

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2008 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 1158
Ways and Means

(Delegate Stein, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Safe Schools Reporting Act

This bill amends the Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005 to allow a school staff member to report an incident of harassment or intimidation.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2008.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill applies to local school systems.

Local Effect: Local school systems could comply with the bill's provisions with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The Safe Schools Reporting Act requires local boards of education to report incidents of harassment or intimidation against public school students that occur on public school property, at school activities or events, or on school buses. An incident of harassment or intimidation may be reported by a student or the parent, guardian, or close adult relative of a student on standard Victim of Harassment or Intimidation Report forms created by the Maryland State Department of Education. Each local board must submit summaries of the forms to the State Board of Education, and MSDE must submit an annual report with aggregate information collected from the forms. The Act is scheduled to terminate June 30, 2009.

Background: Under the Safe Schools Reporting Act, MSDE has compiled forms and submitted reports describing more than 3,200 incidents of harassment and intimidation that have been reported over the last two years. In the 2007 report, which describes incidents that occurred during the 2005-2006 school year, the rate of reported incidents per 1,000 students ranged from 0.1 in Baltimore City to approximately 20.7 in Somerset County as shown in **Exhibit 1**. Because the rates are higher for some of the school systems that have implemented systemwide and schoolwide programs on bullying prevention (including Somerset County), the report theorizes that the wide range in rates is largely the result of greater levels of bullying awareness in some school systems. According to the report, reported incidents peak during middle school (ages 11 to 14). The report does not specify how many forms were submitted by students and how many were submitted by the parents and guardians of students.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 17, 2008
mcp/mwc Revised - House Third Reader - March 26, 2008

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Exhibit 1
Number of Reported Incidents of Harassment and Intimidation
2005-2006 School Year

| <u>School System</u> | <u>Reported Incidents</u> | <u>PreK-12 Enrollment</u> | <u>Incidents per 1,000 Students</u> |
|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Allegany | 36 | 9,715 | 3.8 |
| Anne Arundel | 219 | 73,565 | 3.0 |
| Baltimore City* | 6 | 87,643 | 0.1 |
| Baltimore | 214 | 107,043 | 2.0 |
| Calvert | 189 | 17,468 | 10.8 |
| Caroline | 60 | 5,570 | 10.7 |
| Carroll | 241 | 28,940 | 8.4 |
| Cecil | 29 | 16,521 | 1.8 |
| Charles | 45 | 26,406 | 1.7 |
| Dorchester | 6 | 4,654 | 1.3 |
| Frederick | 250 | 39,672 | 6.2 |
| Garrett | 12 | 4,668 | 2.6 |
| Harford | 99 | 40,212 | 2.5 |
| Howard | 148 | 48,596 | 3.0 |
| Kent | 1 | 2,440 | 0.4 |
| Montgomery | 137 | 139,398 | 1.0 |
| Prince George's | 52 | 133,325 | 0.4 |
| Queen Anne's | 11 | 7,780 | 1.4 |
| St. Mary's | 52 | 16,649 | 3.1 |
| Somerset | 61 | 2,915 | 20.7 |
| Talbot | 20 | 4,482 | 4.5 |
| Washington | 64 | 21,141 | 3.0 |
| Wicomico | 195 | 14,903 | 13.5 |
| Worcester | 18 | 6,727 | 2.6 |
| Statewide | 2,165 | 860,433 | 2.5 |

*Only reflects the second semester of the school year.

Source: Maryland State Department of Education
