
By: **Delegates Zirkin and Morhaim**
Introduced and read first time: February 4, 2002
Assigned to: Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Maryland's Expanding Our Commitment to Excellence in Learning (EXCEL)**
3 **Pilot Program**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing the Maryland's Expanding Our Commitment to
5 Excellence in Learning (EXCEL) Pilot Program for the participation of certain
6 schools in order to reduce class size in certain grades; requiring the State
7 Department of Education to perform certain duties and adopt certain
8 regulations; requiring that schools participating in the Pilot Program perform
9 certain duties; providing funding for the Pilot Program; defining a certain term;
10 and generally relating to the Maryland's Expanding Our Commitment to
11 Excellence in Learning Pilot Program.

12 BY adding to
13 Article - Education
14 Section 5-212.1
15 Annotated Code of Maryland
16 (1999 Replacement Volume and 2001 Supplement)

17 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
18 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

19 **Article - Education**

20 5-212.1.

21 (A) IN THIS SECTION, "EXCEL PROGRAM" MEANS THE MARYLAND'S
22 EXPANDING OUR COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE IN LEARNING PILOT PROGRAM.

23 (B) THERE IS A PILOT PROGRAM IN THE STATE, KNOWN AS THE MARYLAND'S
24 EXPANDING OUR COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE IN LEARNING (EXCEL) PILOT
25 PROGRAM.

26 (C) THE PURPOSE OF THE EXCEL PROGRAM IS TO LIMIT CLASS SIZE IN
27 KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE THREE TO 15 OR FEWER STUDENTS PER CLASS IN
28 AT LEAST 50 SCHOOLS STATEWIDE.

1 (D) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL:

2 (1) DEVELOP AN APPLICATION FORM FOR SCHOOLS THAT DESIRE TO
3 PARTICIPATE IN THE EXCEL PROGRAM;

4 (2) ESTABLISH ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA UNDER WHICH THE DEPARTMENT
5 MAY SELECT THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS;

6 (3) SELECT AT LEAST 50 SCHOOLS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EXCEL
7 PROGRAM, OF WHICH THERE SHALL BE AT LEAST ONE SCHOOL BUT NOT MORE THAN
8 FIVE FROM EACH COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM;

9 (4) ENSURE THAT EACH SCHOOL PARTICIPATING IN THE EXCEL
10 PROGRAM IS A SCHOOL IN WHICH AT LEAST 30% OF THE REGISTERED STUDENTS ARE
11 ELIGIBLE FOR THE FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEAL PROGRAM;

12 (5) ENSURE THAT THE SCHOOLS THAT PARTICIPATE IN THE EXCEL
13 PROGRAM REPRESENT GEOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC BALANCE STATEWIDE;

14 (6) ENSURE THAT AN EVALUATION OF THE EXCEL PROGRAM IS
15 CONDUCTED BY AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION; AND

16 (7) ADOPT REGULATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THIS SECTION.

17 (E) EACH SCHOOL THAT PARTICIPATES IN THE EXCEL PROGRAM SHALL:

18 (1) REDUCE CLASS SIZE TO 15 IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER:

19 (I) IN THE 2002 - 2003 SCHOOL YEAR, IN AT LEAST KINDERGARTEN
20 AND FIRST GRADE;

21 (II) IN THE 2003 - 2004 SCHOOL YEAR, IN AT LEAST KINDERGARTEN
22 THROUGH SECOND GRADE; AND

23 (III) IN THE 2004 - 2005 SCHOOL YEAR, IN KINDERGARTEN THROUGH
24 THIRD GRADE;

25 (2) KEEP THE SCHOOL BUILDING OPEN EVERY DAY FROM EARLY IN THE
26 MORNING UNTIL LATE IN THE DAY;

27 (3) PROVIDE A RIGOROUS ACADEMIC CURRICULUM TO IMPROVE
28 ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT; AND

29 (4) ESTABLISH STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY
30 PROGRAMS.

31 (F) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2003 AND EACH SUCCEEDING FISCAL YEAR, THE
32 GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE FUNDS IN THE STATE BUDGET TO ESTABLISH THE
33 EXCEL PROGRAM AND TO ACCOMPLISH THE PURPOSE OF THIS SECTION.

1 (G) (1) ON OR BEFORE JULY 31, 2003, AND ANNUALLY THEREAFTER, THE
2 STATE SUPERINTENDENT SHALL REPORT THE STATUS OF THE EXCEL PROGRAM TO
3 THE GOVERNOR AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

4 (2) THE REPORT SHALL ASSESS THE EXCEL PROGRAM FOR ITS
5 EFFECTIVENESS AND SUCCESS IN IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN SCHOOLS
6 PARTICIPATING IN THE EXCEL PROGRAM.

7 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
8 July 1, 2002.