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FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 184
Ways and Means

(Prince George's County Delegation)

Prince George's County - Elementary School - Limit on Class Size
PG 503-19

This bill requires the Prince George’s County Board of Education to establish a limit of no more than 30 students in a class for a public school classroom teacher who teaches in kindergarten through grade 3. “Classroom teacher” means a teacher who is primarily responsible and accountable for the students in that class and excludes numerous specified employee classifications, including instructional aides and curriculum specialists. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2019.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS) personnel and one-time costs may increase by as much as \$569,000 in FY 2020, with personnel costs increasing with inflation to \$460,000 by FY 2024. PGCPS retirement expenditures increase accordingly beginning in FY 2022. **This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.**

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: PGCPS does not have an official policy or procedure limiting class sizes. PGCPS annually follows a protocol whereby targets for class size are set based on projected enrollment prior to the start of the school year. The principal selects teachers and paraprofessionals through the student-based budgeting process based on that projected

enrollment. Once students enroll in the fall, adjustments are made through a classroom balancing by the principal, budget team, and administration based on available resources and staff. In part, this involves adding paraprofessionals or instructional assistants to help teachers in larger classes, thus decreasing the student to adult ratio.

Chapters 638 and 639 of 2009 required the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to develop a uniform data collection method to track the number of students who regularly participate in a classroom teacher's class and required each local school system to implement the data collection method by the 2012-2013 school year and report the results to MSDE each year; MSDE must annually report on the data to the General Assembly.

According to MSDE's 2016-2017 Class Size report, approximately 5% of Prince George's County elementary school classrooms exceeded 30 students, as compared to 4% statewide.

Local Expenditures: PGCPs will hire additional teachers to accommodate additional, smaller classes. Presently, per PGCPs, a total of nine kindergarten through grade 3 classes in six of its public schools have over 30 students. Though some of these students can be shifted to classes whose enrollment is below 30 students, it is estimated that as many as six additional teachers may be needed to avoid exceeding the 30-student maximum per classroom teacher in all of the county's kindergarten through grade 3 public school classes.

Based on current first-quartile salaries for Prince George's County school teachers, and accounting for fringe benefits, the personnel costs in fiscal 2020 for hiring six additional teachers totals approximately \$425,000. Also, one-time costs in fiscal 2020 for equipment, materials, and supplies amount to approximately \$144,000, resulting in total fiscal 2020 costs of about \$569,000. Assuming inflation, personnel costs increase from \$425,000 in fiscal 2020 to \$460,000 by fiscal 2024.

Local school boards are responsible for the actual normal cost of pensions for qualifying personnel. Thus, hiring new teachers in fiscal 2020 increases PGCPs retirement expenditures beginning in fiscal 2022.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 215 of 2018 received a hearing in the House Ways and Means Committee. No further action was taken on the bill.

Cross File: None.

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

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