

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 230 (The President, *et al.*)
(Administration)

Economic and Environmental Affairs

Referred to Ways and Means

**Gifted and Talented Student Education - Excellence in Education
Incentive Grant Program**

This amended Administration bill establishes an Excellence in Education Incentive Grant Program for the purpose of awarding grants to eligible county boards of education for the development of innovative instructional programs and services for gifted and talented students. The Governor is required to provide funding in the State budget for the local incentive grants.

This bill takes effect July 1, 1997.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: \$499,990 is included in the proposed FY 1998 State budget to provide incentives pursuant to this bill.

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

Small Business Effect: The Administration has determined that this bill has minimal or no impact on small businesses (attached). Fiscal Services concurs with this assessment. (The attached assessment does not reflect amendments to the bill.)

Fiscal Analysis

State Effect: The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) already provides technical assistance and funding for programs serving gifted and talented children in all 24 local school districts. This legislation enables MSDE to award grants to local school districts for the purpose of developing innovative instructional programs and services for gifted and talented students. The fiscal 1998 State budget allowance includes \$2.4 million for gifted and talented programs, a \$499,990 increase from fiscal 1997. The entire funding increase

(\$499,990) is targeted to implement this new initiative, although the increase is not contingent upon enactment of this legislation.

MSDE is required to (1) establish the criteria for awarding the grants and evaluating effective programs and services; and (2) conduct periodic monitoring of the delivery of gifted and talented programs and services. These two requirements could be handled with existing resources.

Local Effect: This legislation provides additional State funding to local school districts for the development of innovative programs for gifted and talented students. The fiscal 1998 State budget allowance includes \$499,990 in additional funding that is earmarked for local gifted and talented programs. County boards that receive the grants are required to (1) develop and implement programs for the early identification of gifted and talented students; (2) provide staff development; and (3) provide and disseminate to parents and community groups information on programs and services for gifted and talented students. This legislation would not require local school systems to expend additional funds for gifted and talented programs. However, the grants may provide an incentive to expand gifted and talented programs, thus increasing local expenditures.

Additional Comments: While not required by law, all local school districts currently have special programs for gifted and talented students; however, the type and magnitude of these programs vary considerably, as illustrated below.

Howard County - Gifted and Talented Program

Approximately 14,000 students are enrolled in Howard County's gifted and talented programs. The Enrichment Triad model and mathematic courses are offered at the elementary level. Middle schools offer the Enrichment Triad with talent pool classes in English, mathematics, science, and social studies. After-school fine arts and advanced math are also provided. In high schools, English, foreign language, mathematics, science, social studies, research, and computer science courses are offered along with after-school courses in fine arts, advanced math, and computer science. A mentor program is also provided. The county has 78 full-time teachers working in the gifted and talented program. There are 46 other positions (30 talent pool teachers - middle school, 16 classroom teachers - high school) who teach gifted and talented programs on a part-time basis, but have other primary assignments. Howard County's fiscal 1997 school budget includes \$3.4 million for gifted and talented programs.

Prince George's County - Gifted Student Program

At the elementary level, students participate in a program for approximately two hours during each week either within their regular classrooms or in special classes. In middle schools, students are grouped for instruction in English and social studies classes. The high school program consists of a core of courses especially designed for academically gifted students. Prince George's County fiscal 1997 school budget includes roughly \$508,000 for gifted and talented programs, of which \$114,384 is a grant from MSDE.

Information Source(s): Department of Fiscal Services, Maryland State Department of Education

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