

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2016 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

House Bill 1486 (Prince George's County Delegation)  
Environment and Transportation

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**Workgroup on Transportation for Middle and High School Students in Prince  
George's County**  
**PG 440-16**

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This bill establishes a Workgroup on Transportation for Middle and High School Students in Prince George's County. Prince George's County Public Schools must provide staff for the workgroup. The workgroup must report its findings and recommendations to the Prince George's County Senators and House Delegation by August 31, 2016.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2016, and terminates June 30, 2017.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** The Prince George's County school system can staff the workgroup using existing resources.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Bill Summary:** The workgroup must identify where Prince George's County public school buildings and bus routes intersect with bus routes of the Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). The workgroup must also identify the software systems currently in use by or available to the Prince George's County Public Schools, DPWT, and WMATA to operate and monitor their bus systems.

The workgroup must estimate, if Prince George's County Public Schools students were to be transported by DPWT and WMATA, the cost savings to the Prince George's County Public Schools and the cost increase to DPWT and WMATA. Further, the workgroup must determine the feasibility and cost of implementing a system utilizing Global Positioning System technology and text messages to inform parents of when a bus is expected to arrive and provide notification if a bus will be delayed. Finally, the workgroup must identify a range of options for transporting Prince George's County Public Schools middle and high school students, as well as the cost of each option.

**Background:** The Office of Legislative Audits has prepared a [financial management practices audit report for Prince George's County Public Schools](#) dated February 2014. The report contains 23 findings, as well as both the school system's response to the findings and the auditor's comments on the response. A major finding of the report is that the school system should implement certain steps to improve cost-effectiveness, including steps to enhance bus transportation efficiency. The audit report found, among other things, that the school system failed to use its automated routing software to promote efficiency in the use of its school bus fleet and that certain data in the automated system appeared to be questionable.

According to the Maryland State Department of Education, during the 2013-2014 school year, Prince George's County expended more per pupil on student transportation, \$1,234, than any other local school system in Maryland, \$400 above the statewide per pupil average of \$834. Data from the same school year indicates that the Prince George's County school system owns 1,100 school vehicles (contracts for about 10 additional school vehicles) and transports 83,500 students. In comparison, student transportation costs in Montgomery County totaled \$861 per student, 30% less than in Prince George's County. The Montgomery County school system owns 1,120 school vehicles and transports 98,100 students.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Prince George's County, Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 17, 2016  
md/hlb

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