

Chapter 321

(Senate Bill 557)

AN ACT concerning

Education – Alternate Maryland School Assessment – ~~Review and Revision~~

FOR the purpose of requiring the State Department of Education to review ~~and revise~~ the Alternate Maryland School Assessment (ALT–MSA) on or before a certain date; requiring the Department to survey certain teachers regarding satisfaction, or lack thereof, of the ALT–MSA, solicit certain recommendations, and consider certain courses of action as part of a certain review; requiring the Department to report to the Governor and to certain legislative committees regarding a certain review; and generally relating to the review ~~and revision~~ of the ALT–MSA.

Preamble

WHEREAS, The federal No Child Left Behind Act requires all students to be assessed; and

WHEREAS, The assessment of students should be a tool used as part of instruction; and

WHEREAS, ~~Students~~ Some students with severe disabilities may need functional and life skills instruction as well as academic instruction and assessments; and

WHEREAS, Students with severe disabilities also receive an Individualized Education Program (IEP); and

WHEREAS, Assessments should not be so time–consuming as to displace ongoing instructional needs; and

WHEREAS, Special education teachers are spending an inordinate amount of their instructional hours creating, preparing, and administering the many aspects of the Alternate Maryland School Assessment (ALT–MSA), including selecting mastery objectives for each student, developing the artifacts to accomplish the mastery objective, and creating sample worksheets and data sheets to document these actions; and

WHEREAS, The ALT–MSA lends itself to great subjectivity, given the nature of the administration of the assessment and the flexibility provided for scoring the assessment; and

WHEREAS, The scoring of the ALT–MSA lends itself to great subjectivity; now, therefore,

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That:

(a) On or before July 1, 2011, the State Department of Education shall review ~~and revise~~ the Alternate Maryland School Assessment (ALT–MSA) with the goal of reducing the time required to administer the ALT–MSA.

(b) As part of the review required under subsection (a) of this section, the Department shall:

(1) (i) Survey all teachers of severely disabled students and students who are likely to be impacted by the ALT–MSA regarding satisfaction, or lack thereof, with the ALT–MSA; and

(ii) Solicit recommendations for improvement to the ALT–MSA;
and

(2) ~~consider~~ Consider:

~~(1)~~ (i) Providing greater guidance and taking primary responsibility for the creation of the ALT–MSA while allowing modification to be effectuated by the special education instructor;

~~(2)~~ (ii) Reducing the number of mastery objectives that are currently required for each student in each subject; and

~~(3)~~ (iii) Creating State–approved artifacts for each mastery objective, including tasks, products, and actions; ~~and~~

~~(4) For the most severely disabled students, incorporating a living skills based assessment into the existing academic based assessment.~~

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That on or before October 1, 2011, the State Department of Education shall report to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2–1246 of the State Government Article, the House Committee on Ways and Means and the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee regarding the review conducted under Section 1 of this Act.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2010.

Approved by the Governor, May 4, 2010.