

Commission on Local Government

Estimate of Local Fiscal Impact

2020 General Assembly Session

Bill: HB398

Patron: Keam

Date: 1/23/2020

In accordance with the provisions of §30-19.03 of the Code of Virginia, the staff of the Commission on Local Government offers the following analysis of the above-referenced legislation:

Bill Summary:

Requires school boards to employ one school counselor and one social worker for every 250 students in each elementary school, middle school, and high school in which at least 50 percent of the students are eligible for federal free lunch.

Executive Summary:

Localities have evaluated a negative fiscal impact ranging from \$0.00 - \$9,800,000.00. Most of the localities noted that the bill would require hiring additional social workers, and guidance counselors. They also noted that their analysis do not assume any additional funding from the State, but any changes to include the required additional positions in the SOQ funding calculation would cost less based on the new formula. Two localities noted that the bill would not have any impact on them because they are towns, and the county is responsible for maintaining their school.

Local Analysis:

Locality: City of Danville

Estimated Fiscal Impact:
\$1,040,000.00

This would require the hiring of 21 additional social workers and 5 additional guidance counselors. (26 positions x \$40,000). If they are proposing changes to the SOQ section of code, and money was included to cover this, then the cost would be less based on that new formula.

Locality: City of Roanoke

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

Though the City of Roanoke provides funding to our Roanoke City Public School system, that allocation is based on a funding formula tied to our local revenues. The School system is responsible for its own budget process. City Council and the City Manager's Office do not have jurisdiction on how their budget is established or how the School system spends its funds. As such, though this bill will impact the Schools, it will have no fiscal impact on the City itself.

Locality: City of Virginia Beach

Estimated Fiscal Impact:
\$3,912,000.00

The City of Virginia Beach estimates that it would need to hire an additional 21 counselors and 21 social workers in order to ensure compliance with the provisions of HB 398. The cost of the counselors is \$1.825 million while the cost of the Social Workers is \$2.087 million. Together, this equals \$3,912,000.

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**Locality:** Fairfax County

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:**  
\$9,800,000.00

This bill requires school boards to employ one school counselor and one social worker for every 250 students in each elementary school, middle school, and high school in which at least 50 percent of the students are eligible for federal free lunch. According to Fairfax County Public Schools, this would require 20 additional counselors across elementary, middle, and high at a cost of \$2.0 million and 64.4 additional social workers at a cost of \$7.8 million, for a total cost of \$9.8 million.

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Locality: Henrico County.

Estimated Fiscal Impact:
\$1,563,558.00

This bill would require the School Division to add 21 School Counselors. This analysis does not assume any additional funding from the State for these positions.

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**Locality:** Town of Buchanan

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$0.00

No fiscal impact for our town as we do not budget for schools. We fall under the county's umbrella for the school system.

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Locality: Town of Marion.

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

Schools are funded, managed and maintained by Smyth County.

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**Professional and Other Organization**

**Analysis:**

**Organization:** Northern Neck PDC

If required without commensurate state support, this bill increases the burden on local school boards. Distressed rural counties are ill-equipped to provide these added services without fiscal hardship.

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