

**Department of Legislative Services**

Maryland General Assembly

2001 Session

**FISCAL NOTE**

House Bill 1150 (Prince George's County Delegation)

Ways and Means

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**Prince George's County - Task Force on the Future Governance, Fiscal Responsibility, and Autonomy of the Prince George's County Board of Education  
PG 413-01**

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This bill establishes a 16-member Task Force on the Future Governance, Fiscal Responsibility, and Autonomy of the Prince George's County Board of Education to be appointed by June 20, 2001. The task force is charged with: (1) assessing the relationship between the school system and other county government agencies; (2) identifying current and potential education funding sources and addressing the issue of fiscal autonomy for the board; (3) examining alternative governance structures for the school system; (4) studying any other matter with respect to improving education in the county; and (5) developing recommendations. The task force must conduct at least four public forums in different geographic areas of the county between June and November of 2001 and must submit a report by December 20, 2001. The Department of Legislative Services will staff the task force.

The bill is effective June 1, 2001 and sunsets December 20, 2001.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** The Department of Legislative Services could staff the task force with existing personnel and resources.

**Local Effect:** Prince George's County would incur minimal costs for providing meeting space and for advertising public forums. The costs could be met with existing resources. Task force members would serve without compensation.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## Analysis

**Current Law:** None applicable.

**Background:** The Prince George's County Board of Education is an elected board, with one member elected from each of the county's nine school districts. In addition to these members, a student member is selected annually from the county at large by the Prince George's Regional Association of Student Governments.

Two recent audits highlighted some of the problems within the Prince George's County Public School System. The first, a performance audit mandated by the General Assembly, made 297 wide-ranging recommendations, including improvement of the trust and communication between system leaders. Chapter 565 of 1998, the School Accountability Funding for Excellence (SAFE) legislation, created the Prince George's County Public Schools Management Oversight Panel to monitor the school system's implementation of the audit recommendations. The oversight panel has identified as a primary objective improved communication among board members and between the board and the county Superintendent of Schools.

A second audit examining expenditures by board members was completed and submitted to the board in September 2000. The audit uncovered numerous examples of misused funds and made over 30 recommendations, including the full implementation of a prohibition on the use of board funds for alcoholic beverages, the development of guidelines prohibiting the use of board credit cards for personal needs, the establishment of set procedures for expense reimbursements, and repayment of improperly used funds. The Management Oversight Panel recommended that the board accept all of the audit recommendations and suggested that the board strengthen its code of ethics.

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## Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Prince George's County, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader –March 7, 2001  
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