

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2003 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 735 (Senator Brinkley)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Education - Required Number of School Days - State of Emergency

This emergency bill provides that a day when public schools are closed during a state of emergency declared by the Governor must be credited towards the required number of days that schools are in session during a school year.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Local school expenditures could decrease minimally in FY 2003 due to a reduction of at least four days in the required 2002-2003 school calendar. Expenditures could also decrease minimally in future years, depending on the number of days the State spends in states of emergency each year.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Public schools must be open for at least 180 days and 1,080 school hours at the elementary and middle school levels, or 1,170 hours at the high school level. Local school systems develop their school calendars based on these requirements.

Background: Due to the snowstorm on February 16, 2003, the Governor declared a state of emergency that was in effect through February 23, 2003. The state of emergency encompassed four school days.

At its February meeting, the State Board of Education provided the State Superintendent of Schools with the authority to grant local school systems reductions in the school calendar requirement of one to two days. The Superintendent must consider each school system's request on a case-by-case basis, and a request for a waiver of more than two days must be approved by the State board. The State board also authorized the Superintendent to allow school systems to open schools on State holidays in order to make up days that have been lost due to snow.

Local Fiscal Effect: Local school expenditures would decrease minimally due to a reduced number of school days. Most school-related costs, such as salaries, textbooks, and technology equipment, would not be impacted by the legislation. However, some variable costs, such as school maintenance, student transportation, and food service, could decrease minimally.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: A similar bill that would have applied exclusively to the 1995-1996 school year was introduced in 1996 as HB 1050. The bill was passed in the House of Delegates but received an unfavorable report from the Senate Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee.

Cross File: None.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 10, 2003
ncs/jr

Analysis by: Mark W. Collins

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510