

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2023 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

Senate Bill 799  
(Senator Hester)

Education, Energy, and the Environment

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**Public Schools - Cyber Safety Guide - Development, Usage, and Reporting**

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This bill requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), the Behavioral Health Administration within the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS), and the Department of Information Technology (DoIT) to develop and publish jointly a cyber safety guide for public schools by July 1, 2024. The bill includes a related reporting requirement. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2023.**

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures for MSDE increase by as much as \$100,000 in FY 2024 only, as discussed below. Otherwise, the bill has no material effect on State operations or finances.

(in dollars)	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	100,000	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$100,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

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

**Local Effect:** The bill does not materially affect local school system operations or finances.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Bill Summary:** The cyber safety guide must be available by the 2024-2025 school year and contain information and guidance on safe Internet, social media, and technology use

for (1) students in prekindergarten through grade 12; (2) parents; and (3) school employees who interact with students. It must be developed in consultation with professionals who specialize in child development and child psychology and include age-appropriate information and best practices, as specified.

The cyber safety guide must be posted on MSDE's and MCSS's websites and distributed to each public school. The State Board of Education may adopt regulations to implement the bill.

By July 1, 2024, the four affected agencies must jointly report to the General Assembly on the development and usage of the cyber safety guide.

**Current Law:** There are no requirements in current law to develop or provide a cyber safety guide for public schools.

All students in Maryland's public schools, without exception, have the right to educational environments that are safe, appropriate for academic achievement, and free from any form of harassment.

**State Expenditures:** MSDE and DoIT each advise that they require additional staff support to develop and publish the cyber safety guide, while MCSS and MDH indicate that they can provide support with existing resources. The bill requires the guide to be developed in consultation with experts on child development and child psychology. Moreover, development of the guide requires particular cybersecurity expertise related to children that may not be available in the four agencies.

Therefore, general fund expenditures for MSDE increase by as much as \$100,000 in fiscal 2024 for expert consultants to assist in the development and publication of the cyber safety guide (or multiple guides, if determined to be more appropriate) as well as any related printing costs. As the guide must be available for the 2024-2025 school year, additional expenditures are needed only for one year.

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## Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See SB 162 and HB 1410 of 2022 and SB 231 and HB 824 of 2021.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Information Technology; Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Center for School Safety; Maryland Department of Health; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 10, 2023  
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