

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
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FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 604

(Senator Currie, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Appropriations and Ways and Means

College and Career Readiness Act of 2010

This bill requires that, by July 2011, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), in consultation with institutions of higher education, develop and implement a college and career readiness program.

Funds awarded to the State through the Race to the Top (RTTT) grant program must be used to implement the requirements of the bill. By December 31, 2010, MSDE and MHEC must report on the State's capacity to meet current and future demand for career and vocational training needs and the impact on the bill, if implemented, on those needs and the State's capacity to meet them. By December 1 of 2011, 2012, and 2013, MSDE and MHEC must report on the implementation of the bill.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2010. Except for the report on career and vocational training, the bill is contingent on the State receiving RTTT funds by June 1, 2011.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MSDE can include the college and career readiness program as part of the State's RTTT application using existing resources; however, any funding provided for the program may take away funding from other priorities in the application. Maryland is eligible to receive up to \$250 million in RTTT grants. MSDE and MHEC can develop college and career readiness policies with existing resources; if Maryland receives RTTT funds, implementation increases expenditures by an indeterminate amount that may be significant, depending on the degree of implementation. MSDE and MHEC can complete the required reports with existing resources.

Local Effect: Local school systems are required to spend any RTTT grant funds they receive in accordance with the RTTT plan approved by the federal government.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: By July 2011, MSDE and MHEC must:

- develop and adopt a definition of the skills and knowledge required of a student in order to be college ready and incorporate in the definition that to be college ready also means a student is ready for career or vocational training;
- develop and adopt one common assessment to be accepted by primary and secondary education and all public colleges and universities of the State that indicates a student is ready for introductory college-level coursework;
- develop and implement strategies to ensure student success in achieving college readiness; and
- develop and implement strategies for teacher preparation and professional development.

MSDE is required to develop and implement clearly articulated benchmarks against which a student's progress toward college readiness can be measured periodically from Pre-kindergarten to grade 12. In addition, MSDE must ensure all counties have a curriculum for primary and secondary education that will lead to a student being college ready.

MSDE and MHEC must develop and implement an outreach program to educate students and their parents about the skills necessary to be successful in college and a career and about the financial aid process for higher education including the types of available aid. The outreach program should begin in elementary school, as appropriate, and be continued periodically through grade 12, with particular emphasis on the transition from elementary to middle school and middle school to high school. In addition, public colleges and universities should adopt and implement strategies to ensure students are successful and complete a degree.

The implementation of this bill will require the cooperation and input of the Governor, the General Assembly, MSDE, MHEC, higher education institutions, local school systems, the business community, and community organizations.

MSDE and MHEC must periodically review the definition of college readiness and ensure the successful implementation of any strategies developed to reach college readiness and be successful.

Background: The College Success Task Force was appointed by the Governor's P-20 Leadership Council in 2009 to develop a definition and implementation plan for college readiness in Maryland. The task force's draft report was published in February 2010, and its final report is anticipated in spring. The draft report includes the following recommendations:

- change curricula and high school graduation requirements to meet higher standards;
- identify and adopt college readiness assessments to be used statewide;
- adopt diploma endorsement for college readiness;
- rethink how schools and colleges deliver education;
- develop a statewide system of support to increase college success;
- make changes to teacher preparation and professional development;
- communicate more effectively about college readiness and financial assistance for college; and
- make high schools and colleges accountable for college-ready graduates.

RTTT is a \$4 billion competitive grant program authorized under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). The program seeks to encourage and reward states that are implementing significant reforms around four specific areas:

- adopting *standards and assessments* that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy;
- building *data systems* that measure student growth and success and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction;
- recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining *effective teachers and principals*, especially where they are needed most; and
- turning around the *lowest-achieving schools*.

Based on the four reform areas, the RTTT scoring rubric includes 19 criteria and one competitive priority that collectively add up to 500 points. Several of these criteria account for a large number of points; others account for a comparatively small portion of a state's score. In addition, there are four invitational priorities that states are invited to address in their application, but they will not receive any additional points for doing so.

Using these criteria, the U.S. Secretary of Education will determine which states receive grants and the amounts of the grants.

Maryland is eligible for up to \$250 million of RTTT funds. Round 1 applications were due in January 2010. Maryland decided to apply in Round 2 in order to strengthen its application, which is due in June 2010. Any RTTT funds awarded to the State must be spent in accordance with the grant terms.

The University System of Maryland (USM) Board of Regents has adopted changes to institutions' entrance requirements that require four years of math including Algebra II beginning with students entering ninth grade in 2011.

State Fiscal Effect: Many of the bill's provisions that require MSDE and MHEC to *develop and adopt* policies and practices are already in process and can likely be implemented with existing resources of the agencies. However, *implementation* of several of the bill's requirements will require additional expenditures by MSDE and MHEC, the magnitude of which cannot be determined but is likely significant depending on the degree to which they are implemented. Expansion of outreach programs to promote the importance of being college- and career-ready and attending college or post-high school career training, as well as availability of student financial aid assistance, is one example of a program that may require significant additional resources to implement, primarily by MHEC, although several existing outreach efforts by MHEC and higher education institutions could be enhanced and coordinated with limited resources.

MSDE can include the college and career readiness program in the State's RTTT application using existing resources. To the extent that Maryland receives RTTT or other grant funds and those grant funds are eligible to be spent on the bill's purposes, those resources will be available to MSDE and local school systems to implement many provisions of the bill, including developing and implementing college readiness benchmarks from Pre-kindergarten through grade 12; developing and implementing a primary and secondary curriculum that leads to college-ready students; and implementing strategies to ensure student success and teacher preparation and development.

Developing a common assessment of college readiness may require additional one-time expenditures by the agencies and public higher education institutions; however, higher education institutions currently use a variety of assessment tools. Adopting common assessments may result in cost efficiencies that make them cost-neutral in the long term. Further, Maryland is part of a consortium of states that is intending to apply for up to \$350 million of RTTT funds set aside by the U.S. Secretary of Education for the development of the next generation of common high school assessments, which are

intended to align with a common set of K-12 internationally benchmarked standards that build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school completion.

Many of the bill's provisions align with the intent and purpose of federal education policy, including President Obama's goal to increase college degree productivity by 2020, and RTTT. To the extent this bill assists the State in receiving competitive grants, including RTTT, this bill increases revenues that may offset the costs of implementing the bill. However, the bill may also take away funding from other priorities in the RTTT application.

Local Fiscal Effect: Local school system expenditures likely increase to implement the bill's provisions. Community college expenditures for common assessments may increase as described above.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Higher Education Commission; Morgan State University; University System of Maryland; Carroll, Cecil, and Montgomery counties; Department of Legislative Services

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