

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2006 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 1466
Ways and Means

(Delegate Rudolph)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Education - Task Force on Universal Preschool Education

This bill establishes a Task Force on Universal Preschool Education to recommend to the legislature a conceptual framework for increasing access to early childhood education opportunities for families. A final report is due by December 1, 2007. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), the Maryland Higher Education Commission, and the University System of Maryland will provide staff support for the task force.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2006 and terminates June 30, 2008.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The assigned agencies could provide staff support for the task force with available personnel. It is assumed that expense reimbursements for task force members could be paid from existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: Local personnel assigned to the task force could participate with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: By the beginning of the 2007-2008 school year, all school systems must make publicly-funded prekindergarten programs available to all economically disadvantaged four-year-old children.

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.

According to data from MSDE, there are 24,219 students attending public prekindergarten programs in the 2005-2006 school year. The number of prekindergarten students in each school system is shown in **Exhibit 1**. Based on the public kindergarten enrollment of nearly 57,000 students, prekindergarten enrollments would have to increase by approximately 33,000 students to achieve universal prekindergarten for four-year-olds. Extending the programs to three-year-olds would result in even greater increases.

Exhibit 1
Prekindergarten Enrollment
September 30, 2005

Allegany	402	Charles	782	Prince George's	4,934
Anne Arundel	1,287	Dorchester	204	Queen Anne's	343
Baltimore City	3,336	Frederick	727	St. Mary's	741
Baltimore	3,657	Garrett	94	Somerset	155
Calvert	361	Harford	895	Talbot	188
Caroline	250	Howard	811	Washington	432
Carroll	242	Kent	130	Wicomico	478
Cecil	485	Montgomery	3,010	Worcester	275

Source: Maryland State Department of Education

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education, University System of Maryland, Maryland Higher Education Commission, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 1, 2006
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