

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2011 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 528
Ways and Means

(Delegate Luedtke, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**Education - Open Space on Public School Property - Planting and Maintaining
Gardens**

This bill requires local boards of education to encourage the use of open space on public school property for the purpose of planting and maintaining gardens. Each local board must adopt procedures for implementing the bill.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill is directed at local school systems.

Local Effect: If a local school or community group chooses to plant and garden on public school grounds, local school system expenditures may increase to maintain the garden.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Local boards of education are not specifically authorized to use open space on public school property for the purpose of planting and maintaining gardens, nor are they prohibited from doing so.

Background: During World War I, the federal Bureau of Education created the United States School Garden Army to have schools help grow food and boost morale. With concerns about obesity and interest in locally grown produce, the idea of school gardens has experienced a resurgence. In 2003, almost one-third of public schools in California reported having a school-based garden, which was prior to the 2009 legislation that

established a grant program to promote and support the creation of instructional school gardens in the state.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School in Berkeley, California has created a kitchen learning classroom attached to its school garden. Students harvest and prepare produce as part of their garden and kitchen classes.

Local Expenditures: If a local school or community group chooses to plant a garden on public school grounds, local school system expenditures may increase to maintain the garden. The magnitude of the increase is dependent on how many groups choose to plant a school garden and local school grounds maintenance standards.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 791 (Senator Raskin) - 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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