

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
Third Reader

House Bill 55

(Delegate Cluster)

Ways and Means

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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Baltimore County - Education - WhyTry Program

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This bill requires the Baltimore County Board of Education to develop and implement a two-year “WhyTry” pilot program in Baltimore County. The county board must select 2 middle schools that reflect the geographic, racial, ethnic, cultural, and gender diversity of the middle school population in each of the school system’s five geographic areas (a total of 10 middle schools) to participate in the program. The program must include at least two teachers in each of the selected middle schools who have received two levels of program training. Funding for the program must be provided from the Education Trust Fund (ETF).

The bill takes effect July 1, 2016, and terminates June 30, 2018.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. Under current law Baltimore County receives annual ETF funding via the foundation formula State aid program, in amounts that far exceed the costs associated with this program.

**Local Effect:** Baltimore County Public Schools expenditures increase by a total of \$30,600 in FY 2017 and 2018. **This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.**

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The WhyTry program is intended to assist a student with an unweighted grade point average below 2.0 per quarter and an attendance rate less than 94% of required school attendance to become a more effective student, as evidenced by an unweighted grade point average of at least 2.5 per quarter without a letter grade of D or E.

**Current Law:** With the advice of the State Superintendent of Schools, the State Board of Education establishes basic policy and guidelines for the program of instruction for public schools. Subject to State law and the regulations, bylaws, policies, and guidelines established by the State Board of Education, each local board of education must establish the curriculum guides and courses of study for schools in its jurisdiction.

ETF is a nonlapsing, special fund to be used for continued funding of the Bridge to Excellence education aid formulas and programs. The fund may also be used to support capital projects for public schools, community colleges, and public four-year institutions as well as to expand public early childhood education programs in the State.

**Background:** The bill does not specify the substance or structure of the WhyTry program. However, information about a WhyTry program can be found at [whytry.org](http://whytry.org). This program “combines a series of 10 visual analogies with multimedia and physical activities to teach students social and emotional skills” and is purported to help “youth of every learning type deal with life’s daily pressures.”

**State Fiscal Effect:** ETF is estimated to total \$387.9 million in fiscal 2016, \$458.8 million in fiscal 2017, and \$533.6 million in fiscal 2018. The bill does not alter the definition of ETF or its uses. Under current law Baltimore County receives annual ETF funding via the foundation formula State aid program in amounts that far exceed the costs associated with this program, as described below.

**Local Fiscal Effect:** Baltimore County Public Schools has not indicated that any of its current public school teachers have received WhyTry training, at either of the two levels required by the bill. Assuming that 20 teachers (2 at each of 10 middle schools) must receive training at both levels, the school system estimates that its expenditures will increase by a total of \$30,560, as shown in the following table.

### Estimated WhyTry Program Costs

	<u>Level 1</u>	<u>Level 2</u>	<u>Total</u>
Curriculum and Registration Fees	\$5,980	\$1,980	\$7,960
Two-Day Training	6,000	6,000	12,000
Substitutes	3,680	3,680	7,360
Meals and Travel	<u>1,920</u>	<u>1,320</u>	<u>3,240</u>
	<b>\$17,580</b>	<b>\$12,980</b>	<b>\$30,560</b>

The particular timing for training sessions is not known. Depending upon when training sessions can be arranged, first level training costs may occur as early as fiscal 2017 and second level training costs may occur as late as fiscal 2018.

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### Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** HB 1128 of 2015 did not receive a hearing in the House.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Baltimore County, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 18, 2016  
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