

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2013 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 983

(Delegate Hixson, *et al.*)

Ways and Means

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Public Schools - Emergency Management Plans - Evaluations

This bill requires local boards of education to evaluate the emergency management plan (EMP) in each public school by February 1, 2014. Each local board of education must also submit a report to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) on the required evaluation by March 1, 2014. By July 1, 2014, MSDE must submit to the General Assembly a report on (1) the EMPs in State public schools, (2) recommendations on improving the EMPs, and (3) the cost of improvements to the EMPs.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2013, and terminates July 31, 2014.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. MSDE can meet reporting requirements of the bill with existing resources.

Local Effect: Four counties (Carroll, Frederick, Harford, and St. Mary's) advised that the bill will have no local fiscal impact. It is assumed that counties can evaluate current emergency management plans and meet reporting requirements with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The EMP evaluation required of local boards of education must address the following:

- training activities;
- emergency safety exercises;

- school security cameras;
- school visitor policies;
- school resource officer programs; and
- coordination of emergency management activities, plans, and resources with local, State, and federal agencies.

The report submitted to MSDE by each local board must include recommendations on how to improve existing EMPs and on the cost of these improvements.

Current Law: Pursuant to Code of Maryland Regulations, in consultation with other health and safety officials in the local community, each local school system must develop an emergency plan for each public school and central administration office under its jurisdiction that deals with the contingencies of man-made, technological, and natural hazards.

Each public school emergency plan must be on file in each local school system, and each local school system must develop and implement an annual schedule of drills for each school within the system. Each local superintendent of schools must certify annually in writing to the State Superintendent of Schools that the emergency plan requirements are being implemented.

Background: In response to the December 2012 mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, on January 16, 2013, President Barack Obama announced 23 executive actions and signed three presidential memoranda to strengthen existing gun laws and to take related steps addressing mental health and school safety. Most of the President's plan will require Congressional approval. The President also asked Congress to reinstate and strengthen the assault weapons ban that expired in 2004, to restrict ammunition magazines to no more than 10 rounds, and to expand background checks to virtually all gun transactions.

The President's plan calls for more school resource officers and counselors in all schools through the Community Oriented Policing Services hiring program. The plan also calls for the federal government to assist schools in developing emergency management plans and to provide training for "active shooter" situations to 14,000 law enforcement, first responders, and school officials.

Under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act, the federal government provides grants to states, allowing states and local education agencies in part to support programs that prevent violence in and around schools.

The Governor's proposed fiscal 2014 budget includes \$25 million for school safety improvements.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 143 (Senator Pugh, *et al.*) - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): Carroll, Frederick, Harford, and St. Mary's counties; Maryland State Department of Education; National Conference of State Legislatures; www.whitehouse.gov; Department of Legislative Services

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Analysis by: Scott P. Gates

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510