

Commission on Local Government

Estimate of Local Fiscal Impact

2020 General Assembly Session - Special Session I

Bill: SB5004

Patron: Kiggans, Jennifer A.

Date: 8/14/2020

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:

School personnel; school nurses. Excludes school nurse positions from requirements for student support positions and instead requires each local school board to employ at least one full-time equivalent school nurse position in each elementary school, middle school, and high school in the local school division.

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### Executive Summary:

A total of 7 localities (3 cities, 3 counties, and 1 town) and 1 Planning District Commissions have evaluated a negative fiscal impact ranging from \$0.00 - \$11,100,000.

Two localities noted fiscal impacts ranging from \$300,000 to \$11,100,000 because they would either need to upgrade their Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) to Registered Nurses (RN) or they would need to increase the ratio of RN staff from one RN for every two to five schools to one RN for every elementary, middle, and high school. While one of the localities that responded with a fiscal impact has the largest school division in the Commonwealth, its estimate may not represent the greatest fiscal impact of all localities that may be affected because other large school divisions in the Commonwealth may have school health staff (1) at higher ratios, (2) that don't meet the RN standards, or (3) a combination of both factors. Three localities noted that they already comply with the standards of this bill and therefore there would be no fiscal impact. Overall, while this is a small sample of localities that could be affected, it demonstrates that mandating such staff ratios could impose significant costs for localities with school systems that (1) do not meet the staffing ratios prescribed in the bill, (2) do not have school health staff that meet the standards of being RNs, or (3) both.

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### Local Analysis:

**Locality:** City of Harrisonburg

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$0.00

There would be no financial impact to the Harrisonburg City Public Schools

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Locality: City of Norfolk

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

No fiscal impact for Norfolk Public Schools as the school system already meets the requirements stated in the bill in every elementary, middle and high school.

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**Locality:** City of Virginia Beach

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$0.00

The Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS) Staffing Standards and Guidelines sets forth that each elementary, middle, and high school are allocated a nurse per school. Therefore, VBCPS already meets the requirements of SB5004. As such, there would be no fiscal impact to VBCPS or the City if this standard were to be adopted by the General Assembly.

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Locality: Fairfax County

Estimated Fiscal Impact:
\$11,100,000.00

FCPS is the largest school district in Virginia. In FY 2020, there were over 189,000 students enrolled in 200 school sites in Fairfax County Public Schools. The Fairfax County School Health Program functions through a strong partnership with FCPS and the Health Department. Staffing is provided by the Health Department with extensive collaboration and support from public schools staff. The County school health model is a Blended Model that utilizes a combination of Public Health Nurses (PHN) who are licensed as Registered Nurses and trained paraprofessional School Health Aides (SHA). A School Health Aid is assigned to the health room at each school. A Public Health Nurse is assigned between two and five schools, depending on the acuity of each school. The system also relies on extensive and ongoing training for the SHA's as well as school staff.

Under the Fairfax County school health model, the SHA follows established protocols to provide care for sick and injured students, administer medications, conduct hearing and vision screenings, and alert parents or guardians of the need for further care when indicated. Primary PHN responsibilities include the identification of health conditions that may require support; developing a plan of care to assure the students' health needs are supported during the academic day; evaluating and coordinating responses to communicable disease; providing staff training on the support of students' health conditions; and promoting the overall health and wellness of the school community.

The proposed staffing ratio in SB 5004 consists of one full-time equivalent school nurse position in each elementary school, middle school, and high school in the local school division. To achieve the goal of one full-time equivalent nurse in every school, under the current staffing model, the County would incur a projected additional net cost of \$11.1 million in compensation and benefits.

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**Locality:** Henrico County.

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$300,000.00

Mandating a Registered School Nurse at each elementary, middle, and high school would require replacing 20 LPNs with RNs. This would cost \$15,000 per position.

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Locality: Town of Marion.

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

Schools are county functions, so the Town of Marion is not financially involved.

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**Locality:** Wise County

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$0.00

Wise County currently has nurses in each of our schools.  
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Professional and Other Organization

Analysis:

Organization: Northern Neck PDC

No negative impact.

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