

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2003 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 578
Ways and Means

(Delegate Smigiel, *et al.*)

**Education - Public Schools - Academic Classes and Extracurricular Activity -
Participation by Home-Schooled Students**

This bill authorizes a public school to allow a home-schooled student to participate in extracurricular activities and the academic curriculum at the public school. To qualify, a home-schooled student must participate in home instruction under written agreement with the local school superintendent and must be eligible to attend the public school. Extracurricular activities include interscholastic athletics, music and drama programs, student organizations, and other programs sponsored by the public school. Participation in academic curriculum by home-schooled students is limited to four course offerings per year, chosen from mathematics, science, languages, art, and music. If space in extracurricular activities or academic courses is limited, students who attend the public school must be given priority over home-schooled students.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any increased costs associated with a greater number of home-schooled students participating in statewide assessment programs could be met with existing resources.

Local Effect: Allowing home-schooled students to participate in extracurricular and academic programming would not materially affect local school expenditures.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Public schools are not statutorily authorized to allow home-schooled students to participate in extracurricular activities and academic curriculums at public schools.

Background: There are approximately 19,400 home-schooled students in Maryland, accounting for approximately 1.9% of all kindergarten to grade 12 students in the State. Based on an August 1, 2001 report from the U.S. Department of Education, this is slightly higher than the percentage of children ages 5 through 17 who are home-schooled nationwide.

Some school districts across the country have established centers where families may enroll their children in classes or obtain resources and instructional support. Such arrangements are called shared schooling, dual enrollment, or assisted home-schooling. Some school districts also allow home-schooled students to attend public school part-time, and about 18% of home-schooled students exercise this privilege. In addition, approximately 11% of home-schooled students use books or materials from a public school, and 8% use public school curriculums. Approximately 6% of home-schooled students participate in extracurricular activities provided by public schools or school districts.

State Fiscal Effect: Authorizing public schools to enroll home-schooled children in extracurricular activities would have no impact on State finances. However, authorizing public schools to provide academic programming to home-schooled students could encourage more home-schooled students to participate in statewide academic assessment programs.

By regulation, home-schooled students currently have the right to participate in statewide assessments, but many do not exercise this privilege. The State pays the costs (approximately \$30 per pupil) that are associated with preparing, administering, and scoring the assessments. If the bill encourages more home-schooled students to participate in assessments, costs for the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) could increase minimally. Any additional costs are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within the existing budget for MSDE.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: Similar bills that applied to home-schooled students and private school students but did not apply to academic programming were introduced in the last two legislative sessions. HB 1088 of 2002 was not reported out of the House Ways and

Means Committee, and HB 1072 of 2001 received an unfavorable report by the House Ways and Means Committee.

Cross File: None.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 4, 2003
mdf/hlb

Analysis by: Mark W. Collins

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