

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 273 (Senator Bromwell)

Economic and Environmental Affairs

Public Schools - Required Use of Teacher Assistants

This bill requires local boards of education to assign teacher assistants in all classes and for all school activities in kindergarten through the third grade. A teacher assistant may not work without supervision by a certified teacher and cannot supplant a certified teacher.

A teacher assistant must have either a high school diploma or a general equivalency diploma. A teacher assistant may not work in a class in which his/her child is a student.

This bill takes effect July 1, 2000.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: State retirement costs for local school employees could increase by approximately \$9.9 million annually beginning in FY 2003. Revenues would not be affected.

Local Effect: Local school expenditures could increase by \$104.3 million annually beginning in FY 2001. Local revenues would not be affected. **This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.**

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Local school systems have the discretion to assign instructional assistants for each elementary school classroom.

State Fiscal Effect: The State is responsible for paying retirement costs for certain employees of the local boards of education, including costs for instructional assistants. These costs would total approximately \$9.9 million in fiscal 2003. This is based on a \$90.7 million salary base and a 10.95% contribution rate. Since the State payments for teachers' retirement costs are based on the salary base in the second prior year, State retirement expenditures will not increase until fiscal 2003.

Local Fiscal Effect: As of October 1998, local school systems employed 23,560 elementary school teachers and 4,400 instructional assistants. It is estimated that approximately 9,100 public school teachers are assigned solely to kindergarten through third grade classes. This estimate is based on 227,000 full-time equivalent students attending kindergarten through the third grade and an average class size of 25 students. Most instructional assistants are assigned to pre-kindergarten classes; specialized classes such as art, music, and physical education; special education; and Title 1 classes for disadvantaged children.

This bill could require local school systems to hire an additional 8,000 instructional assistants to assist public school teachers in the classroom. This would increase local school expenditures by \$90.7 million for salaries and \$13.6 million for benefits, assuming a wage of \$9 per hour. This estimate also assumes that 25% of existing instructional aides working in elementary schools would be reassigned from their current responsibilities.

In Howard County, instructional assistants are provided in all elementary schools. The school system has a target ratio of 0.3 instructional assistants for each teacher, but the school system has not had the funds to implement the goals. The school system currently provides one instructional assistant per grade level at each school. In Howard County, instructional assistants are paid between \$9 and \$15 per hour depending upon years of service. Baltimore County assigns one instructional assistant per pre-kindergarten class. In addition, many elementary schools assign an instructional assistant for Title 1 and special education classes.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Baltimore County Public School System, Howard County Public School System, Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Legislative Services

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