

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
1999 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 1115 (Delegate Montague)

Ways and Means

Education - Children in State-Supervised Care

This bill requires each local school system to establish a program to ensure that a school addresses inappropriate behavior by a student in State-supervised care before that behavior jeopardizes the school enrollment or performance of the student.

When the behavior of a student in State-supervised care is inappropriate, school officials must refer the student to the school's multi-disciplinary building-level team. The multi-disciplinary team must (1) assess the social, emotional, behavioral, and academic performance and needs of the student; (2) develop and implement a student support plan to address the problems of the student; (3) assess the need and eligibility of the student for special education services; and (4) develop a special plan if the student has a disability.

A principal of a public school may not suspend or expel a student in State-supervised care unless the school has developed and implemented a student support plan. Exceptions are provided in cases where the student presents a clear and imminent risk to the safety of other students.

This bill takes effect July 1, 1999.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Indeterminate increase in local school expenditures. Revenues would not be affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Fiscal Analysis

Local Effect: There are approximately 12,000 children in State-supervised care who have been placed in an out-of-home placement and who are eligible to attend a Maryland public school. During the 1997-98 school year, 123,000 students were suspended or expelled from school. A portion of these students were in State-supervised care.

Each local school system currently provides support programs to help resolve student problems; however, the extent of these programs and services provided to students varies across the State. The Howard County Public School System provides half-time counselors in most elementary schools, two full-time counselors in middle schools, and four counselors and two guidance support staff in each high school. In addition, the school system has 21.5 psychologists and 10 pupil personnel workers to assist troubled or at-risk students. In sum, Howard County will spend approximately \$8.4 million on guidance, psychological, and pupil personnel services in fiscal 1999.

In Prince George's County, 297 guidance counselors work in the county's 170 elementary, middle, and senior high schools. The guidance program provides student intervention services and assistance to students identified as having academic difficulties. The county also has 49 psychologists and 50 pupil personnel workers who provide various student and staff support services. Based on information from Prince George's County, this service helps to promote student achievement and reduce discipline referrals, suspensions, and expulsions. In sum, Prince George's County will spend approximately \$22.8 million on guidance, psychological, and pupil personnel services in fiscal 1999.

Even with these extensive student support programs, local school systems may have to expand these programs in order to serve each student in State-supervised care. During the 1997-1998 school year, local school systems employed around 707 guidance counselors for secondary schools and 257 pupil personnel/social workers. The average salary for a guidance counselor totals \$47,861 and the average salary for a pupil personnel/school social worker totals \$56,155.

Information Source(s): Maryland Association of Boards of Education, Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Legislative Services

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dmm/jr

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