

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2018 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 214
Ways and Means

(Prince George's County Delegation)

Prince George's County - Equality in Education Act
PG 505-18

This bill imposes additional requirements on public charter schools in Prince George's County. Each public charter school in Prince George's County must (1) develop and implement a comprehensive plan to make required equipment and supplies available and affordable to its students and (2) annually report on students who received special education and related services. Public charter schools in the county must also comply with the Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) administrative procedures regarding school uniforms; those public charter schools in the county that require students to wear school uniforms must meet specified requirements regarding the purchase of school uniforms. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2018.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: PGCPS and public charter schools can handle the bill's requirements with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: Small businesses that sell school uniforms and other school equipment and supplies may be impacted.

Analysis

Bill Summary:

Equipment and Supplies Comprehensive Plan

Each public charter school in Prince George's County must develop and implement a comprehensive plan to make required equipment and supplies available and affordable to its students. Prior to implementation, each plan must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of PGCPS; plans must be submitted to the CEO by October 15, 2019. The Prince George's County Board of Education may provide technical assistance to a public charter school in developing and implementing a plan.

Report on Students with Disabilities

By November 1 of each year, each public charter school in Prince George's County must submit a report to the CEO of PGCPS and to the county delegation a report on the number of its students who have disabilities, who have an individualized education plan or 504 plan, and who received special education and related services. The report must specify for students receiving special education and related services (1) the types of services provided; (2) the number of hours of those services provided; (3) the number of personnel needed to provide the services; and (4) any accommodations or modifications provided to the students.

School Uniforms

Public charter schools in the county must also comply with PGCPS administrative procedures regarding school uniforms. Those public charter schools in the county that require students to wear school uniforms must choose a school uniform that may be purchased from more than one vendor or store. A parent must have choice regarding where to purchase the uniform. The public charter school must establish a process to accommodate families who may require financial assistance in acquiring a school uniform and provide information on the process in writing to each parent and on the school website.

Current Law: The local board of education is the public chartering authority within a county. Public charter schools must be nonsectarian and, with exceptions, open to all students on a space-available basis and admit students on a lottery basis if more students apply than can be accommodated. If granted a waiver, a public charter school located within a federal military base may designate as much as 65% of its enrollment for students whose parents are assigned to the base.

A public charter school may give greater weight to a student in a lottery in accordance with an application submitted to the public chartering authority if the student is (1) eligible for free and reduced-price meals; (2) a student with disabilities; (3) a student with limited English proficiency; (4) homeless, as defined under federal law; or (5) a sibling of a currently enrolled student in the public charter school for which the sibling is applying. A sibling of a currently enrolled student or of a student admitted through the lottery process may be given priority to any spaces that become available in a public charter school throughout the year.

Subject to the approval of the public chartering authority, a public charter school may designate a geographic attendance area, within which the median income is equal to or less than the median income of the county and from which student placement in the school is guaranteed to up to 35% of its available space.

Public charter schools cannot discriminate in their enrollment policies or charge tuition to students. A local school system shall serve students with disabilities attending charter schools in the same manner as the public agency serves students with disabilities in its other schools, in accordance with applicable federal and State law.

Background: According to the PGCPS website, all 11 of the public charter schools in Prince George's County require students to wear uniforms.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Prince George's County Public Schools; Maryland State Department of Education; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 14, 2018
mm/rhh

Analysis by: Scott P. Gates

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