

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2008 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Revised**

Senate Bill 955 (Senator Harrington)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Ways and Means

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**Task Force on Student Physical Fitness in Maryland Public Schools**

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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.

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**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.

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**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**.

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**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

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## Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** HB 503 (Delegate Walker, *et al.*) – Ways and Means.

**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  
ncs/rhh Revised - Senate Third Reader - April 1, 2008  
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