

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2009 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 588
Ways and Means

(Delegate Kaiser, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Education - Public Schools - Standardized Course Numbering System

This bill authorizes the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to develop a standardized course numbering system to facilitate the collection of data on student participation in courses offered by public schools. Local school systems may adopt the course numbering system on a voluntary basis. If MSDE requires data collection involving course numbers, a local school system that has not adopted the standardized course numbering system must provide a translation between its system's course numbers and the standardized system. In an effort to mitigate the potential fiscal impact of this required translation, the bill expresses legislative intent that a local school system that has not adopted the standardized system be able to access and use any federal or State funds otherwise available for this purpose.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2009.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Authorizing MSDE to create a standardized course numbering system has no direct effect on State expenditures. If resources for the system become available, expenditures are likely to increase by several million dollars. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: Local school system administrative costs may increase to provide translations between local course numbers and the standardized system if MSDE requires data collection involving course numbers. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: This is a new initiative.

Background: Establishing a standardized course numbering system enables comparisons among local school systems and is a component of a statewide longitudinal education data system. According to a *Data Quality Campaign* report, only a few states have developed a standardized statewide course numbering system.

Stimulus Package

It is anticipated that the State will receive one-time education funding from the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund, which is part of the federal economic stimulus package. Establishing a longitudinal data system to track students through the education system is a funding priority for this federal aid. Standardized course numbers are one element of a longitudinal data system.

State Effect: MSDE advises that adding standardized course numbers requires its data collection system to be reprogrammed and school-level staff to be retrained. To add unique student identifiers to its data set, MSDE received a \$5.9 million three-year federal grant in 2006. It is assumed that adding standardized course numbers to MSDE's data systems will likewise cost several million dollars. MSDE advises that it has applied for but not yet received a federal grant to pay for the development of a standardized course numbering system. MSDE further advises that it only intends to use the authorization if federal funding is obtained for this purpose.

Local Expenditures: If MSDE requires data collection involving course numbers, local school system administrative costs may increase to provide translations between local systems' course numbers and the standardized course numbers.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 15, 2009
mlm/mwc Revised - Updated Information - March 4, 2009
Revised - Enrolled Bill - May 15, 2009

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