

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

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

House Bill 525 (Delegate Myers, *et al.*)  
 Appropriations

**Task Force to Study the Feasibility of Using Standard School Construction Plans**

This bill establishes a 10-member Task Force to Study the Feasibility of Using Standard School Construction Plans. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must provide staff support for the task force. The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, and the House Ways and Means Committee on or before December 1, 2004.

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

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures could increase by \$44,700 in FY 2005. This reflects the cost of a six-month consultant contract within MSDE. Revenues would not be affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	44,700	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$44,700)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

*Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate effect*

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The task force must: (1) study and make recommendations regarding the feasibility of developing and using standard school building construction plans for constructing all State school buildings; (2) develop potential criteria for standard construction plans including consideration of the needs of urban, suburban, and rural schools; (3) study projected costs of plan development, periodic updates to standard plans to account for various building and zoning code compliance, complying with various levels of State and local government zoning and building codes, and developing alternative plans for the individual needs of a school; and (4) study the potential savings to the State and local school districts of using standard school building construction plans.

**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. A final report is expected to be issued in early 2004.

**Background:** The development of public school construction documents, such as architectural and engineering plans, accounts for approximately 6% of the total construction cost for a public school project. Since architectural and engineering plans are ineligible costs under the State Public School Construction Program, local school systems are required to pay the full cost to develop the plans.

The concept of standard statewide plans has been raised several times in the past, including during the deliberations of the Task Force to Examine the School Construction Program, chaired by Treasurer William S. James in 1985. The concept of standard plans has repeatedly been rejected.

**State Fiscal Effect:** Existing MSDE staff would be unable to support the task force due to two unfilled registered architect positions in the School Facilities Branch. MSDE does not anticipate filling these vacant positions for several months and therefore a consultant would need to be hired. The cost of a six-month consultant contract is estimated at \$44,700 in fiscal 2005. This reflects a minimum of two work days per week for two registered architects and one work day per week for an administrative assistant.

---

## Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

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

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

---

Analysis by: Hiram L. Burch Jr.

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