

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2006 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 1094 (Senators Lawlah and Exum)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Prince George's County - Board of Education - Election of Members

This bill makes changes to the composition, compensation, and protocols of the Prince George's County Board of Education that will be elected at the 2006 general election.

In addition, the bill restores the title of county superintendent of schools for the chief executive officer of Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) and provides for the continuation of the school system's Chief Academic Officer, Chief Financial Officer, and Chief Accountability Officer. The full text of the employment contracts for these four positions must be public record.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2006 unless the termination date on the current governance structure for the Prince George's County Board of Education is altered.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Prince George's County school expenditures would increase by an estimated \$15,750 in FY 2007 and by approximately \$27,000 annually thereafter due to higher compensation levels for board of education members.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The bill changes the composition of the Prince George's County Board of Education that will be elected at the 2006 general election. One member must be elected from each of nine school board districts established in the bill, and members' terms must be staggered according to the results of the election. The terms of the board chair and vice chair are also increased from one year to two years.

The bill increases compensation levels for board members and decreases the maximum amount a board member may be reimbursed for travel and other expenses. The chair of the board is entitled to receive \$24,000 per year, and other members are entitled to receive \$23,000 each. All members may receive up to \$5,000 in expense reimbursements.

The bill provides that five elected board of education members are needed to establish a quorum unless there are two or more vacancies on the board, in which case four elected members represent a quorum. A quorum must be present for the board to take any action, and the affirmative vote of a majority of a quorum is required to pass a motion.

The bill also adds the chairs of the Prince George's County Senate and House delegations to the Shared Space Council for Prince George's County.

Current Law: The Prince George's County Board of Education consists of nine members appointed jointly by the Governor and county executive. The board appoints a Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and the CEO selects a Chief Academic Officer, a Chief Financial Officer, and a Chief Accountability Officer. This governance structure is scheduled to terminate with the election of new board members at the November 2006 general election.

The Prince George's County Board of Education will revert to an elected board in December 2006. At the November 2006 election, one board member will be chosen from each of five school board districts and four members will be elected from the county at large. The board chair is entitled to compensation of \$19,000 per year, and other board members are entitled to \$18,000 each. In addition, each board member may be reimbursed up to \$7,000 per year for travel and other expenses. The number of affirmative votes needed for passage of a board motion is: (1) six if the student member is voting; (2) five if the student member is not voting; or (3) five if there is one or more vacancy on the board.

The 23-member Shared Space Council for Prince George's County considers alternative uses for any vacant public schools in the county.

Background: Chapter 289 of 2002 disbanded the elected Prince George's County Board of Education and reorganized the PGCPS governance structure under a board appointed jointly by the Governor and the county executive. When the legislation was enacted, PGCPS was working to accomplish nearly 300 broad recommendations made in a performance audit mandated by the General Assembly. The system was also struggling with conflicts among board of education members and between board members and the county superintendent of schools. The appointed board of education is scheduled to revert to an elected board in 2006.

Currently, 14 counties in Maryland elect their boards of education. Of these, six elect all school board members from the county at large and three elect all members from individual school board districts. The other five counties with elected boards have a mix of members elected from the county at large and from individual districts.

The local board of education with the highest annual compensation level for its members is the Montgomery County board; the president of the board earns \$22,500 per year and other members earn \$18,500. The members of several local boards of education earn no compensation.

Local Expenditures: The bill increases annual board member compensation by \$5,000 per member and decreases maximum annual expense reimbursements by \$2,000 per member. Assuming the full reimbursement allowance would be used, the net annual increase in Prince George's County school expenditures would be \$27,000. The elected board will take office in December 2006, increasing fiscal 2007 expenditures by an estimated \$15,750. This estimate assumes seven months of increased compensation. After fiscal 2007, the full annualized expenditure increase of \$27,000 would be incurred each year.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: A similar bill was introduced last year as HB 1117. The House passed the bill, but the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee took no action on it.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Legislative Services

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