

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 575
Ways and Means

(Delegate Johnson, *et al.*)

**Education - Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program -
Human and Sex Trafficking**

This bill requires that the age-appropriate education program on the awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault developed and implemented by the State Board of Education and each nonpublic school include, for students in grades 6 through 8, material promoting the awareness and prevention of human and sex trafficking. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2020.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) can develop the required program using existing resources.

Local Effect: Local school systems can provide instruction on the awareness and prevention of human and sex trafficking grades 6 through 8 using existing resources; however, resources may be diverted from existing health curriculum requirements.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Each local school system must (1) provide in public schools a comprehensive health education program with sufficient frequency and duration to meet the requirements of the State curriculum for all students in prekindergarten through grade 8 and (2) offer in public schools a comprehensive health education program in grades 9 through 12 that enables students to meet graduation requirements and to select

health education electives. Access to the curriculum must be provided for nondiploma-bound students.

In order to graduate from a public high school in Maryland, students must complete a half credit of health. According to MSDE, a half-credit course is about 67 hours of instruction time.

State law requires local school systems to teach a number of specified health topics including drug addiction and prevention education; awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault; and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) that includes hands-only CPR and the use of an automated external defibrillator.

State regulations require health instruction in the following topics: mental and emotional health; alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs; personal and consumer health; family life and human sexuality; safety and injury prevention; nutrition and fitness; and disease prevention and control.

Awareness and Prevention of Sexual Abuse

The State Board and each nonpublic school must develop and implement a program of age-appropriate education on the awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault. The program must be taught by a teacher who is trained to provide the instruction on the awareness and prevention of sexual assault and incorporated into the health curriculum of each local board of education and each nonpublic school.

“Nonpublic school” is specified to mean a noncollegiate educational institution that holds a certificate of approval from the State Board of Education and participates in the State’s Nonpublic Schools Textbook and Technology Grants program.

Background: Human trafficking is an umbrella term used to describe the activities involved when someone obtains or holds a person in compelled service. Major forms of human trafficking include forced labor, sex trafficking, bonded labor, debt bondage, involuntary domestic servitude, forced child labor, child soldiers, and child sex trafficking. Millions of adults and children are in forced labor, bonded labor, and forced prostitution around the world.

A 2017 report by the International Labour Organization estimated 24.9 million individuals were victims of forced labor worldwide in 2016, with 4.8 million of these in forced sexual exploitation. The National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline, which receives funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is available to answer calls 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The hotline provides callers with a wide range of

services such as crisis intervention, urgent and nonurgent referrals, and antitrafficking resources and technical assistance. The hotline received more than 41,000 contacts in 2018.

New Health Education Standards

New health education standards were adopted in December 2019; educators throughout the State are in the process of collaborating with MSDE to revise the health education framework for alignment to the new skill-based standards. In a skills-based health education, classroom teachers focus on the development of skills that behavior change theory link to the adoption of healthy behaviors. The core concepts, or functional information, is woven into the development of skills.

The new health education framework, as revised to comply with previous legislation, addresses abuse and assault prevention. A group of educators, representatives from nonpublic agencies, and child abuse and assault prevention experts and advocates met for over a year to develop a program on the awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault. The grade 7 standards require students to analyze laws, policies, and consequences related to sexual mistreatment, grooming, harassment, abuse, assault, exploitation, and *human trafficking* that are designed to protect young people. The indicators for grades 6 and 8 do not explicitly include the words “human and sex trafficking”; however, the words sexual mistreatment grooming, harassment, abuse, assault, exploitation, and boundary violations were selected by the committee to represent age-appropriate instruction on abuse, assault, and exploitation for those grades.

Additional Comments: Specified nonpublic school expenditures increase minimally to develop and implement a program of age-appropriate education that includes for students in grades 6 through 8 material promoting the awareness and prevention of human sex trafficking and to train teachers to deliver the program. A cost estimate cannot be reliably determined; however, it is assumed that the costs to develop and implement a program that meets the requirements of the bill are minimal.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Governor’s Office on Crime Control and Prevention; U.S. Department of State; Department of Legislative Services

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