

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2017 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 582 (Senator Klausmeier)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**Baltimore County Public School System - Magnet Program - Selection of
Students for Admission to Middle School**

This bill requires the Baltimore County Public School System to establish an assessment process to evaluate the academic achievement and readiness of applicants for admission to a middle school magnet program. The school system must only include applicants who demonstrate high academic achievement and readiness in the lottery that selects students to be admitted to a middle school magnet program.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2017.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: The bill does not materially impact Baltimore County Public School System operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The bill defines “magnet program” as a theme-related curriculum and instructional program in the Baltimore County Public School System that (1) is not available as a comprehensive school program option; (2) serves as an incubator for innovative instructional practices; (3) in accordance with State-rated school building capacity, draws students from across student attendance boundaries; and (4) is accessed through a centralized student application and admission process.

Current Law/Background: The Office of Magnet Programs in the Baltimore County Public School System provides educational choices to parents of students with different interests, talents, and aptitudes. Magnet programs are intended to enhance students' educational experiences and academic performance by providing unique learning environments, innovative instructional programs, and specialized programs of study and/or experiences that extend and enrich the existing school system curricula, promote student diversity, and align with evolving community and industry/business needs.

The Baltimore County Public School System does not employ any admissions criteria for elementary or middle school magnet programs. If the number of applicants exceeds the number of seats available, available seats are first filled with priority placements. A random lottery is conducted to fill all remaining available seats and to generate a wait list. Kindergarten students receive priority placement when they have an older sibling who is currently enrolled in the same magnet program and who will continue in the magnet program during the year for which the kindergarten applicant is seeking placement. In addition, if the primary work site of a school system employee is a school with a magnet program and the employee's child applies to (and is eligible for) a magnet program in that school, the child is given priority placement in the magnet program.

The Baltimore County Public School System indicates that magnet programs are intended to provide unique educational opportunities for all public school students. The school system notes that, nationally, 15 of the 20 largest school systems in the country use a lottery process for magnet placements. In addition, the Baltimore County Public School System advises that establishing high academic achievement and readiness standards may disadvantage low-income and minority students.

The Baltimore County Public School System will operate magnet programs in 30 public schools during the 2017-2018 school year (9 middle schools, 6 elementary schools, and 15 high schools). The 9 middle schools with magnet programs include:

- Deer Park Middle Magnet School
- Deep Creek Middle School
- Lansdowne Middle School
- Loch Raven Academy
- Northwest Academy of Health Sciences
- Parkville Middle School
- Southwest Academy
- Stemmers Run Middle School
- Sudbrook Magnet Middle School

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Baltimore County; Maryland State Department of Education;
Department of Legislative Services

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mm/hlb

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