

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2002 Session

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 635 (Senator Mooney)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**Public Education - Maryland Adolescent Survey - Parental Notice and
Permission**

This bill requires public middle schools and high schools to obtain permission from a student's parent or guardian before the student may participate in the Maryland Adolescent Survey (MAS). A school must provide the parent or guardian of a participating student with an advance copy of MAS or an opportunity to see an advance copy of MAS.

The bill is effective July 1, 2002.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Local school expenditures would increase by an estimated \$36,000 in FY 2003 to provide written notice to parents whose children would be asked to participate in MAS. **This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.**

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Public schools selected to participate in MAS are not required to obtain parental consent before administering the surveys. In practice, parents are informed of the survey in the school orientation process, Parent Teacher Association meetings, parent newsletters, and other school announcements. Parents may ask that their children be

excluded from participation in MAS, and students are told that participation is not required.

Background: The Maryland Adolescent Survey is administered every other school year to a representative sample of approximately 36,000 students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12. MAS surveys students on their use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs; their perceptions about drug usage; their family situations; and their feelings about neighborhood and school safety. The MAS student questionnaire and the 2001 survey results can be viewed on the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) website.

To receive funding under the federal Safe and Drug Free Schools Program, states are required to administer drug use surveys to students. The proposed fiscal 2003 State budget includes \$6.4 million from the federal program.

State Fiscal Effect: MAS was most recently administered in April 2001 and will be administered again in December 2002 (fiscal 2003). MSDE estimates that the contract for the administration of MAS will cost approximately \$300,000 in fiscal 2003. This pays for the contractor to print the surveys, distribute the surveys to participating schools, collect the surveys, analyze the survey results, write a final report, and distribute the final report. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Department of Transportation, and MSDE share in the costs associated with MAS. In fiscal 2001, MAS was almost entirely financed with funding from the Cigarette Restitution Fund. It is unlikely that the bill would impact the cost of the MAS contract.

However, the surveys must be administered to a large number of students to ensure that results are valid and representative of Maryland's student population. If parents refuse to provide consent or fail to return consent forms to schools, federal funding through the Safe and Drug Free Schools Program could be jeopardized.

Local Expenditures: Local school systems would be required to send notification to the parents and guardians of 36,000 students who participate in MAS every other fiscal year. Estimating \$1 per notification for copying, postage, and return postage, local school system expenditures would increase by \$36,000 in fiscal 2003. This assumes that parents would not receive an actual copy of MAS in the mail. Instead, parents could be directed to a website where they could view a copy of MAS or could visit the school to examine a copy of MAS. If the actual survey is sent to every parent, local expenditures would be higher. In addition, if a greater number of parents must be notified to ensure the participation of a certain number of students, local school system costs could be higher.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 509 (Delegate Greenip) – Ways and Means.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 22, 2002
ncs/jr

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