

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

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 389
Ways and Means

(Delegate Branch)

Task Force to Study System Variables That Impact Student Achievement in Underperforming Public Schools

This bill establishes a task force to study education system variables that may impact student achievement in underperforming public schools, including educational leadership, class sizes, teacher quality, school facilities, and any other factors identified by the task force. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) must provide staff support for the task force. A final report with findings and recommendations is due by December 1, 2009.

The bill takes effect October 1, 2008 and terminates November 30, 2009.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Although there would be some expenses associated with the task force, the costs could be absorbed within the existing budgets of MSDE and DLS.

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

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: As required by the Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act of 2002, MSDE has contracted with a private entity, MGT of America, Inc., to study the impact of increased State aid on student achievement. MGT submitted interim reports in December

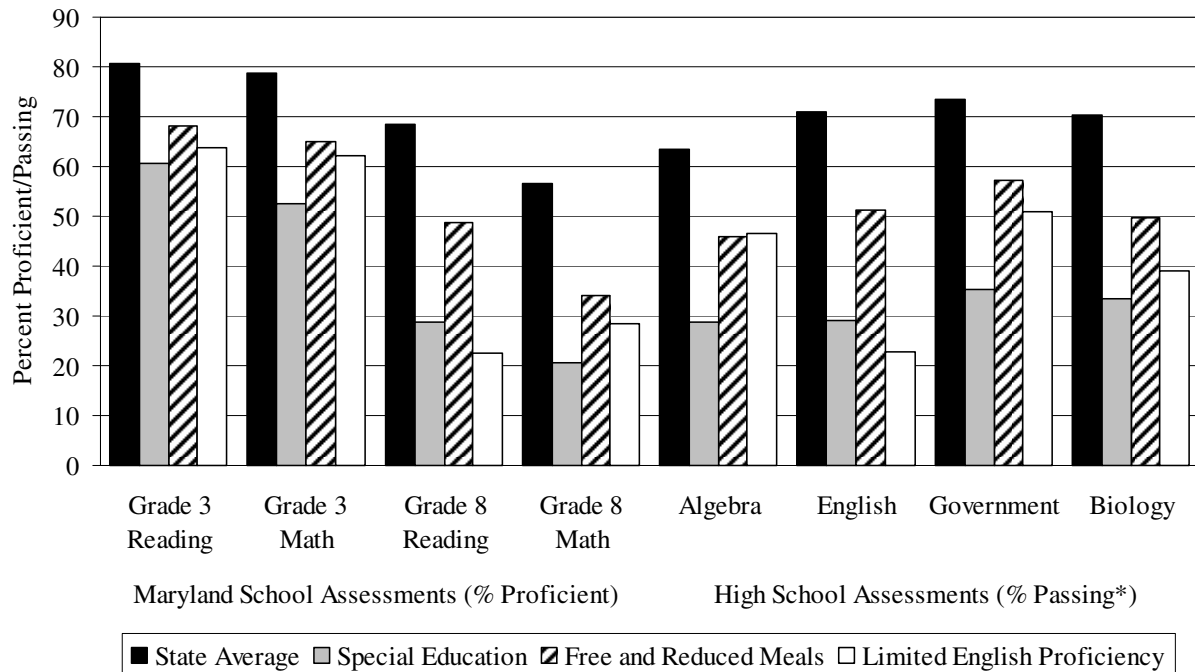
2006 and December 2007, and is scheduled to submit a final report in December 2008. The final report must include:

- a detailed description of how local school systems are using State education aid;
- a comparison of school systems that show significant improvements in student and school performance to school systems that do not;
- an assessment of the extent to which county boards are successful in implementing their comprehensive master plans;
- an analysis of the amount of funding that local governments provide for education each year;
- a list of programs or factors that consistently produce positive results for students, schools, and school systems; and
- any other information the State Superintendent of Schools determines to be relevant to the evaluation of student and school performance.

Background: As stated in the preamble to the bill, some populations of students continue to perform below average on State assessments. **Exhibit 1** compares the statewide average performance on the Maryland School Assessments and High School Assessments to the performance of special education students, students eligible for free and reduced price meals, and students with limited English proficiency. The exhibit shows that, in all cases, the at-risk student populations perform below the statewide averages.

In its 2007 interim report, MGT of America identifies systemic and school-level “potential best practices” that will be analyzed further for the final report due in December 2008. Systemic potential best practices include strategic planning, data utilization for instructional decision-making, targeted professional development, and use of teacher specialists. School-level potential best practices were grouped into several categories, including academic intervention and acceleration, differentiated instruction, inclusion and co-teaching for special education and English language learners, and graduation enhancement programs.

Exhibit 1
Performance of Different Student Populations on State Assessments
2007



*Percent passing is per test taken and includes students who are not required to pass the High School Assessments (HSAs) to graduate and multiple entries for students who took the tests more than once during the school year. The results cannot be used to predict graduation rates or the number of students who may not graduate due to HSA requirements.

Source: Maryland State Department of Education

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: A nearly identical bill was introduced as SB 330 of 2007. The bill received an unfavorable report from the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee.

Cross File: SB 78 (Senator Kelley, *et al.*) – Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 30, 2008
mll/rhh

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