

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

House Bill 515
Ways and Means

(Delegate Cain, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Public Schools - Staff Members - Report

This bill requires each local board of education to submit a report on the ratio, at the end of the previous school year, of students to staff members as specified by July 1, 2021, and each July 1 thereafter. Specifically, the report must include, for each school, the student-to-staff ratio for each of the following staff members: school counselor; school psychologist; social worker; occupational therapist; speech pathologist; and bilingual facilitator. The report must also include the ratios of students to each of these staff members for the school system as a whole. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2020.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) can annually report the information reported by local school systems using existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: Local school system expenditures are not substantially affected. Most school systems currently report other staffing information to MSDE. It is assumed that local school systems can devote current resources to reporting the required information. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: Local school systems currently report staffing data to MSDE, including data reported by MSDE in the annual [*Staff Employed at School and Central*](#)

[Office Levels – Maryland Public Schools report](#). However, the information is not provided or reported using the staffing categories required by the bill.

The current report includes all positions, with the exception of temporary and hourly personnel and contractual personnel with less than a school-year contract. The staff classifications used in the report that are related to those in the bill are shown in **Exhibit 1**.

Exhibit 1 **Current Staffing Reports Classifications**

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Therapists	Staff who perform activities related to physical or occupational methods of treatment and rehabilitation of students
Guidance Counselors	Staff responsible for counseling students with regard to their academic, self-management, education/career decision making, interpersonal, or related needs that impact directly on educational and career choices
Psychological Personnel	Staff who evaluate a student’s cognitive and emotional development, diagnose educational and personal disabilities, and provide appropriate follow-up in the form of consultation or direct intervention
Pupil Personnel Workers	Staff who work with the family, school, and community to determine the cause of and provide solutions for serious attendance, academic, and/or disciplinary problems of students
School Social Workers	Staff assigned to investigate, diagnose, and provide case work and group work services for student problems arising from the home, school, or community

Source: Maryland Department of Education; Department of Legislative Services

Chapter 552 of 2019 requires each local school system to submit an interim and final report on school psychologists in the local school system. The reports must include specified information including the current ratio of school psychologists to students in each public school and strategies (including any additional State and local funding) to, by
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October 1, 2020, (1) have at least one school psychologist at schools with fewer than 700 students and (2) for schools with 700 students or more students, have a ratio of not less than one school psychologist for every 700 students. Each local school system must submit an interim report by July 1, 2020, and a final report by December 1, 2020.

Local Expenditures: Local school system expenditures are not substantially affected. However, Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) advises that many of the positions listed in the bill are related to students with an Individualized Education Program or Section 504 plan. These positions are itinerant because they are service-hour driven and providers can work at multiple schools throughout the year (or even during the same week). AACPS advises that an additional accountant will need to be hired and that personnel software will need to be updated to track these positions and assign them proportionally to each school. Nevertheless, the Department of Legislative Services advises that any changes necessary are likely absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Baltimore City Public Schools; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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