

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2017 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

Senate Bill 145 (Senators Pinsky and Jennings)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Ways and Means

Education - Statewide Kindergarten Assessment - Completion

This bill extends from October 1 to October 10 the date by which the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) must be completed when a local board of education or a principal and teacher who are in mutual agreement decide to assess all students entering kindergarten in a school year.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2017.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. Under the bill the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has the same number of days (45) to return the aggregate KRA results; thus, MSDE operations are not materially affected.

Local Effect: Extending the date by which local school systems and principals and teachers who are in mutual agreement to assess all students entering kindergarten in a school year does not materially affect local school system finances. However, giving local school systems and teachers more time to conduct the KRA after Labor Day may reduce the operational impact of conducting the KRA.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: The new KRA was administered for the first time to all kindergarteners entering public school during the 2014-2015 school year. The assessment is part of the new Ready for Kindergarten: Maryland's Early Childhood Comprehensive

Assessment System that was developed to align with Maryland's more rigorous PreK-12 College- and Career-Ready Standards. MSDE advises that the intent of the KRA is to identify a profile of each student's skills and any readiness gaps for instructional and intervention purposes and to report out subgroups of students to gauge the school readiness gaps by school, local school system, and by the State.

In response to concerns about increased testing and specific concerns with the first KRA administration, as well as in response to the Commission to Review Maryland's Use of Assessments and Testing in Public Schools (Chapter 421 of 2015), MSDE reported that it has reduced the number of items on the KRA by 20%, made improvements to the data transfer of enrollment information and connectivity, and updated reporting features for teachers.

Chapters 273 and 427 of 2016 limited the administration of the KRA to a representative sample of kindergarten students, as determined by MSDE, from within each local school system. However, a principal and a teacher who are in mutual agreement, or a local board of education, may administer a statewide kindergarten assessment to all students in a classroom or school system with the purpose of measuring school readiness if (1) the assessment is completed by October 1 and (2) the aggregate results are returned within 45 days after administration of the assessment.

According to the Code of Maryland Regulations (13A.08.01.02-3), the superintendent of a local school system must notify MSDE that the local board of education has decided to conduct a full census assessment of all students in all kindergarten classes or a principal and teacher in a school in the local school system have agreed to conduct a full census assessment of all students in that teacher's kindergarten class. MSDE must publish and disseminate to a local school system the aggregated assessment information (for both sample and full census assessments) no later than November 15 of each year.

On August 31, 2016, the Governor issued Executive Order 01.01.2016.09 (later amended by Executive Order 01.01.2016.13) requiring, with few exceptions, the local boards of education to open schools for student attendance no earlier than the Tuesday following the Labor Day holiday and to conclude no later than June 15 beginning in the 2017-2018 school year. Since under the executive order many local school systems will be opening for students later in the year, the time period during which the KRA may be given is more constrained. This bill provides an additional 10 days to complete the KRA after Labor Day.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

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