

Department of Legislative Services  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2018 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
 Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 1136  
 Ways and Means

(Delegate Valentino-Smith, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**Student Hearing and Vision Screenings – Reporting Requirements**

This bill requires the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to (1) review hearing and vision screening reports from local boards of education and local health departments (LHDs) and (2) in counties where fewer than 50% of students who have failed the screenings are receiving recommended services, coordinate with the local board of education or LHD to implement measures to improve the number of students receiving the recommended services.

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures increase by \$55,400 in FY 2019 for staff to implement the bill. Future years reflect annualization and ongoing costs. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	55,400	67,700	69,700	72,300	74,900
Net Effect	(\$55,400)	(\$67,700)	(\$69,700)	(\$72,300)	(\$74,900)

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

**Local Effect:** LHDs and local boards of education can likely update any policies and coordinate with MDH to implement the bill with existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

## Analysis

**Current Law:** Each local board of education or LHD must provide hearing and vision screenings for all students in local public schools, and each LHD must provide and fund the screenings for private and nonpublic schools in the jurisdiction. Unless evidence is presented that a student has been tested within the past year, the screenings must take place in the years that a child enters a school system, enters the first grade, and enters the eighth or ninth grade. Further screenings must be done in accordance with the bylaws adopted by the State Board of Education or policies adopted by a local board of education or LHD.

Results of screenings go in each child's permanent record, are given to the parents of any student who fails the screenings, and are reported to the local board of education or LHD. The parent or guardian of a student who does not pass a screening must report on the recommended services received by the student, and the report must be submitted on a form provided by the local board of education or LHD. The local board of education or LHD must report the results of screenings and the number of students receiving recommended services to MDH. A student whose parent or guardian objects in writing to a hearing or vision screening on religious grounds may not be required to take the screening.

**Background:** Vision screenings are provided by either the local school board or LHD, depending on the jurisdiction. LHDs conduct screenings in all but four jurisdictions. In one jurisdiction, the local school system contracts with a local hospital to perform the screenings. Vision screenings test for myopia, color vision, and depth perception.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) [advises](#) that good vision is key to a child's physical development, success in school, and overall well-being. The vision system is not fully formed in babies and young children, and equal input from both eyes is necessary for the brain's vision centers to develop normally. If a young child's eyes cannot send clear images to the brain, his or her vision may become limited in ways that cannot be corrected later in life. However, if problems are detected early, it is usually possible to treat them effectively. AAO [notes](#) that some symptoms of vision problems are not obvious. For example, a vision problem could result in a child having a short attention span, losing his or her place when reading, avoiding reading and other close activities, and turning his or her head to the side.

**State Expenditures:** General fund expenditures for MDH increase by \$55,365 in fiscal 2019, which accounts for the bill's October 1, 2018 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one full-time health policy analyst to analyze screening data, make determinations about whether follow-up is necessary, and coordinate with LHDs and local boards of education to implement remedial measures. It includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Position	1
Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$50,006
One-time Start-up Costs and Ongoing Operating Expenses	<u>5,359</u>
<b>Total FY 2019 General Fund Expenditures</b>	<b>\$55,365</b>

Future year expenditures reflect a full salary with annual increases and employee turnover and ongoing operating expenses.

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### Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** American Academy of Ophthalmology; Maryland Association of County Health Officers; Maryland Association of Boards of Education; Baltimore City; Montgomery and Prince George's counties; Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Department of Health; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 1, 2018  
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