

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2001 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 802 (Delegate Campbell)
Ways and Means

Elementary and Secondary Education - Mentoring Programs - Mandatory Standards

This bill requires each local board of education to establish a mentoring program for all newly hired teachers with fewer than two years of teaching experience. At a minimum, mentoring programs must require a teacher in the program to: (1) be assigned a mentor to provide information and support and to evaluate the new teacher; (2) be observed in the classroom by the mentor at least four times during the school year; and (3) submit a portfolio containing lesson plans, tests, and students' work. The Maryland State Department of Education must adopt regulations to ensure statewide uniformity of mentoring programs.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any additions or alterations to current teacher mentoring regulations could be adopted and implemented by the Maryland State Department of Education with existing resources.

Local Effect: All local boards of education have established a teacher mentoring program. Local school systems could make minor alterations to teacher mentoring procedures with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Teacher mentoring regulations require a mentor to: (1) hold an advanced professional certificate; (2) demonstrate knowledge of or training in adult learning theory and peer coaching techniques; (3) demonstrate a knowledge base and skills to address the performance evaluation criteria and outcomes to be met by the new teacher; and (4) possess a positive reference from a current or recent principal or supervisor. A mentor may not participate in a formal evaluation of a new teacher to whom the mentor is assigned. The regulations require teachers and their mentors to meet regularly.

Annual teacher mentoring program funding of \$7.9 million for Baltimore County and \$2 million for Prince George's County is set in statute and sunsets following fiscal 2002. Competitive teacher mentoring grants with a mandated total annual funding level of \$5 million are distributed to all 24 local school systems.

Background: The goal of Maryland's teacher mentoring programs is to enhance the educational achievement of students by improving the quality of the teacher workforce and reducing the turnover rate of teachers. Due to an increasing number of teachers retiring and an ongoing interest in reducing public school class sizes, Maryland hired 8,900 new teachers last year, compared with about 5,500 in prior years, and expects to hire up to 10,000 new teachers for the 2001-2002 school year.

In addition to teacher mentoring programs, Maryland has initiated several programs designed to improve teacher quality and retention. Through the State and Local Aid Program for Certification by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, a public school teacher pursuing national certification can have the certification fee paid by the State and the local school system. If a teacher achieves national certification, the State provides a \$2,000 per year salary enhancement. Many local school systems also provide additional monetary incentives for teachers with national certification. Teacher Certification Grants offer professional development opportunities for the purpose of reducing the number of provisionally certified teachers working in Maryland's public schools. Teacher Development Grants, established by the State in 1998, enhance training for teachers in dealing with at-risk students. The State also provides funds to eight regional professional development networks operating around the State. Other State incentive programs designed to attract and retain qualified teachers include graduate school tuition tax credits for teachers, a low-interest mortgage program, and signing bonuses for newly-hired teachers who graduated in the top 10% of their class.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

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