

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2004 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

House Bill 83 (Delegate Ross)  
Ways and Means

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**Education - Character Education Programs - Study**

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This bill requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), in collaboration with each local school system, to conduct a study of character education programs. The study must include an evaluation of character education programs and the models that have been successful, the costs of implementing character education programs, and the feasibility of adding character education as a requirement to the State curriculum. The State Superintendent of Schools must report findings from the study to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 15, 2004.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2004 and terminates December 31, 2004.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** MSDE could conduct the study with existing resources.

**Local Effect:** Local school system personnel could participate in the study at no additional cost to the systems.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Background:** MSDE advises that it and each local school system have staff assigned to character education initiatives and that ongoing programs and collaborative efforts have been established for character education.

In a publication from 2000, the National Conference of State Legislatures listed several common guidelines for character education instruction:

- identification of the core ethical values to be taught;
- instruction in the definition of moral behavior and the process for making decisions based on ethical values;
- reinforcement of the core values throughout a student's school experiences;
- opportunities for students to demonstrate the values being taught;
- commitment to character education values by both students and staff;
- recruitment of parents and community members as partners; and
- evaluation of the program's effectiveness.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** SJ 13 of 2002 would have urged local school systems to develop character education programs in their schools. The resolution passed in the Senate but was not reported out of the House Committee on Ways and Means. Bills to establish mandatory character education programs in all local school systems were introduced in the 2000 and 2001 legislative sessions as SB 737 and SB 754, respectively. Both bills received unfavorable reports from the Senate Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee.

**Cross File:** None.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 12, 2004  
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