

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2012 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

Senate Bill 983 (Senator Ferguson)  
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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**Task Force to Develop a Creativity and Innovation Index for Maryland**

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This bill establishes a Task Force to Develop a Creativity and Innovation Index for Maryland. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must provide staff for the task force. The task force must report its findings to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 31, 2013.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2012, and terminates on June 30, 2014.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for MSDE are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Bill Summary:** The task force must study how to measure the opportunities for students to engage in innovative work, including core curriculum classes and the availability of before and after school programs that provide creative opportunities for students, including: arts education, debate clubs, science fairs, theater performances, concerts, and filmmaking. The task force must also:

- consult with individuals who have expertise and experience in innovation in the fields of business, science, technology, mathematics, engineering, and arts education; and
- make recommendations regarding the creation of a Creativity and Innovation Index for Maryland to measure the opportunities for K-12 students to engage in innovative work.

**Current Law:** The State Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Schools, each local board of education, and each public school must implement a program of education accountability for the operation and management of the public schools. Under the accountability program, the State board and the State Superintendent must assist each local board of education to establish educational goals and objectives that conform with statewide educational objectives for subject areas, including reading, writing, and mathematics. With the assistance of its local board of education, each public school must survey current student achievement in reading, language, mathematics, and other areas to assess its needs.

Each public school must establish as the basis for its assessment of its needs, project goals, and objectives that are in keeping with the goals and objectives established by its local board and the State board. With the assistance of its local board, the State board, and the State Superintendent, each public school must develop programs to meet its needs on the basis of the priorities it sets.

Each local board of education is required to develop and implement a comprehensive master plan that describes the goals, objectives, and strategies that will be used to improve student achievement and meet State performance standards and local performance standards in each segment of the student population. The plan must be updated annually, and is required to include specified elements.

Also, local boards of education are encouraged to develop gifted and talented education programs. A gifted and talented student is defined as an elementary or secondary student who is identified by professionally qualified individuals as:

- having outstanding talent and performing, or showing the potential for performing, at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with other students of a similar age, experience, or environment;
- exhibiting high-performance capability in intellectual, creative, or artistic areas;
- possessing an unusual leadership capacity; or
- excelling in specific academic fields.

**Background:** *Education Week* recently reported that several states are exploring the development of an index that would gauge the extent to which schools provide opportunities to foster creativity and innovative thinking. A Massachusetts commission has met at least twice to consider its Creative Challenge Index, pursuant to a legislative requirement. Legislation has been introduced in California to develop a voluntary creative and innovative education index. *Education Week* indicates that the Governor of Oklahoma is pursuing a public-private partnership to develop what the Governor described as a “public measurement of the opportunities for our students to engage in innovative work.”

Creative Challenge, Inc. seeks to initiative what it calls the Creative Challenge Index in each state that would provide a public measurement of the number and range of opportunities for K-12 students to engage in creative work. Through such an index, schools would be ranked according to the creative environment that they offer their students. Under this conception of the index, the intent is not to measure individual student outcomes regarding creativity or innovative thinking.

Proponents of such an index for schools find that creative and innovative thinking must be nourished, especially given competition in the global marketplace and the current emphasis on standardized tests. However, some have expressed concerns that an index may trivialize creativity and innovation by attempting to make a quantitative, instead of qualitative, measure of such activities, and that such an index may be used to punish schools that fail to rank well.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** *Education Week*, Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Legislative Services

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