

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2008 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 49 (Delegate Ross)
 Ways and Means

Education - Maryland High School Assessment Test Results

This bill requires the State Board of Education to report results from the Maryland high school assessments (HSAs) to each local board of education by July 1 of each year.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2008.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures would increase by \$5.5 million in FY 2009 to pay the current HSA testing contractor to have HSA results compiled by July 1, 2008. Some additional general fund costs could also be incurred in FY 2010 to meet the July 1, 2009 deadline, but the Maryland State Department of Education expects to be able to meet the bill's July 1 target by 2010. Revenues would not be affected.

(\$ in millions)	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	5.5	-	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$5.5)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate effect

Local Effect: None. The costs of statewide assessments are borne by MSDE, not local school systems.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: A deadline for the reporting of State assessments is not established in State law or regulations.

Background: After many years of consideration, the State Board of Education decided in 2004 to make passage of the HSAs mandatory for high school graduation beginning with the class of 2009. HSAs are end-of-course tests taken in four subject areas: algebra, biology, government, and English. Students take each HSA after completing the applicable course and may subsequently take the test multiple times each year until a passing score is achieved.

Committee narrative in the 2007 *Joint Chairmen's Report* requested the State Board of Education to hold five regional public hearings on the HSAs "to educate the public about current policies ... and to hear the public's concerns." The five hearings were held in Baltimore City and Allegany, Charles, Prince George's, and Talbot counties in September 2007, and more than 120 participants testified at the hearings. One of the concerns expressed at the public hearings was the amount of time it takes to score HSAs. In response, MSDE is planning to implement a purely multiple choice format for the HSAs beginning in May 2009. MSDE estimates that this change, along with the use of a new test provider, will shorten the grading time from nine to three weeks. MSDE also advises that it is working to encourage more school systems to use online testing, which would further accelerate the scoring process.

In October 2007, the State Board of Education approved an alternative option for students who fail to pass an HAS two or more times. The Bridge Plan for Academic Validation will be available beginning summer 2008.

State Expenditures: General fund expenditures would increase by \$5.5 million in fiscal 2009 to comply with the July 1, 2008 deadline for issuing HSA results to local boards of education. This estimate reflects the additional amount that MSDE's current testing vendor would charge to deliver results that quickly. The May 2008 administration of the HSAs will still contain constructed response items that take much longer to score than simple multiple choice responses. By May 2009, the HSAs will be composed of entirely multiple choice responses; however, because it will be the first administration of a new assessment format, MSDE is not certain that the results will be available by July 1, 2009. Although additional costs could again be incurred in fiscal 2010 to ensure that valid results are available on an accelerated schedule, MSDE expects annual cost savings from the elimination of constructed responses and the expansion of online testing.

By fall 2009, MSDE expects to be able to deliver HSA results within three weeks of each test administration. Therefore, no costs would be incurred after fiscal 2010.

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 2, 2008
ncs/rhh

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