

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2014 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 355 (Senator Ferguson, *et al.*)
 Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Task Force to Study the Establishment of Specialized and Accelerated Educational Programs for Adult Learners

This bill establishes a Task Force to Study the Establishment of Specialized and Accelerated Educational Programs for Adult Learners. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (DLLR) must staff the task force. A report with findings and recommendations is due by December 1, 2014.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2014, and terminates June 30, 2015.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$19,800 in FY 2015, which reflects the cost of hiring one part-time contractual employee within DLLR to staff the task force and produce the required report. MSDE can provide minimal supplemental staffing using existing resources. Reimbursements for task force members can be handled with existing resources.

(in dollars)	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	19,800	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$19,800)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate effect

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The task force must determine whether a structure for establishing and operating specialized and accelerated educational programs for adult learners is needed and would be beneficial to the State; and if so, study and make recommendations on specified matters including the appropriate structure, funding, accountability, and statutory structure for the programs.

Task force members may not receive compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations, as provided in the State budget.

Current Law/Background: MSDE coordinates and oversees elementary and secondary education in the State, including charter schools, and operates the External High School Diploma Program among other functions. The State Board of Education awards high school diplomas to students who meet State requirements.

Adult Education and Literacy Services was transferred from MSDE to DLLR by Chapter 134 of 2008. Its mission is to provide leadership for the establishment of adult education goals, oversight for implementation of the federal Adult Education State Plan, and administration of the statewide general equivalency development (GED). The Adult Education and Literacy Program delivers literacy and English language instruction and high school diploma options for adults and out-of-school youth. The office oversees Maryland's Adult Instructional Services and GED testing programs. Instructional programs include Adult Basic Education; Adult Secondary Education, including GED test preparation and the National External Diploma Program; English for Speakers of Other Languages; English Literacy/Civics education; Family Literacy; and Workplace Education. The Governor's proposed fiscal 2015 budget for the program contains \$3.0 million including \$1.3 million in State general funds, \$148,982 in special funds, and \$1.6 million in federal funds.

State Expenditures: General fund expenditures increase by \$19,831 in fiscal 2015 which reflects a 30-day start-up delay and the bill's June 1, 2014 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one part-time (50%) contractual employee within DLLR to staff the task force and produce the required report. It includes a part-time salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, ongoing operating expenses, and assumes termination of the contractual employee on December 31, 2014. The bill requires MSDE and DLLR to share the staffing responsibilities; however, only one part-time contractual employee will be required to complete the report. It has been assigned to DLLR because DLLR is responsible for adult education. MSDE staff can provide any required support using existing resources. This estimate assumes that DLLR and MSDE will absorb any additional expenditures related to reimbursements for the task force members.

Contractual Position	0.5
Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$15,316
Operating Expenses and Start-up Costs	<u>4,515</u>
Total FY 2015 State Expenditures	\$19,831

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: SB 433 of 2013 passed the Senate and received a hearing in the House Ways and Means Committee, but no further action was taken.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 10, 2014
mc/rhh

Analysis by: Caroline L. Boice

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