

Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly

2008 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 299

(Delegate Conaway)

Ways and Means

Education - Baltimore City - Public and Private Schools - Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure Courses

This bill requires the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners and private schools in Baltimore City to develop mandatory courses on criminal law and criminal procedure to be implemented during middle school or an equivalent age-appropriate grade level.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill only applies to Baltimore City.

Local Effect: Baltimore City school expenditures could increase by an estimated \$2.4 million in FY 2010 to implement mandatory criminal law and criminal procedure courses in all middle schools. **This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.**

Small Business Effect: Potential meaningful. Private school expenditures would increase to implement mandatory criminal law and criminal procedure courses.

Analysis

Current Law: With the advice of the State Superintendent of Schools, the State Board of Education establishes basic policy and guidelines for the program of instruction for public schools. Subject to State law and the bylaws, policies, and guidelines established by the State Board of Education, each local board of education must establish the curriculum guides and courses of study for schools in its jurisdiction.

Background: The Maryland State Department of Education advises that criminal law and procedure is not part of the voluntary State curriculum for middle schools. However, the voluntary State curriculum for government at the high school level does include civil and criminal law, and students are tested on civil and criminal law in the government high school assessment. MSDE also advises that all school systems in Maryland offer elective criminal law courses.

Local Expenditures: Baltimore City school expenditures could increase by an estimated \$2.4 million in fiscal 2010 to hire teachers qualified to teach mandatory criminal law and criminal procedure courses (\$2.15 million) and to purchase textbooks and materials needed for the courses (\$240,000). The information and assumptions used to develop this estimate are stated below.

- The mandatory courses would be developed in the 2008-2009 school year and would be taught beginning in the 2009-2010 school year.
- There are approximately 6,000 students in each middle school grade in Baltimore City, so each year, approximately 6,000 students would receive the required instruction.
- It is estimated that each teacher would have approximately 200 students per year. This assumes that the criminal law and procedure courses would be one semester long and that a teacher could teach approximately four classes of 25 students or five classes of 20 students per semester. In total, 30 new teachers would be needed.
- The average cost per teacher for salary and benefits is estimated at \$71,600. The total cost for 30 teachers would be approximately \$2.15 million.
- Enough textbooks and other course materials would be needed for 3,000 students each semester. The materials would cost an estimated \$80 per student, or \$240,000 in total.

After fiscal 2010, costs for textbooks and course materials could decrease if the same materials are reused. To the extent that existing teachers are qualified to teach criminal law and procedure, costs for teachers could be somewhat less than \$2.15 million. Additional school system costs could also be incurred for curriculum development and support.

Small Business Effect: Like public schools, private schools in Baltimore City would be required to implement criminal law and procedure courses for all middle school students. There are approximately 1,250 private school students in each middle school grade in Baltimore City. Using the same assumptions described above for Baltimore City public schools, private school costs would increase by an estimated \$500,000 in fiscal 2010.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education, Baltimore City Public School System, Department of Legislative Services

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