

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

Senate Bill 161

(Senator A. Washington)

Budget and Taxation

Appropriations and Ways and Means

Community Schools - Alterations

This bill authorizes a local school board for a school system with fewer than 40 eligible schools under the Concentration of Poverty Grant (CPG) program to expend up to 15% of personnel grant and per pupil grant funds on behalf of eligible schools, provided that a plan to meet specified current law requirements is submitted to the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB). This authorization does not apply to a public charter school unless that school chooses to participate in the plan. The State Director of Community Schools must, in consultation with local school systems and members of the community schools' leadership team, create a common needs assessment tool that each community school coordinator must use to complete the community school needs assessment. Programs and services provided to CPG-eligible schools must prioritize areas of greatest needs according to the most recent needs assessment plan. The definitions of "community school" and of "wraparound services" are altered. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2024.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. State CPG expenditures are not affected. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and AIB can handle the bill's provisions using existing resources.

Local Effect: The bill authorizes, but does not require, centralized local education agencies (LEA) expenditure of CPG funds. Further, the bill expands community school service options but does not require a net change in community school expenditures. However, local school systems with large numbers of community schools may realize increased costs associated with annual community school coordinator reports.

Small Business Effect: Small businesses that provide services authorized under current law and under the bill may be marginally affected.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The definition of “community school” is altered to, among other changes, include a public school that establishes partnerships that leverage shared accountability, collaborative leadership, capacity building, and authentic family and community engagement, using a student-centered framework to promote inclusive student achievement. The definition of “wraparound services” is expanded to include transportation to off-site learning opportunities (in addition to apprenticeship programs under current law), hearing services (in addition to vision and dental care services), and to include additional therapists.

MSDE may provide comments to the community school coordinator on the implementation plan. A community school coordinator must review the implementation plan at least once every three years to determine whether the community school is meeting students’ needs. A community school coordinator must alter the implementation plan, using the common needs assessment tool, and the provision of wraparound services to address changes in students’ needs and submit the updated plan to the local school system for approval. Following school system approval, the updated plan must be submitted to MSDE. A needs assessment must be published online. Local governments are expected to demonstrate support for a community school through adoption of supportive policy.

Commencing in 2025, by August 15 of each year, each community school coordinator of a CPG-eligible school must submit to MSDE and AIB a report that provides specified information for the immediately preceding school year for the community school coordinator’s school. MSDE and AIB must make publicly available each submitted report. By December 1, 2024, MSDE and AIB must jointly submit a report to the General Assembly on possible methods for ensuring that CPG funds are used appropriately and effectively.

Current Law:

Community Schools, Needs Assessment, and Implementation Plans

“Community school” means 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 by providing wraparound services. The Director of Community Schools in MSDE must coordinate professional development for community school coordinators at each community school.

A community school coordinator is responsible for completing an assessment of the needs of the students in the school for appropriate wraparound services to enhance the success of

all students in the school, and developing an implementation plan based on the assessment, in cooperation with other interested stakeholders. The needs assessment must (1) include an assessment of the physical, behavioral, mental health needs and wraparound service needs of students, their families, and their communities and (2) be submitted to MSDE and the local school system within one year of receiving a CPG personnel grant or within one year of becoming a community school. Local governments are expected to demonstrate support for a community school through meaningful partnerships and support that is supplemental to and does not supplant existing efforts. “Wraparound services” provided by a community school, according to its implementation plan, may involve extended learning time and an extended school year as well as any of a wide range of specified services, supports and practices.

Concentration of Poverty Grants

CPGs have two components. First, for each eligible school a personnel grant is received to employ a community school coordinator with specified qualifications and provide full-time coverage by at least one health care practitioner. A county that provides health coverage or community school services with funds other than the personnel grant must continue to provide those services through fiscal 2030. Second, per pupil grants are provided for each qualifying school following the completion of a community school needs assessment. CPG funds must generally be distributed by the local school board to each eligible school. However, if the local school system has at least 40 eligible schools, the local board may expend up to 50% of CPG personnel and per pupil grants on behalf of eligible schools in accordance with a plan developed in consultation with eligible schools that ensures that each eligible school receives the required positions/coverage and services.

The personnel grant is a State-funded categorical amount that increases with inflation. Per pupil grants are only wealth equalized for districts that receive the minimum State funding (40%) under the compensatory education formula; for all other districts, the State pays the full amount. The local funding percentage is based on the compensatory education wealth equalization formula. The following table lays out the phase-in of the two components of the funding.

Concentration of Poverty Grants Phase-in

School Poverty Percentage	Year Personnel Phased-in	Year Per Pupil Phased-in
> = 80%	FY 2020	FY 2022
75%-80%	FY 2021	FY 2023
70%-75%	FY 2022	FY 2024
65%-70%	FY 2023	FY 2025
60%-65%	FY 2024	FY 2026
55%-60%	FY 2025	FY 2027

School concentration percentages are based on a three-year average of compensatory education enrollment in each public school. Under Chapter 55 of 2021, the three-year enrollment count excludes the 2020-2021 school year. A percentage increment of per pupil funding for each of six years of eligibility, beginning with 16% in the first year of eligibility and culminating in 100% funding by the seventh year, is specified in statute. County governments (including Baltimore City) must appropriate the greater of the combined local share of several aid programs, including the CPG program, after certain local relief provisions are applied, or the per pupil maintenance of effort result.

State Fiscal Effect: State CPG funding is not altered. MSDE and AIB revenues and expenditures are not affected. MSDE advises that it has created a needs assessment tool that aligns with the bill’s requirement for development of such a tool and that it offers technical assistance in this domain. AIB can receive and review additional community school expenditure plans from school systems with existing resources. This analysis assumes that AIB and MSDE are not required to review the reports submitted by each of the community school coordinators in the State.

Local Fiscal Effect: The county government local share of CPG funding of public schools is not altered. It is assumed that community school coordinators can handle annual reporting requirements under the bill using existing resources, though local school systems with large numbers of community schools may realize increased costs associated with annual community school coordinator reports. Local school system revenues are not materially affected. The bill authorizes, but does not require, centralized LEA expenditure of CPG funds. Further, the bill expands community school service options (for example hearing services and additional therapists) but does not require a net change in community school expenditures.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: HB 200 (Delegate Wilkins) - Appropriations and Ways and Means.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 23, 2024
js/hlb Third Reader - March 25, 2024
Revised - Amendment(s) - March 25, 2024

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