

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2006 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

House Bill 866  
Ways and Means

(Delegates Bates and Miller)

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**Education - Full-Day Kindergarten and Prekindergarten Programs - Alternative Providers**

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This bill requires each local board of education to determine and report its capacity to provide required kindergarten and prekindergarten programs each year, beginning with its 2007 update to the comprehensive master plan. If the local board's capacity is insufficient to meet the requirements that full-day kindergarten be provided to all students and prekindergarten be provided to all disadvantaged four-year-old children, the county must contract with alternative early learning and child care providers to provide the services. A local board of education may only contract with a provider that is licensed by the Department of Human Resources and is accredited or commits in writing to become accredited prior to the beginning of the school year. By May 31 of each year, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must provide the local boards that do not have sufficient kindergarten and prekindergarten capacity with an inventory of the alternative early learning and child care providers in the county.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. MSDE already takes inventory of alternative early learning and child care providers and will continue to do so with existing budgeted resources.

**Local Effect:** None. Local school systems have the authority to contract with alternative early learning and child care providers under current law and will be required to do so if other means of meeting the kindergarten and prekindergarten requirements are not identified.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## Analysis

**Current Law:** All local school systems are required to provide full-day kindergarten to all students and offer prekindergarten to economically disadvantaged four-year-old children by the 2007-2008 school year. Local school systems submit updates to their comprehensive master plans by October 15 of each year. Comprehensive master plans must include the strategies the local boards of education will use to ensure that the required programs are available by the 2007-2008 school year.

Chapter 585 of 2005 requires MSDE to license child care centers.

**Background:** The Commission on Education Finance, Equity, and Excellence (Thornton Commission) recommended that full-day kindergarten programs be provided for all students and that prekindergarten programs be available to all disadvantaged four-year-old children. These recommendations were codified in the Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act of 2002, and local school systems are required to provide the services by the 2007-2008 school year. Increased formula funding under the Act is tied to these mandates. Funding for full-day kindergarten is provided through an increase (from 0.5 to 1.0) in the kindergarten full-time equivalent enrollment rate used to calculate State aid. Funding for prekindergarten programs is provided through the compensatory education formula.

Local school systems have been providing prekindergarten programs for high risk children for many years, with some of the funding for the programs coming from Extended Elementary Education Program grants from the State. In the 2005-2006 school year, 81% of Maryland kindergartners attend full-day programs and 11 school systems provide full-day programs for all kindergarten students. According to data from MSDE, only Carroll County provides full-day kindergarten for less than half of its kindergarten students. **Exhibit 1** shows the total number of kindergarten students, the number of kindergarten students in full-day programs, and the percentage of kindergarten students attending full-day programs in each school system.

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**Exhibit 1**  
**Kindergarten Students in Full-Day Programs**  
**2005-2006 School Year**

<u>School System</u>	<u>Kindergarten Students</u>	<u>Full-day K Students</u>	<u>Percent Full-day</u>
Allegany	643	643	100%
Anne Arundel	4,871	2,841	58%
Baltimore City	6,146	6,146	100%
Baltimore	7,204	6,040	84%
Calvert	1,070	814	76%
Caroline	402	402	100%
Carroll	1,885	732	39%
Cecil	1,060	816	77%
Charles	1,457	856	59%
Dorchester	314	314	100%
Frederick	2,694	1,732	64%
Garrett	313	313	100%
Harford	2,815	1,968	70%
Howard	2,849	1,521	53%
Kent	159	159	100%
Montgomery	9,384	7,550	80%
Prince George's	8,410	8,410	100%
Queen Anne's	495	424	86%
St. Mary's	1,044	872	84%
Somerset	220	220	100%
Talbot	294	294	100%
Washington	1,620	1,200	74%
Wicomico	1,119	1,119	100%
Worcester	391	391	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>56,859</b>	<b>45,777</b>	<b>81%</b>

Source: Maryland State Department of Education

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**Local Fiscal Effect:** Local school systems are already required to include in their comprehensive master plan updates the strategies they will use to ensure that the Bridge

to Excellence kindergarten and prekindergarten requirements are met. Furthermore, they have the authority to contract with licensed alternative providers to meet the requirements. It is anticipated that, under current law, alternative providers will be used by local school systems that are unable to meet the requirements through other means.

To the extent that the bill results in greater use of private providers, there could be a decrease in local capital expenditures for public school facilities if plans to improve or add to existing school facilities could be delayed or eliminated.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** A similar bill was introduced last year as HB 739. It received an unfavorable report from the House Committee on Ways and Means.

**Cross File:** None.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 2, 2006  
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