

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2015 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 763
Ways and Means

(Delegate Cullison, *et al.*)

Task Force to Study the Effectiveness of Teacher Education Programs in the Instruction of Reading

This bill establishes the Task Force to Study the Effectiveness of Teacher Education Programs in the Instruction of Reading. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must provide staff for the task force. By December 31, 2015, the task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2015, and terminates June 30, 2016.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MSDE can staff the task force using existing resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The 18-member task force includes 1 member of the Senate and 1 member of the House of Delegates. The Governor must designate the chair of the task force. A member of the task force may not receive compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for standard travel expenses.

The task force must:

- study and assess whether students in the State are meeting age- and grade-appropriate benchmarks for reading comprehension;
- study whether current teacher education courses are adequately preparing teachers to teach students how to read;
- study whether current assessments given at the completion of teacher education courses are adequately assessing whether an individual is prepared to teach reading;
- study whether current teacher education courses include an emphasis on phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, fluency, and comprehension;
- research teacher education courses relating to reading instruction in other states, compile a list of best practices, and assess whether any of the findings should be applied in the State; and
- research other states that require additional assessments or certifications specifically designed to measure a teacher's ability to teach reading, compile a list of best practices, and assess whether any of the findings should be applied in the State.

The task force must make recommendations on the following: (1) whether the State should require additional teacher education coursework, assessments, or certifications specific to an individual's ability to teach reading instruction before an individual is given a credential to teach in the State; (2) funding requirements and budgetary priorities necessary to carry out any legislative or policy initiatives of the task force; and (3) any other relevant issues or considerations identified by the task force.

Current Law/ Background: MSDE advises that a work group, made up of experts from higher education, the Maryland chapter of the International Reading Association, local school system teachers and specialists, and MSDE specialists, was established in April 2014 to begin revising the reading courses required for secondary teachers seeking certification and is now completing a final draft of Literacy in the Content Area Parts I and II. Directions and Rubrics for development should be available by summer 2015.

In April 2015, a second work group will begin revising the reading courses required for teachers of elementary students. Directions and Rubrics for development are anticipated by summer 2016. Both work groups convene on a voluntary basis with no remuneration, and with any food or drink supplied by the participants themselves.

MSDE advises that these two MSDE-facilitated workgroups will continue to meet if the task force proposed in the bill is enacted. In that case, there will be concurrent groups working toward establishing new reading requirements for certified teachers during 2015.

State Expenditures: MSDE advises that due to constrained budgets additional resources are required to staff the task force. The Department of Legislative Services advises that MSDE can staff the task force using existing resources.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 2, 2015
md/rhh

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