

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 310 (Senator Simonaire)
Education, Energy, and the Environment

Education - Youth Suicide Prevention School Program - Revisions

This bill expands the educational programs authorized under the Youth Suicide Prevention School Program to include classroom instruction designed to increase pupils' awareness of the relationship between gambling and youth suicide. The bill likewise expands the findings and declarations of the General Assembly to include that (1) youth suicide often exists in combination with other problems, including gambling addiction and (2) that a suicide prevention program for young people must recognize student behavioral health issues, recognize students experiencing trauma or violence out of school, and refer students to behavioral health services. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) can update regulations and materials used for the Youth Suicide Prevention School Program with existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: Local school systems can likely update any local youth suicide prevention programs to include information on gambling addiction with budgeted existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Chapter 122 of 1986 established the Youth Suicide Prevention School Program, administered by MSDE in cooperation with local school systems and community

suicide prevention agencies. The program requires MSDE to adopt regulations that set eligibility guidelines for State funding of youth suicide prevention school programs. Additionally, youth suicide prevention school programs must plan, fund, and implement educational programs, which may include classroom instruction, school or community-based alternative programs outside of the classroom, and teacher training programs. Among other things, classroom instruction may be designed to achieve an increase in pupils' awareness of the relationship between drug and alcohol use and youth suicide.

Chapter 36 of 2020, The Blueprint for Maryland's Future established the Maryland Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports within the Maryland Community Health Resources Commission. The consortium must complete certain tasks related to the development of coordinated community supports partnerships to meet student behavioral health needs and other related challenges in a holistic, nonstigmatized, and coordinated manner, including developing a statewide framework for the creation of a coordinated community supports partnership, implementing a related grant program, evaluating a payment reimbursement program for providers, and developing a program for uninsured students. In addition, in consultation with MSDE, the consortium must develop best practices for the creation of a positive classroom for all students. The Blueprint also expanded funding for school-based health centers and for local school systems to train school staff to recognize student behavioral health issues and required local boards of education to enhance and expand the availability of behavioral health services to students.

State Fiscal Effect: MSDE advises that, although the agency supports the development of youth suicide prevention programs with supports that include staff development, classroom programs of instruction, and crisis intervention, the State has not allocated additional funding to MSDE to foster the development of local youth suicide prevention programs since 2009. The program was subsequently funded via a federal grant to MDH's Behavioral Health Administration; however, the federal grant ended in 2019. MDH advises that the agency still provides assistance for local school systems running their own suicide prevention programs, including by generating a School Suicide Prevention Toolkit. Additionally, MDH works with the Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling to develop materials related to gambling addiction. Therefore, although, MSDE and MDH may need to adopt new regulations, update procedures governing the Youth Suicide Prevention School Program, and potentially expand existing supports made available to local programs, such tasks are achievable with existing resources.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Association of County Health Officers; Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Department of Health; Maryland State Lottery and Gaming Control Agency; Baltimore City Public Schools; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Baltimore County Public Schools; Frederick County Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; Prince George's County Public Schools; St. Mary's County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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km/jc

Analysis by: Michael E. Sousane

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