

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2022 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 832 (Delegate Ruth)
Ways and Means

Education - Maryland Homeschool Advisory Council - Establishment

This bill establishes the Maryland Homeschool Advisory Council in the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). MSDE must provide staff for the council. Council members may not receive compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for expenses. The council must (1) meet at least four times each year at a time and place designated by the chair; (2) gather information on the needs of homeschool parents and homeschool umbrella schools in the State; and (3) advise the State Superintendent of Schools, the State Board of Education (SBE), and the Governor on matters relating to homeschooling. The bill establishes provisions regarding council membership, membership qualifications, leadership, and terms. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2022.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MSDE can staff the council using existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: Local school systems can allow homeschool liaisons to serve on the council using existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: Each member of the council must be:

- a resident of the State;
- an individual of ability and integrity who is experienced in homeschooling;

- represent the diversity of homeschool families that exist throughout the State, including diversity of homeschool philosophy, age, religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity; and
- represent the interests of the citizens of the State in promoting homeschooling as a trusted, parent-directed quality school choice.

Council members serve for three-year terms. A member may not serve more than two consecutive terms. At the end of a term, a member continues to serve until a successor is appointed or selected and qualifies. Each year, the council must elect a chair and vice chair from among its members.

Current Law: According to regulations, a parent or guardian who chooses to provide a home instruction program for his or her child must initially sign a statement on a form prescribed by MSDE which indicates consent to the home instruction and materials requirements. The form must be submitted to the local superintendent of schools at least 15 days before the beginning of a home instruction program. The home instruction program must (1) provide regular, thorough instruction in the studies usually taught in the public schools to children the same age; (2) include instruction in English, mathematics, science, social studies, art, music, health, and physical education; and (3) take place on a regular basis during the school year and be of sufficient duration to implement the instruction program. The home instruction program may include enrollment on a part-time or full-time basis in courses offered by accredited or unaccredited colleges.

A parent or guardian who chooses home instruction for his or her child must maintain a portfolio of materials as specified. However, a transcript from a college may be used in lieu of a portfolio. A parent or guardian must agree to allow a local school system to review the program of instruction as specified.

A local school system may not impose additional requirements other than those in regulation.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

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

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