

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2005 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 349
Appropriations

(Delegate Krebs, *et al.*)

Higher Education - Teacher Education Reading Programs - Alignment with
Federal Law

This bill requires public institutions of higher education that have teacher education programs to provide teacher education reading curricula that are aligned with the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Public institutions of higher education must revise their teacher education courses to place strong emphasis on phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, fluency, and comprehension. In order to receive State funding under the Sellinger formula, private institutions of higher education that have teacher education programs must comply with the same requirements.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill codifies the current practices of teacher education programs in Maryland institutions of higher education.

Local Effect: None. The bill codifies the current practices of teacher education programs in Maryland's community colleges.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: A public institution of higher education that offers a teacher education program is not specifically required to align its reading curricula with NCLB.

To qualify for State funding, a private institution of higher education must: (1) be a nonprofit institution; (2) be approved by the Maryland Higher Education Commission

(MHEC); (3) be accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools; (4) have awarded degrees to at least one class of students; (5) maintain at least one earned degree program other than a seminarian or theological program; and (6) submit proposals for new or modified programs to MHEC.

Background: NCLB, which was signed into law in January 2002, requires the use of scientifically-based teaching methods. Reading First was one of the new programs authorized by NCLB. It offers competitive federal grants for the purpose of enhancing reading programs for children in kindergarten to third grade through teacher professional development, diagnostic assessment of students' abilities, the purchase of reading materials, and any other ongoing efforts to improve reading instruction. Phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, fluency, and comprehension must be emphasized in the programs. The proposed fiscal 2006 State budget includes \$9.9 million in federal funds from the Reading First program.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) advises that a committee of local school system and higher education representatives met in spring 2004 to specifically ensure that teacher education reading curricula in Maryland institutions of higher education meet the criteria established in the bill. Likewise, the University System of Maryland, Morgan State University, the Maryland Association of Community Colleges, and the Maryland Independent Colleges and Universities Association all advise that their teacher education programs are meeting the requirements of the bill.

In addition to institutions of higher education, MSDE advises that local school systems are incorporating phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, fluency, and comprehension into their professional development programs.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HJ 11 of 2004 would have urged institutions of higher education that receive State funds to align their teacher education reading curricula with the requirements of NCLB and emphasize phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, fluency, and comprehension. No action was taken on the joint resolution by the House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Independent College and University Association, Morgan State University, University System of Maryland, Maryland Association of Community Colleges, Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Higher

Education Commission, U.S. Department of Education, Department of Legislative Services

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mp/rhh

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