

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 539 (Delegate Greenip, *et al.*)
Ways and Means

Education - Standardized Testing - Options

This bill grants a parent or legal guardian of a child attending a public school in the State the option of choosing between a national standardized test or the Maryland Criterion Reference Test as the measure used for evaluating the child's academic achievement and educational accountability. The bill also makes the National Standardized Academic Achievement Test the standard for the State's minimum reading level requirement.

This bill takes effect June 1, 1997.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Indeterminate but potentially significant increase in general fund expenditures as discussed below. Revenues would not be affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None. Small businesses would not be directly affected.

Fiscal Analysis

State Effect: The Maryland Criteria Reference Tests are part of the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP) that measures school performance based on how well students (1) solve problems cooperatively and individually; (2) apply what they have learned to real world problems; and (3) can relate and use knowledge from different subject areas. MSPAP tests are given to approximately 180,000 students in grades 3, 5, and 8. Subject areas incorporated in the MSPAP tests are reading, writing, language usage, mathematics, science, and social studies. MSDE spends approximately \$4 million annually to develop and administer the MSPAP tests. The breakdown on the program's costs is

illustrated below.

Itemized Expenditure List	FY 1998 Expenditures
CTB/McGraw Hill - Publication of Test Booklets	\$214,408
CTB/McGraw Hill - Packaging, Distribution, Securing of Test Booklets and Documents, and Data Processing	\$1,297,536
CTB/McGraw Hill - Research	\$223,173
Task Development (Teacher Contracts, Copyrights, etc)	\$295,200
Westat - Field Testing	\$44,000
Measurements Inc. - Scoring Tests	\$1,888,090
Total Costs	\$3,962,407

Source: Maryland State Department of Education

This bill would impact MSDE's current education accountability program in several ways. First, providing parents the choice between a national standardized test and the MSPAP test would require MSDE to purchase both tests. Assuming one-half of parents select the national standardized test, State expenditures would increase by \$900,000, since the national standardized test costs \$10 per student. Further, MSDE would still incur the costs to develop and score the existing MSPAP test, which costs around \$4 million annually.

Second, MSDE advises that the current MSPAP is designed to measure school performance not the academic achievement of individual students. This is due to the fact that students only take a portion (one-third) of the entire assessment test that is used to measure school performance. By incorporating the testing results from all students within a school, MSDE is able to measure education accountability on a school-based level. This bill would require that the assessment test be used to measure a child's academic achievement. To accomplish this, MSDE would have to expand the current MSPAP test to include all assessment components (currently students are only assessed on one-third of the components). MSDE advises that this would result in an additional \$3.2 million for test development and scoring. Accordingly, State expenditures could increase by \$4.1 million annually.

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

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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