

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2008 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 403 (Delegate Nathan-Pulliam, *et al.*)  
Health and Government Operations

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State Advisory Council on Physical Fitness - Obesity in School-Age Children

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This bill adds to the duties of the State Advisory Council on Physical Fitness by requiring the council to recommend ways to increase physical activity in schools and by school-age children and teachers, including adding alternative exercise programs to school curriculums. In addition, the council has to consult with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to develop a method for collecting data on the effect of such programs on complications related to obesity in children, including type II diabetes. Recommendations have to be submitted to the Maryland State Department of Education, county boards of education, and private and parochial schools.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** The bill's requirements could be handled with existing resources, assuming the council is charged with developing mechanisms for data collection and not implementation. If implementation were required, general fund expenditures could increase, potentially by a significant amount.

**Local Effect:** None, assuming that mechanisms developed and recommendations made by the council are not required to be adopted by local schools under the bill. However, if implementation were required, local school expenditures could increase significantly.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## Analysis

**Current Law:** The State Advisory Council on Physical Fitness is charged with

- improving the habits in recreation, exercise, sports, and the use of leisure time;
- protecting and improving physique and health; and
- improving instruction for any of these purposes.

The council maintains liaison with

- MSDE;
- county boards of education; private and parochial schools;
- county commissions; and
- physical fitness agencies in other states and the federal government.

In addition, the council

- consults with and advises county advisory councils on their physical fitness programs;
- gives out information on physical fitness programs in the State by publication, advertisement, conferences, workshops, programs, lectures, and other means; and
- collects and assembles pertinent information from other State agencies.

**Background:** A National Center for Health Statistics 2003-2004 survey indicates that nationally about 17% of children and adolescents ages 2 to 19 were overweight. According to a report released by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene in 2006, there is a lack of data on the weight of children in Maryland. However, 2002 Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System data indicate that 14% of low-income children in federally funded maternal and child health programs age 2 to 5 were overweight. This represents a significant increase from 8.2% in 1997.

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## Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 15, 2008  
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