

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 284 (Delegate Greenip, *et al.*)
Ways and Means

Education - Graduation From Public High School - Community Service Requirement

This bill enables the local boards of education to determine whether a public high school student must perform community service as a condition of graduation.

This bill takes effect July 1, 1997.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

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

Small Business Effect: Potential minimal effect on small businesses as discussed below.

Fiscal Analysis

Background: The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) requires students entering middle or 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 school systems have designed their own community service program.

State Effect: In fiscal 1997, the State received \$399,000 in funding from the federal government through two grants (Learn and Serve America and Funding for Advancement of Service Learning) for community service programs. Of this amount, \$281,000 goes to the local boards of education. Making the community service graduation requirement optional 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 State or federal grants; and (2) MSDE does not increase the grant amount to a school system that elects to continue the program. 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 received \$281,000 in federal grants and \$96,250 in State funds to design local community service programs in fiscal 1997. Any reduction in local revenues (federal and State grants) and expenditures would depend upon the local school systems discontinuing the program once the graduation requirement is made optional.

The current requirement's costs varies throughout the State. For example, Baltimore County spends \$55,000 to implement the community services requirement; however, in Howard County, the community service requirement is integrated into the county's existing curriculum at no additional cost.

Small Business Effect: Small businesses, especially nonprofit organizations, could be affected depending upon the number of school systems that choose to discontinue the community service graduation requirement and to the extent that such businesses rely on student volunteers to perform certain work activities.

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

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Analysis by: Hiram L. Burch Jr.
Reviewed by: John Rixey

Direct Inquiries to:
John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst
(410) 841-3710
(301) 858-3710