

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2004 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 524
Appropriations

(Delegate Myers, *et al.*)

Task Force to Study Leasing New Public School Facilities

This bill establishes a 13-member Task Force to Study Leasing New Public School Facilities. The Interagency Committee on School Construction (IAC), the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), and the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) must provide staff support for the task force. The task force must be appointed and begin its deliberations by August 1, 2004, and report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by January 31, 2005.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2004 and terminates on January 31, 2005.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for IAC, MSDE, DBM, and DLS are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The task force must study and make recommendations regarding the feasibility of leasing new public school facilities including: (1) evaluating the potential costs and benefits of the State and local governments leasing new public school facilities; (2) comparing the leasing of schools to the current practice of constructing new school buildings; (3) researching and reviewing current State regulations to determine if

regulations permit the leasing of newly constructed school facilities; and (4) studying any other issue that the task force determines relevant to the evaluation of leasing new school facilities.

Current Law: The Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act of 2002 established a Task Force to Study Public School Facilities. The task force remains in effect until May 1, 2004.

Background: The Task Force to Study Public School Facilities was established in 2002 to look at whether the State's school facilities are adequate to sustain programs provided for under the Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act and supported by proposed funding levels. The task force was required to examine the equity of the State's school construction program, particularly the equity of the State and local cost shares for school construction projects; whether to continue the Aging Schools Program as a permanent program; and any other issues the task force determines are relevant to evaluate the adequacy and equity of the State's school construction program. Faced with the difficult tasks of defining adequacy and seeking equity in school construction in a time of budget deficits, the task force submitted a preliminary report in December of 2002 and requested an extension of its mandate into 2003. The General Assembly agreed, extending the task force until May 1, 2004. The task force is scheduled to issue a final report in early 2004.

Additional Comments: MSDE advises that existing staff would be unable to support the task force and that a consultant would need to be hired for seven months at a cost of \$13,000. The need for the consultant results from two unfilled registered architect positions in the School Facilities Branch.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education, Public School Construction Program, Department of Budget and Management, Department of Legislative Services

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lc/ljm

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