

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2008 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 503

(Delegate Walker, *et al.*)

Ways and Means

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Task Force on Student Physical Fitness in Maryland Public Schools

This bill establishes a Task Force on Student Physical Fitness in Maryland Public Schools to study the advisability and the effects and costs of requiring public schools to provide students with a minimum level of physical activity or physical education each week. The Maryland State Department of Education must provide staff support for the task force, and a report is due by November 20, 2008.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2008 and terminates June 30, 2009.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Travel expense reimbursements for task force members could be supported with existing budgeted resources. MSDE could provide staff support for the task force with existing personnel.

Local Effect: Local officials appointed to the task force could serve without affecting local budgets.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Each public school must have a program of physical education that is given in a planned and sequential manner.

Background: Comparing data from separate administrations of the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey over a span of approximately 25 years reveals that the percentage of children who are overweight tripled from a 1976-1980 administration of the survey to a 2003-2004 administration. The pattern of increases is relatively consistent across age groups, genders, and racial backgrounds. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that the percentage of adolescents participating in daily physical education in schools decreased from 42% in 1991 to 28% in 2003 and that less than one-third of high school students meet recommended levels of physical activity.

The National Parent-Teacher Association has adopted a resolution that urges local PTAs “to support daily physical education programs as an integral part of children’s education.” State legislatures have also acted to address children’s physical activity levels. A briefing document from the National Conference of State Legislatures indicates that 21 states in 2005 enacted legislation to refine or increase physical education requirements or encourage positive physical education programs.

MSDE advises that physical education programs in the 24 local school systems vary widely. For example, some elementary schools provide just 30 minutes of physical education per week, while a small percentage of public elementary schools in Maryland may provide as much as 120 or 125 minutes per week. Minutes in physical education for middle school students also vary, although the total time spent in physical education is generally higher than in elementary schools. The minimum and maximum amounts of time in physical education for elementary and middle schools in each school system are shown in **Exhibit 1**.

Exhibit 1
Minimum and Maximum Minutes in Physical Education
As of November 2007

<u>School System</u>	<u>Elementary Schools</u>		<u>Middle Schools</u>	
	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
Allegany	40	45	90	150
Anne Arundel	30	60	86	172
Baltimore City	30	90	225	450
Baltimore	50	120	90	225
Calvert	45	90	225	225
Caroline	45	90	235	235
Carroll	90	90	90	270
Cecil	90	90	168	252
Charles	60	90	225 for 3 qtrs.	225
Dorchester	45	125	90	150
Frederick	90	100	250 for 3 qtrs.	
Garrett	50	60	74	200
Harford	45	90	150	250
Howard	90	90	150 for 1 qtr.	150 for 2 qtrs.
Kent	90	90	95	120
Montgomery	30	60	225	250
Prince George's	50	75	450	450
Queen Anne's	90	120	50	200
St. Mary's	67	67	90	135
Somerset	50	60	180	270
Talbot	45	90	225 for 1 qtr.	
Washington	55	110	225	225
Wicomico	120 over 6 days		120 over 6 days	
Worcester	60	90	60	90

Source: Maryland State Department of Education

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 955 (Senator Harrington) – Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 10, 2008
mll/rhh Revised - House Third Reader - April 21, 2008

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