

Department of Legislative Services  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2022 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
 First Reader

House Bill 573 (Delegate Belcastro)  
 Ways and Means

School Wellness and Recess Grant Program - Establishment

This bill establishes a School Wellness and Recess Grant Program in the State. The purpose of the program is to (1) ensure that public schools, nonpublic schools, and Judy Centers have strong, comprehensive, and written wellness policies that address the whole school, whole community, whole child (WSCC) model; and (2) encourage students in prekindergarten through grade 12 to participate fully in recess by being physically active and engaged with their peers in activities of their choice. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must implement and administer the program. Grants must support existing school wellness and recess programs. The Governor must include \$500,000 for the program in the annual budget bill. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2022.**

Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures increase by \$500,000 annually in the form of grants to local public schools, private schools, and Judy Centers. MSDE can administer the program using existing resources. Expenditures in FY 2023 are at the discretion of the Governor. **This bill establishes a mandated appropriation beginning in FY 2024.**

(in dollars)	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
Net Effect	(\$500,000)	(\$500,000)	(\$500,000)	(\$500,000)	(\$500,000)

*Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease*

**Local Effect:** Local public school systems receive a significant portion of up to \$500,000 in grants annually. Because grants must support existing programs, local government expenditures are defrayed in the equivalent amount of grants.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The bill specifies the components of the WSCC model. MSDE must prioritize grant awards based on (1) the quantifiable measure of need of the school or center; (2) the inclusion of all students in the school or center, including students with disabilities; (3) whether the school or center has a written wellness policy that addresses the WSCC model; and (4) geographic diversity among the grantees.

“Recess” is defined as a regularly scheduled period in the school day for physical activity and play that is monitored by trained staff or volunteers. MSDE may adopt regulations to implement the bill.

**Current Law:** Every public school must have a program of physical education that is given in a planned and sequential manner to all students in order to develop their good health and physical fitness and improve their motor coordination and physical skills. The specific curriculum and course of study is set by each local board of education. Maryland regulations require a physical education comprehensive program to provide a developmentally appropriate instructional program that advances student knowledge, confidence, skills, and motivation to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity.

The State Board of Education (SBE) and local boards of education must, with certain exceptions, ensure that students with disabilities have equal opportunities to participate in mainstream physical education and athletic programs in public schools. SBE and local boards must ensure that adapted, allied, or unified physical education and athletic programs are available and adequately funded by the local board.

Judy Centers provide early childhood education programs and comprehensive support services for children, from birth through kindergarten, and their families who reside in specific low-income school districts. Under Chapter 36 of 2021, funding is provided for 9 additional Judy Centers annually in each of fiscal 2021 through 2025, and for 18 additional centers annually in fiscal 2026 through 2030, culminating in 135 new Judy Centers by fiscal 2030. The State must prioritize increasing the number of Judy Centers in Title I communities.

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## Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education; Department of Budget and Management; Department of Legislative Services

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