

Department of Legislative Services
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FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 379
 Ways and Means

(Delegate Olszewski, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Education - Reporting Requirement - Class Size

This bill requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to develop, by the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year, a uniform data collection method to track the number of students who regularly participate in each classroom teacher’s class as of September 30 of each year. Local school systems will then be required to implement the method and report the results to MSDE by December 1, and MSDE must report on the data by January 31 of each year.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by at least \$37,200 in FY 2012 to develop and implement a class size reporting method to be used beginning in fall 2012. Future year expenditure estimates reflect annualization, regular salary increases, and inflation. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	0	0	37,200	92,900	97,300
Net Effect	\$0	\$0	(\$37,200)	(\$92,900)	(\$97,300)

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

Local Effect: Local school systems can report class sizes in a format developed by MSDE with existing personnel and resources.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Although schools and school systems report student enrollments and teacher data to MSDE, reports on class sizes are not required.

Background: Maryland does not currently report class sizes. However, student-teacher ratios, which are not the same but may give some indication of school systems that have smaller class sizes, can be developed from data reported by MSDE. **Exhibit 1** compares the number of students enrolled as of September 30, 2007, to the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers reported for October 2007. From the two numbers, a student-teacher ratio is calculated and shown in the final column of the exhibit. The ratios range from a low of 11.6 students per teacher in Worcester County to a high of 16.7 students per teacher in St. Mary's County.

MSDE advises that a number of factors complicate accurate reporting of class sizes. Some of the factors are discussed briefly below.

- Many schools use alternative scheduling techniques that separate small groups of students for more intensive services for a portion of the day while other students remain in larger groups.
- Elementary arts classes may include multiple grades or classrooms taught by a single teacher.
- Special education classes are typically smaller but may include students from multiple grades learning multiple subjects.
- Some classes may, at times, consist of a single student.
- In middle and high schools, students' schedules often change at the end of each semester or marking period, meaning class sizes may likewise change.

Exhibit 1
Public School Student to Teacher Ratios in Fall 2007

<u>School System</u>	<u>Headcount Enrollment September 2007</u>	<u>FTE Teachers October 2007</u>	<u>Students per FTE Teacher</u>
Worcester	6,745	581.9	11.6
Somerset	2,910	242.0	12.0
Dorchester	4,654	375.5	12.4
Garrett	4,510	358.0	12.6
Kent	2,274	178.0	12.8
Howard	49,542	3,756.8	13.2
Allegany	9,436	704.0	13.4
Wicomico	14,860	1,075.9	13.8
Baltimore City	81,284	5,877.0	13.8
Cecil	16,290	1,173.8	13.9
Harford	39,172	2,771.7	14.1
Baltimore County	104,283	7,374.4	14.1
Montgomery	137,717	9,638.9	14.3
Caroline	5,658	393.8	14.4
Prince George's	129,752	9,004.9	14.4
Washington	21,703	1,502.9	14.4
Carroll	28,320	1,940.6	14.6
Anne Arundel	73,400	5,000.0	14.7
Talbot	4,396	295.6	14.9
Frederick	40,487	2,694.9	15.0
Queen Anne's	7,808	512.0	15.3
Calvert	17,394	1,126.2	15.4
Charles	26,676	1,724.5	15.5
Saint Mary's	16,890	1,014.3	16.7
State	846,161	59,317.6	14.3

Note: Includes students in prekindergarten through grade 12.

Source: Maryland State Department of Education

State Expenditures: General fund expenditures increase by an estimated \$37,200 in fiscal 2012, which accounts for the bill's requirement that the uniform data collection method be used beginning with the 2012-2013 school year. The estimate reflects the cost of hiring one full-time education program specialist in April 2012 to develop the uniform

class size data collection method and train local school system employees in the method. In future years, the program specialist is responsible for refining the method, auditing school system reports, and ensuring compliance with the requirements. A salary, fringe benefits, contractual costs for developing and printing training materials, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses are included in the estimate.

	<u>FY 2012</u>	<u>FY 2013</u>
Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$22,235	\$90,438
Contractual Services	10,000	0
Operating Expenses	<u>4,938</u>	<u>2,432</u>
Total State Expenditures	\$37,173	\$92,870

Future year expenditures reflect a full salary with 4.4% annual increases and 3% employee turnover and 1% annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

MSDE advises that attempting to collect class size data without automating the process would be imprecise and estimates that developing and implementing an effective and precise system will cost several million dollars. MSDE added unique student identifiers to its data sets for the 2007-2008 school year and plans to continue modernizing its data tracking systems in the coming years. MSDE has applied for a federal grant to establish common course codes and to collect basic course participation and performance information. These data elements may aid in the development of an automated class size system. Assuming funding for the expansion of education information systems continues, developing the capacity to measure class sizes more consistently across school systems could be built into the new systems.

Local Expenditures: Although the bill requires additional administrative responsibilities for local school systems, it is assumed that the added responsibilities can be met with existing personnel and resources.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB0119 LR0832 2008 W&M

Cross File: SB 990 (Senator Stone, *et al.*) - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

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

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