

**Department of Legislative Services**

Maryland General Assembly

2015 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

Senate Bill 27

(Senators Brochin and Zirkin)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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**Baltimore County Public Schools - Revocation of Magnet Status - Approval**

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This bill specifies, that in Baltimore County, the revocation of the magnet status of a public school in the county does not become effective until the revocation is approved by the majority vote of all the members of the Baltimore County Senate and House delegations to the General Assembly.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2015.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** The bill does not directly affect Baltimore County finances. **This bill may impose a mandate on a unit of local government.**

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** Subject to approval by the State Superintendent and in accordance with the applicable bylaws, rules, and regulations of the State Board of Education, a county board of education may establish a public school if, in its judgment, it is advisable. On approval by the State Superintendent, any school that is established becomes a part of the State program of public education. With the advice of the county superintendent, the county board must determine the geographical attendance area for each school that is established.

**Background:** The Baltimore County Board of Education currently provides magnet programs at 6 elementary schools, 7 middle schools, and 15 high schools throughout Baltimore County, as shown in **Appendix 1**. The Baltimore County Board of Education’s proposed fiscal 2016 budget includes \$478,976 for the Magnet Office.

An external audit of the Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) Magnet Programs was conducted in 2013, and among its recommendations was to form a task force charged with defining the role, definition, and value of magnet programs at the elementary, middle, and high school levels and the development of a five-year strategic plan to address the other audit recommendations. The Magnet Task Force was convened in December 2013 and met through March 2014.

In August 2014, the task force reconvened and was tasked with developing a definition for the BCPS magnet programs and beginning the implementation of the strategic plan. Collecting and analyzing data and input from a wide array of sources, including parents, students, BCPS teachers and administrators, and other community stakeholders is considered to be a crucial part of the role of the task force. At the end of the 2014-2015 academic year, the task force plans to submit an annual progress report, including findings and recommendations to the BCPS Superintendent.

Initial reports indicate that the task force has recommended removing or altering the magnet status of two elementary schools – Cromwell Valley Elementary School and Lutherville Laboratory Elementary School – for the 2015 and 2016 school year, which has led to much concern in the affected communities. The decision to remove or alter the magnet status of a school can be made by the county superintendent and school board. The school board indicates that recommendations from the magnet task force regarding the magnet status of these schools results from the county’s *Capital Improvement Plan* and is intended to address enrollment patterns and overcrowding in these areas of Baltimore County. Newspaper reports indicate that some members of the community have been concerned about a lack of transparency or input in the process.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 2, 2015  
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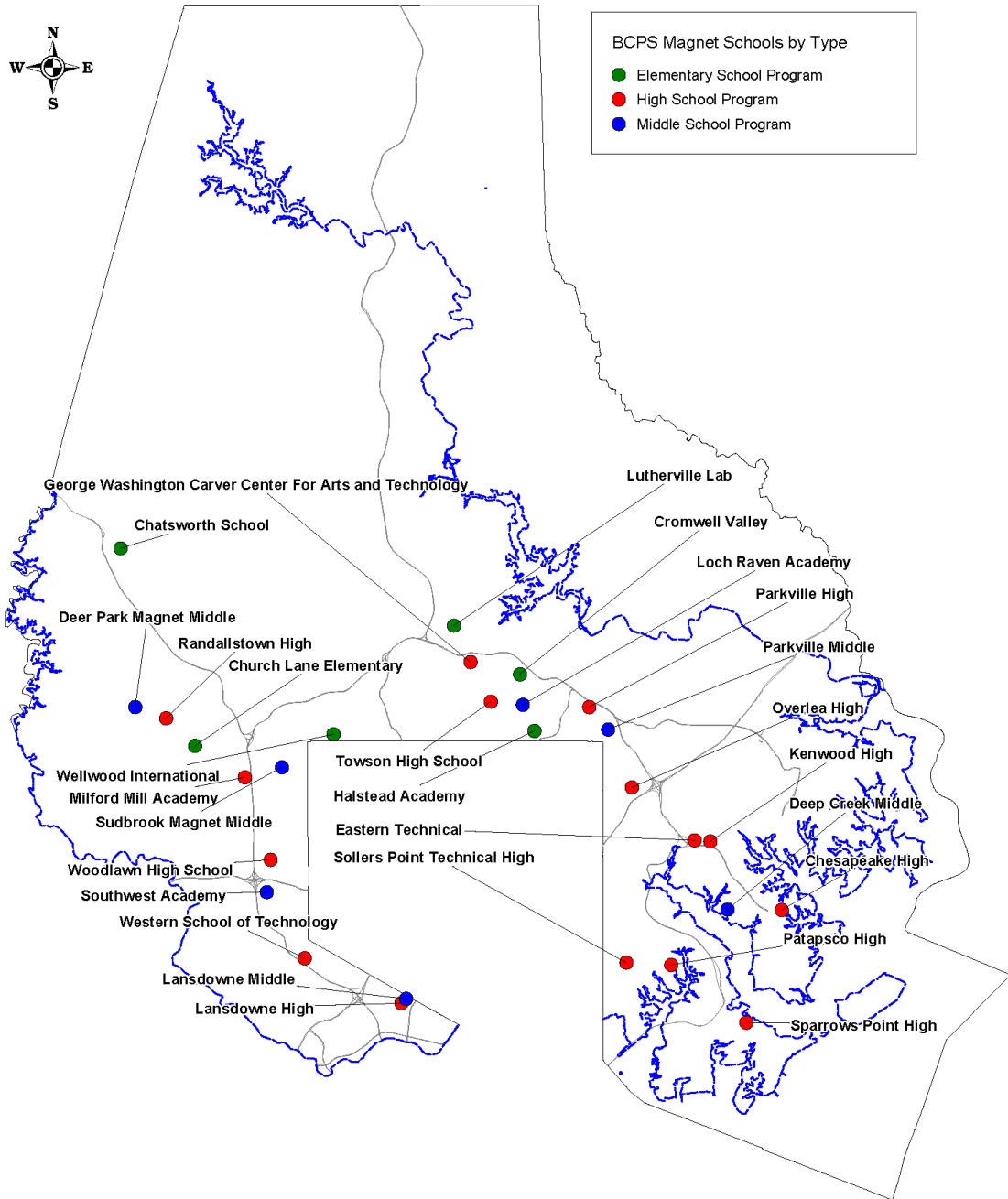
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# Appendix 1

## Baltimore County Public Schools Hosting Magnet Programs



Source: Baltimore County Public Schools Office of Strategic Planning