

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 59 (Delegate Greenip)
Ways and Means

Education - Graduation from Public High School - Prohibition of Community Service Requirement

This bill eliminates community service as a requirement for graduation from public high schools in the State.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Indeterminate effect on revenues and expenditures as discussed below.

Local Effect: Local government finances could be affected as discussed below.

Fiscal Analysis

Background: The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) requires students entering middle and high school to complete either: (1) a community service program designed by the State superintendent; or (2) a locally designed program approved by the State superintendent. Currently, all 24 local school systems have designed their own community service program.

State Effect: Approximately \$313,000 is included in the proposed fiscal 1997 budget to administer the community services program, of which \$216,750 is federal funds (\$78,000 from Learn and Serve grants and \$138,750 from the Advancement of Service Learning program) and \$96,250 is State general funds. Eliminating community service as a requirement for graduation would not preclude the State from providing assistance and funding to those school systems which continue to incorporate community service within their curriculum. Accordingly, State expenditures will only decrease to the extent that: (1) local school districts no longer apply for the State or federal grants; and (2) MSDE does not increase the grant amount to a school system that continues the program on a voluntary basis. In addition, federal funding should not be affected, in that the two federal grants are not

directly tied to a mandatory community services program.

Local Effect: Local school systems are expected to receive \$78,000 in federal grants to design local programs in fiscal 1997. Local grants in fiscal 1996 ranged from \$5,000 to \$15,000 for each school system. Any reduction in local revenues (federal grants) and expenditures would depend upon the local school systems discontinuing the program once the graduation requirement is repealed.

The current requirement's costs varies throughout the State; however, many school systems reported that the program did not require any additional expenditures. For example, both Anne Arundel and Dorchester County Schools reported that the community services requirement was integrated into the counties' existing curriculum. Accordingly, there would be no fiscal cost savings if the requirement was repealed.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education, Anne Arundel County Schools, Dorchester County Schools, Department of Fiscal Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 6, 1996

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