

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 215 (Senator Edwards)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Allegany County and Garrett County - School Buses - Length of Operation

This bill allows a school vehicle to be operated for 15 years, rather than 12, in Allegany and Garrett counties. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2019.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not materially affect State finances or operations.

Local Effect: The bill does not materially affect Allegany or Garrett County Public School System finances or operations.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: Unless it fails to meet applicable school bus and motor vehicle safety standards, a school vehicle may be operated for 12 years. In certain counties, a school vehicle may be operated for 15 years (unless it fails to meet applicable school bus and motor vehicle safety standards). Those counties include: Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester. In those counties, a school vehicle must also meet specified maintenance standards.

A school vehicle may be operated for additional years if (1) the vehicle is maintained under a preventative maintenance plan approved by the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) and the Maryland State Police that includes an inspection at the end of the twelfth year and a minimum of two inspections by MVA each year thereafter; (2) any necessary structural repairs are certified by an independent expert approved by MVA to meet or exceed the

manufacturer's original manufacturing standards; (3) the school vehicle is equipped with specified features; and (4) the State Superintendent grants approval.

Background: The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) advises that, except for the counties allowed under statute to operate school buses for 15 years, all other counties must annually submit a waiver request to the State Superintendent of Schools seeking approval to continue operation through year 15.

Allegany and Garrett County Public Schools both advise that they currently operate school buses beyond the 12-year statutory limit by requesting approval through MSDE's waiver process. Thus, while the bill may result in administrative efficiencies for both school systems as well as MSDE, it is not anticipated to significantly affect either school system.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 276 (Allegany County Delegation and Chair, Garrett County Delegation) - Environment and Transportation.

Information Source(s): Allegany County Public Schools; Garrett County Public Schools; Maryland State Department of Education; Department of State Police; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 4, 2019
an/hlb

Analysis by: Eric F. Pierce

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510