

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2006 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 745

(Delegate Gilleland)

Ways and Means

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Education - Student Discipline - Conferring in Face-to-Face Meeting

This bill requires a principal to confer in a face-to-face meeting with a teacher who refers a student to the principal. The meeting must take place before the student may be returned to the teacher's class, and a principal must keep records of the required face-to-face meetings. If a required face-to-face meeting does not take place, a written report must be submitted to the appropriate school employees and the local board of education. The State Board of Education must adopt regulations regarding face-to-face meetings.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The State Board of Education could adopt regulations for face-to-face meetings with existing personnel and resources.

Local Effect: Local school expenditures could increase minimally in some school systems to conduct and record face-to-face meetings.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: If a student is referred to a principal for disruptive behavior, the principal or the principal's designee must confer with the teacher who referred the student. If a student has been suspended or expelled, the principal or the principal's designee may not return the student to the classroom without conferring with the teacher who referred the student, other appropriate school personnel, the student, and the student's parent or guardian. There is no requirement that any of these meetings be face-to-face.

Background: The number of suspensions, the number of students suspended, and the percentage of students suspended in each local school system during the 2004-2005 school year are shown in **Exhibit 1**. In total, there were 124,540 suspensions involving 71,029 different students. The largest numbers of suspensions were recorded in Baltimore City and Baltimore and Prince George's counties. Although these school systems had above-average percentages of students suspended, they did not have the highest percentages in the State. Greater percentages of students were suspended from the Somerset (16.7%), Dorchester (15.4%), Charles (13.5%), Kent (13.3%), and Wicomico (13.3%) county school systems. The most common categories of suspensions were disrespect/insubordination/disruption and attacks/threats/fighting. MSDE does not collect data on incidents of disruptive behavior that do not result in suspension.

Exhibit 1
Suspensions by Local School System
2004-2005 School Year

	<u>Suspension</u> <u>Offenses</u>	<u>Students</u> <u>Suspended</u>	<u>Percent of</u> <u>Students</u> <u>Suspended</u>
Allegany	964	596	6.3%
Anne Arundel	13,832	7,246	10.0%
Baltimore City*	16,886	10,108	11.6%
Baltimore	20,331	11,522	11.1%
Calvert	1,862	1,166	6.8%
Caroline	1,370	595	11.5%
Carroll	2,050	1,207	4.2%
Cecil	2,335	1,276	8.0%
Charles	6,074	3,407	13.5%
Dorchester	1,383	701	15.4%
Frederick	5,234	2,498	6.4%
Garrett	264	191	4.2%
Harford	6,059	3,229	8.2%
Howard	3,162	2,028	4.3%
Kent	672	317	13.3%
Montgomery	9,408	6,335	4.6%
Prince George's	20,776	12,759	9.7%
Queen Anne's	884	528	7.2%

	<u>Suspension Offenses</u>	<u>Students Suspended</u>	<u>Percent of Students Suspended</u>
St. Mary's	3,007	1,387	8.7%
Somerset	1,020	467	16.7%
Talbot	418	268	6.2%
Washington	1,292	890	4.4%
Wicomico	4,550	1,846	13.3%
Worcester	<u>707</u>	<u>462</u>	<u>7.2%</u>
State	124,540	71,029	8.4%

*Includes suspensions from Edison Schools.

Source: Maryland State Department of Education

Local Fiscal Effect: There were 124,540 suspensions in fiscal 2005, an average of nearly 90 per public school in Maryland. This figure does not include the number of times students were referred to principals' offices for disruptive behavior but were not suspended. The total number of face-to-face meetings that a principal or a principal's designee would have to initiate, therefore, is unknown but is at least 125,000 and probably much higher. It is also not known how often principals engage in face-to-face meetings now to fulfill the existing requirement that they confer with teachers who refer students to their offices.

It is assumed that most schools could meet the requirements of the bill with existing resources; however, administrative costs associated with holding, documenting, and maintaining records of face-to-face meetings could increase for schools with high suspension rates. Assuming face-to-face meetings would often be relatively brief, any additional costs would not be significant.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

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