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FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 242

(Senator Britt, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Ways and Means

Education - Multiple Suspensions Services Pilot Program

This bill establishes a three-year Multiple Suspensions Services Pilot Program to be implemented in one public school in each of two local school systems selected by the State Superintendent of Schools. A student who is enrolled in a school participating in the pilot program and is subject to multiple suspensions totaling more than 10 school days in a school year must be referred to the pupil services team in the student's school. In addition, a principal must notify the local superintendent of schools in writing if a student who has been suspended more than 10 days is subsequently suspended again. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must reimburse the participating local school systems for at least half of the cost of implementing the pilot program. By December 31, 2009, MSDE must report on the effectiveness of the pilot program.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2007 and terminates June 30, 2010.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures would increase by an estimated \$191,200 in FY 2008 to support 50% of the cost of the pilot program. Future year expenditure estimates reflect salary increases for local school system personnel and the termination of the program after FY 2010. Revenues would not be affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	191,200	197,000	203,000	0	0
Net Effect	(\$191,200)	(\$197,000)	(\$203,000)	\$0	\$0

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

Local Effect: Local school revenues from State aid would increase by an estimated \$191,200 in FY 2008. The funding would support 50% of pilot program costs, and the

two local school systems participating in the program would be responsible for the other 50%. The additional State aid would continue through FY 2010.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: Within five days after a suspension that brings the cumulative number of days a student is absent from a pilot program school to more than 10 days in a school year, the principal of the school must refer the student to the school's pupil services team and provide written notice to the student and the student's parent or guardian that the team will be meeting. Written notice must be provided in the native language of the student's parent or guardian.

Within 10 days after referral to the pupil services team, the team must meet with the student and the student's parent or guardian to develop a plan to prevent further suspensions; identify resources to minimize additional suspensions; and review the student's record and other relevant information to determine whether the student may have a disability that warrants referral to an individualized education program team. The group must also determine dates and times for subsequent meetings when the plan can be reviewed and revised as needed.

Current Law: For cause, a public school principal may suspend any student in the principal's school for up to 10 days. The student or the student's parent or guardian must be given a conference with the principal and any other appropriate personnel during the suspension period. While suspended, a student has to remain away from school premises during school hours and may not participate in school-sponsored activities.

At the request of a principal, a local school superintendent may suspend a student for more than 10 school days or may expel a student after an investigation and a conference with the student and the student's parent or guardian. A student or the parent or guardian of a student may appeal the superintendent's decision to the local board of education.

Background: In the 2005-2006 school year, more than 72,600 students were suspended a total of 127,000 times. Approximately 26,900 students, or 37% of all suspended students, were suspended multiple times. **Exhibit 1** shows the number of suspensions served by students who had multiple suspensions.

Exhibit 1
Number of Suspensions Served by Students with Multiple Suspensions
2005-2006 School Year

<u>Times</u> <u>Suspended</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Percent of Multiple</u> <u>Suspendees</u>
2	13,922	51.7%
3	6,302	23.4%
4	3,218	11.9%
5	1,601	5.9%
6 or more	<u>1,889</u>	<u>7.0%</u>
Total	26,932	100.0%

Source: Maryland State Department of Education

The most common categories of suspensions were disrespect/insubordination/disruption, which accounted for 36.8% of suspensions in the 2005-2006 school year, and attacks/threats/fighting, which accounted for 29.7% of suspensions that year.

MSDE notes that, depending on the school system, pupil services teams may consist of a school administrator, a teacher, a health service professional, a pupil personnel worker, a school counselor, a social worker, a school psychologist, and/or a special educator.

Currently, a student who is suspended for more than 10 days in a single suspension must meet with the local superintendent of schools or the superintendent's representative, and the student must at least be given a community resources list that can be used to obtain further services. MSDE reports that there were 4,414 students in the 2005-2006 school year who were suspended for more than 10 days or expelled from school. Not including those students for whom any one suspension exceeded 10 days, MSDE reports that 6,672 students in the 2004-2005 school year and 6,927 students in the 2005-2006 school year had multiple suspensions that added to more than 10 days.

State Expenditures: General fund expenditures would increase by an estimated \$191,200 in fiscal 2008 to pay 50% of the costs for the pilot program. Because the bill requires school systems selected to participate in the program to designate high-suspension schools for the pilot program, the estimate assumes that the two schools participating in the program would each need to hire two full-time pupil personnel workers or social workers to meet with students and develop intervention plans for them. The State would pay one-half of the local school system costs, or an estimated \$95,600 per participating school system. This estimate was calculated using the average

fiscal 2006 salary for pupil personnel and social workers (\$71,853) and estimating 4% annual growth plus fringe benefits at 23% of salary to get an average cost per pupil personnel/social worker of \$95,600. Future year general fund expenditures would reflect salary increases for the workers and would end after fiscal 2010 when the pilot program terminates.

Local Fiscal Effect: Two local school systems selected by the State Superintendent of Schools would receive an estimated \$191,200 (\$95,600 each) in additional State aid in fiscal 2008. The local school systems would pay the other 50% of pilot program costs, or approximately \$95,600 per system. The State and local funds would be expended to hire additional pupil personnel and social workers for the two schools participating in the pilot program.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 639 (Delegate Stukes, *et al.*) – Ways and Means.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Legislative Services

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Analysis by: Mark W. Collins

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