSS must make public funding available to a community school. The bill also expresses legislative intent that money appropriated for the Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program in accordance with The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future legislation must be used to offset the fiscal 2020 and 2021 cost of implementation of the bill, for community schools with at least 80% of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals (FRPM). **The bill takes effect July 1, 2019.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: LSSs will incur some costs to review community school plans. Under the bill, approval of community schools is at the discretion of each LSS. The impact on local government finances is assumed to be minimal and may be offset by State funding via specified separate legislation.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The purpose of a community school is to help students and families overcome the in-school and out-of-school barriers that prevent children from learning and succeeding over the course of their lives by having an integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and familial and community engagement. A community school must promote (1) active family and community engagement; (2) expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities provided after school, during weekends, and in the summer that emphasize mastering 21st Century skills; and (3) collaborative leadership and practices that empower parents, students, teachers, principals, and community partners to build a culture of professional learning, collective trust, and shared responsibility. A community school must have (1) a community school coordinator (CSC) to coordinate support programs that address out-of-school learning barriers for students and families; (2) a community school leadership team, whose membership is specified; and (3) a parent teacher organization or a school family council.

A community school or CSC may solicit the assistance and support of community partners to fulfill the bill's requirements. Eligible interventions for which a community school may receive public funding include, as detailed further in the bill: (1) academic services; (2) parental involvement programs; (3) physical and mental health services; and (4) community involvement programs.

Current Law/Background: State law does not prescribe what a community school must entail and provide nor an approval process for community schools.

Community Schools

The Coalition for Community Schools indicates that a community school is both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. While models vary nationwide, implementation is typically guided by a school-site leadership team of school staff and community stakeholders, and the work is managed by a CSC.

According to the Maryland Out of School Time (MOST) Network's website, there are five community school initiatives in Maryland: Baltimore City Community Schools, the Linkages to Learning collaborative in Montgomery County, TNI@School in Prince George's County, Y in Central Maryland in Baltimore County, and Bester Community of Hope in Washington County. According to the MOST Network, there are more than 50 community schools in Baltimore City that are supported through the Family League of Baltimore and other lead agencies.

State Programs

Chapter 32 of 2016 established the Public School Opportunities Enhancement Program (PSOEP) to assist local school systems, public community schools, and nonprofit organizations in the State in expanding or creating extended day and summer enhancement programs and to assist nonprofit organizations in the State and community schools in expanding or supporting existing educational programming during the school day. Specified counties are eligible to participate in the program. If the grantee is a local school system, the local school system must provide at least an equal match to State grant funding. Only those community schools that exist in the State and use a community school strategy that is recognized by MOST are eligible for a grant.

The law initially mandated \$7.5 million for PSOEP in fiscal 2018 through 2021. However, Chapter 361 of 2018 (Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education Act), extended the program indefinitely, while reducing required annual funding to \$3.0 million.

Chapter 361 also established the Learning in Extended Academic Programs (LEAP) Grant Program. Beginning in fiscal 2019, the Governor must appropriate at least \$4.5 million annually for the program, which was redirected from PSOEP. LEAP provides a grant to public schools in which at least 80% of students qualify for FRPM to provide extended academic programming that has a positive measurable impact on or enriches the academic performance and overall well-being of students who are at risk of falling behind academic requirements. An extended academic program must include before and after school, weekend, or summer programs. To qualify, summer programs must provide at least four hours of daily programming for at least 30 days and before and after school programs must provide at least eight hours of academic programming each full week that school is in session.

Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education and Adequacy Study

Chapter 701 of 2016 established the 25-member Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education. The commission's members include legislators and various representatives of State and local government and education stakeholders as well as the business community. University System of Maryland Chancellor Emeritus Dr. William "Brit" Kirwan was appointed by the Governor and Presiding Officers of the General Assembly to serve as chair of the commission.

The commission essentially has a two-part charge:

- reviewing the findings and recommendations of the Study on Adequacy of Funding for Education in the State of Maryland as required by Chapter 288 of 2002 and subsequent legislation; and

- determining how the State can better prepare students for postsecondary education and to be competitive in the workforce and with other high-performing countries in the global economy.

The commission submitted a preliminary report of its findings in January 2018, and based on those recommendations, Chapter 361 of 2018 was enacted, including LEAP. The January 2019 [interim report](#) of the commission recommends, among other things, categorical funding for all public schools where at least 55% of students qualify for FRPM to be used to (1) establish or enhance community schools and (2) establish or enhance school health and behavioral services. The recommendations include funding for a CSC, a health care practitioner, and a per pupil grant to provide supports and interventions for all students in a concentration of poverty school at a *total* estimated cost (State and local) of approximately \$622 million annually. The commission will make funding formula recommendations in fall 2019.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future

Senate Bill 1030 – The Blueprint for Maryland's Future – establishes State education policy, based on the recommendations of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (also known as the Kirwan Commission), and provides funding in fiscal 2020 and 2021 under several existing, modified, and new programs. Among these, the legislation establishes a Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program. This program provides grants to public schools in which at least 80% of the students were eligible for FRPM in a specified year. Under The Blueprint legislation, each of these schools must employ one CSC and the equivalent of a full-time health care practitioner. If the funding exceeds costs and/or the school already employs individuals in such positions, resulting excess funds must be used for specified wraparound services.

For eligible schools, the CSC is responsible for establishing a community school, including completing an assessment by July 1, 2020, of the needs of the students in the school for appropriate wraparound services to enhance the success of all students in the school. For both fiscal 2020 and 2021, funding is provided to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to fund one director of community schools in MSDE.

Local Fiscal Effect: The bill authorizes, but does not require, the forming of partnerships for implementing community schools. It is assumed that an LSS may reject a community school if it will substantially increase LSS costs. The number of community schools that would be approved by an LSS under the bill is not known. While LSSs will incur some costs to review proposed community schools, it is assumed they can do so within existing resources.

Also, the bill specifies that a community school or CSC may solicit the assistance and support of community partners to fulfill the bill's requirements. It is assumed that in-kind or direct financial support by community partners will be part of approved plans for community schools. Baltimore City Public Schools advises that its CSCs are not typically paid by the LSS.

For the reasons discussed above, it is assumed that the impact on LSS expenditures will be minimal. Furthermore, assuming that The Blueprint for Maryland's Future legislation is enacted, and to the extent that funding for community schools is released by the Governor (for fiscal 2020), costs to LSS will be offset. The Blueprint legislation provides approximately \$54.5 million in fiscal 2020 and \$58.7 million in 2021 for the Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program (discussed above).

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 733 (Delegate Ebersole, *et al.*) - Ways and Means.

Information Source(s): Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Baltimore City Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Out of School Time Network; Coalition for Community Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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