

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2001 Session

FISCAL NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 65 (Chairman, Budget and Taxation Committee and
Chairman, Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee)
(Departmental – Education)

Budget and Taxation and Economic and Environmental Affairs

Ways and Means

Education - Task Force on Alternative Learning Programs

This departmental bill establishes a 13-member Task Force to Study Alternative Learning Programs to be appointed by June 30, 2001. The task force must study the costs and benefits of using State funds to support alternative learning programs and must submit its report to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 15, 2001. The report must include recommendations on: (1) the types of students who could benefit from alternative learning programs; (2) the manner in which alternative learning programs should be funded and administered; (3) ways to ensure accountability in alternative learning programs funded by the State; and (4) ways in which alternative learning programs may be used to enhance community involvement in the education of students enrolled in public secondary schools. Task force members may not receive compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses. The Maryland State Department of Education must provide staff support for the task force.

The bill is effective July 1, 2001 and sunsets December 31, 2001.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The Maryland State Department of Education could staff the task force with existing resources. Travel reimbursements could be paid with existing resources.

Local Effect: Travel reimbursements for local government task force members could be paid with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: The Maryland State Department of Education has determined that this bill has a meaningful impact on small business (attached). (The attached assessment does not reflect amendments to the bill.) As amended, Legislative Services advises that the bill has no impact on small business.

Analysis

Current Law: None applicable.

Background: Because some youths seem to learn better through real life academic applications than they do in classroom settings, there has been a national trend towards the utilization of alternative learning programs that combine education and on-the-job training for youths who are at risk of dropping out of high school, who have dropped out of high school, who have been expelled from public schools, or who have graduated from high school without the necessary training to enter the workforce. Approximately 10,300 students in Maryland dropped out of high school during the 1998-1999 school year, a dropout rate of 4.2%. Dropout rates in Maryland's local school systems range from less than 2% in Montgomery County to almost 11% in Baltimore City.

Small Business Effect: The Maryland State Department of Education's meaningful impact estimate is based on the unamended version of the bill. Creating a task force to examine alternative learning programs would have no impact on small businesses.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader – January 16, 2001
ef/hlb Revised – Senate Third Reader – March 23, 2001

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