

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2004 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 979
Ways and Means

(Delegate Kelley, *et al.*)

Education – Elementary and Secondary Schools – Parental Involvement Plans

This bill requires each local school system and each school to develop and implement parental involvement plans in collaboration with parents. Local school systems must also develop and implement parental involvement grading systems evaluating the participation of parents in schools.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2004.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill affects the operations of local school systems.

Local Effect: Local school expenditures could increase significantly for additional school personnel. Expenditures could also be incurred by local school systems for printing and for the development of new databases to track parental involvement.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary: By September 1, 2004, each local school system and each school must develop and implement parental involvement plans designed to enhance parental involvement in children's education. At the beginning of each school year, schools must hold "Parents Make the Difference" evenings where parents must be given a report on the state of the school, an overview of the school year, and a parental involvement family kit. The kits must include a list of the ways parents can become involved in schools, a list of

school activities in which parental involvement is encouraged, an explanation of the parental involvement grading system, and a survey for parents that assesses their interest in volunteer activities available at the school. Using the results of the survey, each school must publish a volunteer resource book that lists the interests and availability of parent volunteers. Only school staff may use the resource books.

The principal of each school must designate one staff member to act as the school's parent facilitator. The parent facilitator must organize staff training that enhances understanding of effective parental involvement strategies and the importance of administrative leadership in creating a climate conducive to parental participation. The State Board of Education must require at least two hours of parental involvement staff training per year as professional development.

Current Law: Although all local school systems and schools involve parents in different ways, they are not statutorily required to implement parental involvement plans.

Background: In fall 2003, the State Superintendent of Schools appointed Maryland's Parent Advisory Council (M-PAC) to advise the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent on parental involvement issues. M-PAC is comprised of approximately 150 parents and advocates. Its mission is to help the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) achieve Goal 5 of its Achievement Matters Most initiative: to have parents involved in their children's education. The objectives for Goal 5 are:

- schools and school systems will communicate more frequently and clearly with families and communities;
- schools will help parents and legal guardians enhance their parenting skills and will share with them activities to promote academic success;
- all school systems will adopt a family involvement policy aligned with the State's policy; and
- schools will help parents and legal guardians improve school and student performance.

M-PAC is charged with submitting recommendations to allow the State, local school systems, and schools to accomplish the objectives.

Local Expenditures: Local school expenditures would increase significantly beginning in fiscal 2005. The largest increase would most likely be for new school personnel. The legislation directs principals in every school to designate a parent facilitator. Although it

may be possible for some schools to fulfill this requirement without adding personnel, many schools would probably need a new part-time staff member to act as a parent facilitator. This assumes that the role of a parent facilitator would be broader than simply organizing staff training as stated in the bill. If half of the State's 1,400 public schools need a half-time parent facilitator at an average cost of \$25,000 per year (including benefits), local school expenditures would increase by a total of \$17.5 million annually. Schools that do not need to add personnel may still need to provide stipends to teachers or other school personnel who agree to act as parent facilitators.

In addition to school personnel, schools would also incur new printing costs. The bill requires each parental involvement family kit to include a copy of the school's parental involvement plan and several additional documents. At the "Parents Make the Difference" evening, additional reports and documents are required. Each school is also required to publish a volunteer resource book. Some of these requirements probably duplicate existing documents that will be provided to parents with or without this legislation, but in total, the number of documents required by this bill would necessitate increased printing costs for most schools.

Finally, local school systems could also incur new costs for databases to track parental involvement. The bill requires local school systems to develop and implement parental grading systems and to survey parents about their volunteering interests. Local school expenditures could increase to the extent that these initiatives require new database systems or upgrades to existing systems. New data entry expenses could also be incurred.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

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Analysis by: Mark W. Collins

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