

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
 First Reader

House Bill 1346
 Appropriations

(Delegate Haynes, *et al.*)

Public Safety - Student Peer Mediation Program Fund - Establishment

This bill establishes a Student Peer Mediation Program Fund to provide grants to schools and community-based organizations in Baltimore City to establish student peer mediation programs to reduce juvenile violence. The Executive Director of the Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention (GOCCP) must administer the fund, establish application procedures, and make grants from the fund to schools and community-based organizations in Baltimore City. The Governor must annually appropriate at least \$250,000 for the fund. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2019.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by at least \$285,100 in FY 2020, which assumes that at least \$250,000 is provided to capitalize the fund, even though funding is discretionary in that year. Future year general fund expenditures are annualized and reflect ongoing costs and the bill’s mandated appropriation. Special fund revenues and expenditures increase by at least \$250,000 annually beginning in FY 2020. **This bill establishes a mandated appropriation beginning in FY 2021.**

(in dollars)	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
SF Revenue	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
GF Expenditure	\$285,100	\$290,500	\$291,800	\$293,300	\$294,800
SF Expenditure	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
Net Effect	(\$285,100)	(\$290,500)	(\$291,800)	(\$293,300)	(\$294,800)

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

Local Effect: Baltimore City grant revenues may increase to the extent city schools receive grants under the bill; grant expenditures increase correspondingly.

Small Business Effect: Potential meaningful.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The fund is a special, nonlapsing fund consisting of money appropriated in the State budget, investment earnings, and money from any other source accepted for the benefit of the fund. The fund may only be used to provide grant assistance to schools and community-based organizations in Baltimore City to establish student peer mediation programs to reduce juvenile violence. Money disbursed from the fund is supplemental to and not intended to supplant funding that would otherwise be available to schools and community-based organizations in Baltimore City. Expenditures from the fund may only be made in accordance with the State budget.

The account and transactions of the fund are subject to audit by the Legislative Auditor.

A school or community-based organization that applies for a grant from the fund must provide the executive director with (1) a plan that details how the proposed program will train students in conflict resolution techniques and (2) any information the executive director deems necessary.

Current Law:

School Safety Subcabinet

Chapter 30 of 2018, the Maryland Safe to Learn Act, established the School Safety Subcabinet, which consists of the following individuals or their designees:

- the State Superintendent of Schools (who chairs the subcabinet);
- the Secretary of Health;
- the Secretary of State Police;
- the Attorney General;
- the Secretary of the Department of Disabilities; and
- the Executive Director of the Interagency Commission on School Construction.

The subcabinet is charged with multiple responsibilities, chief among them (1) collaborating with various stakeholders to provide a comprehensive, coordinated approach to school safety; (2) initiating collaborative partnerships and facilitating coordination among stakeholders to leverage existing resources to deliver school safety services uniformly to local school systems; (3) distributing grants from the Safe Schools Fund; and (4) adopting regulations to carry out its responsibilities. The subcabinet must submit an annual report with specified information.

Maryland Center for School Safety

Chapter 30 made Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS), which was first established in 2013, an independent unit within the Maryland State Department of Education and designated the subcabinet as its governing board. It also increased the mandated appropriation for MCSS' operations from \$500,000 to \$2.0 million annually, and transferred 14 new positions to MCSS. Under Chapter 30, MCSS must, among other responsibilities:

- assist local school systems to identify resources and implement training for students and parents about relationship violence, identifying the signs of unhealthy relationships, and preventing relationship violence;
- analyze data on School Resource Officers (SROs) and develop guidelines for local school systems regarding the assignment and training of SROs;
- provide staff to the subcabinet;
- certify school safety coordinators;
- consult with local school systems on safety evaluations;
- review and comment on school emergency plans; and
- report on life-threatening incidents that occur on public school grounds.

Each local school system must promptly inform MCSS of any critical, life-threatening incidents that occur on school grounds and invite the center to participate in a required after-action review of the incident. At the conclusion of the review, the local school system must file a report with MCSS, and the center must report to the Governor and General Assembly on lessons learned from the incident and any recommendations for improving school safety.

Background: In October 2018, aided by a \$200,000 federal grant that covered some start-up costs, MCSS launched a Safe Schools Maryland Tip Line (833-MD-B-SAFE) and corresponding SafeSchoolsMD smart phone app. The phone number and app are available to the public to anonymously report potential threats, including mental health crises, bullying, school and community violence, abuse, harassment, and other related activities. In its first few months of operation, it received 177 tips.

State Expenditures:

Capitalization of the Fund

Although the mandated appropriation cannot take effect until fiscal 2021, this analysis assumes that funding for grants is provided beginning in fiscal 2020, even though such

funding is discretionary in that year. Thus, general fund expenditures increase by at least \$250,000 annually beginning in fiscal 2020 to capitalize the new special fund.

Special fund revenues and expenditures increase correspondingly, reflecting receipt of the general funds and spending from the fund to provide grants to schools and community-based organizations in Baltimore City. This analysis assumes that GOCCP uses the full appropriation each year to provide grants to eligible schools and community-based organizations in Baltimore City.

Administrative Expenses

The bill does not authorize the new special fund to be used to pay GOCCP's administrative expenses; accordingly, this analysis assumes that additional general funds are needed. As a result, general fund expenditures for GOCCP increase by \$35,071 in fiscal 2020, which accounts for a 90-day start-up delay. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one part-time (50%) grant administrator to establish the required procedures and manage the fund. It includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses. Existing GOCCP staff do not have the capacity to manage the new fund.

Position	0.5
Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$29,946
Operating Expenses	<u>5,125</u>
FY 2020 GOCCP Administrative Expenditures	\$35,071

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

The Office of Legislative Audits can audit the new fund with existing resources during the course of the regular GOCCP fiscal compliance audit.

Local Fiscal Effect: Local revenues and expenditures increase for any Baltimore City schools that successfully apply for and receive grants from the new fund.

Small Business Effect: Small businesses that are able to secure funding to establish student peer mediation programs to reduce juvenile violence may be able to expand as a result of the bill. The extent to which any community-based organizations in Baltimore City that are eligible to apply for grants from the fund are considered small businesses is unknown.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 1731 of 2018 was referred to the House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee, but no further action was taken.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention; Maryland State Department of Education; Department of Budget and Management; Baltimore City Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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