

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2005 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

House Bill 1122  
Ways and Means

(Prince George's County Delegation)

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**Prince George's County - Education - Parental Involvement Plans  
PG 403-05**

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This bill requires Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) and each public school in the system to develop and implement parental involvement plans in collaboration with parents. PGCPS must also develop and implement parental involvement grading systems evaluating the participation of parents in schools.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2005.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** Prince George's County school expenditures could increase significantly for additional school personnel to act as parent facilitators. Expenditures could also be incurred for printing and for the development of a database to track parental involvement. **This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.**

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

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**Analysis**

**Bill Summary:** By September 1, 2005, PGCPS and each school in the system must develop and implement parental involvement plans designed to enhance parental involvement in children's education. At the beginning of each school year, county 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 do so.

**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 130 parents and advocates. Its mission is to help the Maryland State Department of Education 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.

In February 2005, M-PAC reported its preliminary recommendations to members of the State Board of Education. The recommendations included the appointment of a parent

member to the State board and the establishment of benchmarks for parent involvement that could be incorporated into annual accountability reports. M-PAC will be holding public forums in every school system in Maryland during spring of 2005 to discuss its preliminary recommendations. With the additional feedback gathered through the public forums, M-PAC plans to finalize its recommendations by July 2005 when it will report to the State board again.

**Local Expenditures:** PGCPs expenditures would increase significantly beginning in fiscal 2006. The largest increase would most likely be for new school personnel. The legislation directs the principal 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 need new part-time staff members to act as parent facilitators. 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 county's 204 public schools need half-time parent facilitators at an average annual cost of \$25,000 per facilitator (including benefits), PGCPs school expenditures would increase by \$5.1 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, the county's public schools could incur increased 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 many county schools.

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

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** A similar bill, HB 979 of 2004, would have applied to all local school systems. The bill received an unfavorable report from the Ways and Means Committee.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Prince George's County, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 18, 2005  
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