

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2010 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 973

(Delegate Aumann, *et al.*)

Ways and Means

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Public Schools - Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline - Distribution of Information

This bill requires each local board of education to provide each student in grades 6 through 12 with the telephone number of the Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline by: (1) printing the number prominently in the school handbook; and (2) printing the telephone number on a student's school identification card, if provided. A local board of education is not required to reprint or reissue school handbooks or student school identification cards in use on July 1, 2010, in order to comply with the bill.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2010.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill is directed at public schools.

Local Effect: Local school system finances are not materially affected because they are not required to reprint or reissue school handbooks or student identification cards in use.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: Chapter 122 of 1986 established the Youth Suicide Prevention School Program, administered by the Maryland State Department of Education in cooperation with local school systems and community suicide prevention agencies, to combat youth suicide. One element of the program is the Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline (1-800-422-0009) which began operation in 1990. The Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline is a decentralized hotline answered by four different call centers in

Maryland. Youth aged 14 to 24 are able to call 24 hours a day and speak confidentially with a counselor about their problems.

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that suicide is the third leading cause of death for youth between the ages of 10 and 24. Deaths from suicide capture only part of the problem; a nationwide survey of youth in grades 9 through 12 in private and public schools found that, in the 12 months preceding the survey, 15% of students reported seriously considering suicide, 11% reported creating a plan, and 7% reported trying to take their own life.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Human Resources; Maryland State Department of Education; Allegany, Harford, and Montgomery counties; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 15, 2010
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