

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 1253 (Delegate Hubbard)

Ways and Means

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Education - School Safety Plans

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This bill requires local boards of education to prepare and annually update a school safety plan. The plan must be submitted to the State Board of Education for approval and funding. The State Board must include in its annual budget request the funds it considers necessary to effectively implement school safety programs throughout the State and the Governor must include these funds in the annual State budget.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) advises that \$33.8 million in funds is needed in FY 2002 to develop and implement school safety plans and \$2.7 million is needed annually in future years to update the plans. The Governor is required to include funds in the State budget in the amount determined necessary by the State Board of Education to implement school safety plans.

**Local Effect:** Local school expenditures and State aid would increase by \$33.8 million to implement school safety plans and purchase school surveillance and security devices in the first year and \$2.7 million annually thereafter.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

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Analysis

**Bill Summary:** School safety plans prepared by local boards must establish methods of: (1) addressing the growing incidence of student violence; (2) providing a safe learning environment; (3) assuring safety of students transported by the school during noninstructional hours; (4) responding effectively to crises; (5) allowing Maryland Emergency Management Agency personnel to train and provide technical assistance to school personnel; and (6) using video surveillance cameras, metal detectors, and other security devices to improve safety. The Maryland Emergency Management Agency must train and provide technical assistance to county school personnel.

**Current Law:** Crisis plans have existed in every school system for the past ten years and have focused primarily on loss and grief issues relating to individual deaths. Most local school systems are currently expanding their crisis plans to include violent situations that arise on school premises. MSDE has created guidelines for developing a crisis plan.

**Background:** In response to recent violent incidents in schools, in September 1998 Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), and the Maryland State Teachers Association held a conference on safe schools. One of the outcomes of this conference was the creation of the Safe Schools Interagency Steering Committee, co-chaired by the Lieutenant Governor and Dr. Nancy Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools. Membership includes representatives of MSDE, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the State Police, the Department of Juvenile Justice, and the Maryland Emergency Management Agency, as well as student members. The steering committee began meeting in April 1999, and plans to continue meeting through 2000.

The steering committee created three subcommittees: Youth Leadership, Crisis Response, and Mental Health and School Partnership. The Crisis Response Subcommittee has focused on ensuring that schools, school systems, and State and local police departments are able to quickly and properly respond to any instances of violence. The subcommittee is creating crisis plans which can serve as models for schools and school districts. This model will help school districts comply with a regulation the State Board of Education plans to adopt that will require all school districts to have crisis response plans that include individual plans for each school.

**State and Local Fiscal Effect:** Most local school systems are currently expanding their crisis plans to include violent situations that arise on school premises. These plans could be updated to reflect the criteria in HB 1253 with existing resources. However, local school systems may need additional State resources to implement the provisions of their crisis plans and to provide training to local school and emergency services officials. Many local school

systems have already staged emergency practice drills to prepare school and emergency services officials for an actual crisis or violent situation.

#### *State Board Required Funding*

The bill requires the State board to include in its annual budget request the funds it considers necessary to effectively implement school safety programs. The Governor must include this funding in the annual State budget. MSDE has determined that \$33.8 million in State funding for fiscal 2002 is needed to implement school safety programs statewide. This amount includes \$6.7 million to develop school safety plans for each public school, \$26.9 million to install, operate, and maintain security devices (surveillance and metal detectors), and \$200,000 for administrative oversight. This estimate is based on a \$20,000 per school cost to install surveillance and video monitoring equipment and a \$5,000 per school cost to develop school safety plans.

The Department of Legislative Services advises that school safety plans could be developed with existing resources, since many local school systems have indicated that such plans are already in existence. This should reduce the potential fiscal impact by \$6.7 million.

#### *Maryland Emergency Management Agency*

The Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) coordinates the State's response to any major emergency or disaster. MEMA is organized within the Maryland Military Department and consists of approximately 30 emergency management professionals. The agency coordinates various federal programs and develops and implements emergency plans and procedures. MEMA is responsible for training emergency personnel and exercising statewide plans. MEMA advises that it has limited expertise on many of the criteria required for school safety plans. Accordingly, MEMA advises that five additional positions at an annualized cost of \$225,000 would be needed to perform the required responsibilities of the bill.

Kent and Prince George's counties advise that developing and updating school safety plans could be done with existing resources. School safety plans have been in existence for a number of years and are updated annually with the assistance of the Maryland Emergency Management Agency. Accordingly, MEMA should be able to perform the required responsibilities with existing resources. The only potential expense would be related to training exercises for local school systems, and any expense would depend upon the involvement of the agency.

### **Additional Information**

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**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Emergency Management Agency, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 15, 2000  
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Analysis by: Hiram L. Burch, Jr.

Direct Inquiries to:  
John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510