

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2022 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 756 (Senator Hester)
 Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**University System of Maryland - County School Technology Pilot Program -
 Established**

This bill establishes the County School Technology Pilot Program to review the Howard County School redistricting process to (1) identify opportunities to apply computer-based analytical processes for more efficient school redistricting that are not subject to personal or political influence and (2) predict the number of prekindergarten seats that will be needed within the following three years, to the extent practicable. The University System of Maryland (USM) must implement and administer the program and provide specified staff. In fiscal 2024, the Governor must include an appropriation of \$200,000 for the program. By June 30 each year, beginning in 2024 through 2028, USM must report to specified committees of the General Assembly on specified information. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2022, and terminates June 30, 2028.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: USM higher education expenditures increase an estimated \$178,800 in FY 2023. USM higher education expenditures continue through FY 2028 and reflect annualization and inflation. In FY 2024, USM higher education expenditures are offset by \$200,000 in mandated general funds. **This bill establishes a mandated appropriation for FY 2024.**

(in dollars)	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
Higher Ed Rev.	\$0	\$200,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	\$0	\$200,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Higher Ed Exp.	\$178,800	\$204,700	\$211,600	\$218,800	\$226,100
Net Effect	(\$178,800)	(\$204,700)	(\$211,600)	(\$218,800)	(\$226,100)

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

Local Effect: Howard County Public Schools (HCPS) expenditures potentially increase minimally to provide information and analytic support in the initial years of the pilot program; however, HCPS expenditures for redistricting and planning may decrease in future years. Any such impact cannot be reliably estimated. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: USM may coordinate with specified institutions and programs to implement and administer the program. USM must provide (1) a project manager with experience in State planning and (2) a database engineer with experience in GIS software and GIS queries or SQL programming and queries.

A local board of education may use results obtained through the program in its redistricting process.

Current Law:

Establishment of a Public School

Subject to approval by the State Superintendent and in accordance with State Board of Education regulations, a local board may establish a public school if, in its judgment, it is advisable. On approval by the State Superintendent, any school established becomes a part of the State program of public education. With the advice of the local superintendent of schools, a local board of education must determine the geographical attendance area for each school established.

In November 2019, the Howard County Board of Education approved a redistricting plan [School Planning – HCPSS](#) for the 2020-2021 school year. The plan, which changes the attendance area for more than 5,400 students in the county, was the culmination of the largest redistricting effort in the county's history. The approved redistricting plan is intended to reduce overcrowding and advance socioeconomic equity.

State Fiscal Effect: According to the bill, USM must provide (1) a project manager with experience in State planning and (2) a database engineer with experience in GIS software and GIS queries or SQL programming and queries. USM advises that it will cost approximately a total of \$300,000 to \$325,000 annually to hire individuals with the required skills. The Department of Legislative Services advises that costs are likely less. Thus, USM higher education expenditures increase by an estimated \$178,771 in fiscal 2023, which accounts for a 90-day start-up delay following the bill's July 1, 2022

effective date. This estimate includes the cost of hiring two full-time contractual staff with the specified qualifications to (1) identify opportunities to apply computer-based analytical processes for more efficient school redistricting that are not subject to personal or political influence and (2) to the extent practicable, predict the number of prekindergarten seats that will be needed within the following three years. It includes salaries, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Positions	2
Salaries and Fringe Benefits	\$164,085
Operating Expenses	<u>14,686</u>
Total FY 2023 USM Expenditures	\$178,771

Future year expenditures reflect full salaries with annual increases and employee turnover as well as annual increases in ongoing operating expenses. It is assumed that there are no expenditures after the June 30, 2028 (fiscal 2028) termination date.

This estimate does not include any health insurance costs that could be incurred for specified contractual employees under the State’s implementation of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

In fiscal 2024, \$200,000 of the USM higher education expenditures are offset by \$200,000 in mandated general funds.

Other specified State agencies and entities may choose to coordinate with USM using existing resources.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Howard County; University System of Maryland; Department of Budget and Management; Department of Legislative Services

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