

Department of Planning and Budget

2023 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: HB2367

House of Origin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Introduced	<input type="checkbox"/> Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/> Engrossed
Second House	<input type="checkbox"/> In Committee	<input type="checkbox"/> Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled

2. Patron: Hudson

3. Committee: Education

4. Title: Department of Education; statewide strategic plan; speech-language pathologists.

5. Summary: Requires the Department to develop and maintain a statewide strategic plan for recruiting and retaining speech-language pathologists that, at a minimum, (i) analyzes data to determine the specific staffing needs of local school divisions on an ongoing basis; (ii) evaluates the potential effectiveness of strategies for addressing recruitment and retention challenges, including tuition assistance, differentiated pay for speech-language pathologists, and the expansion of speech-language pathologist mentorships; and (iii) estimates the costs of implementing each such strategy, including the extent to which federal funds could be used to support implementation. The bill requires the Department, no later than November 1 of each year, to update the Chairmen of the Senate Committee on Education and Health and the House Committee on Education on its progress in implementing such plan. The foregoing provisions of the bill have a delayed effective date of July 1, 2024. The bill also directs the Department of Education and the Board of Education, in consultation with each local school board, to (a) examine the caseloads and compensation of speech-language pathologists in each local school division, (b) compare such caseloads and compensation to those of speech-language pathologists in contiguous states, and (c) make recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly no later than November 1, 2023, for such amendments to relevant law and the general appropriation act as may be necessary to effectuate a reduction in caseloads and increase in compensation that would facilitate stronger recruitment and retention of speech-language pathologists in public elementary and secondary schools in the Commonwealth.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: Yes, Item 130.

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates: Preliminary, see item 8.

8. Fiscal Implications: This bill would require the Department of Education (DOE) to conduct extensive data collection, data review, and develop recommendations for the Governor and General Assembly by November 1, 2023. DOE does not currently have staff available to

complete this work in that time frame. DOE estimates it would require \$60,000 in one time state funding in fiscal year 2024 to hire support to meet these requirements.

DOE would also need additional support to develop the strategic plan required by this bill. DOE estimates a need for an additional \$150,000 in one-time state funding in fiscal year 2025 to develop the strategic plan.

Caseload standards for students with a speech or language impairment are established by the Board of Education in 8VAC20-81-340. These positions are funded within the Special Education program of the Standards of Quality. If caseload standards are reduced as a result of the recommendations in the report, there would be an indeterminate but possible significant state and local cost. Any actual impact would depend on the standards adopted and on the Direct Aid to Public Education budget as rebenchmarked for future biennia. Any actual impact to local school divisions is indeterminate.

Speech language pathologists are funded in the Standards of Quality using the elementary and secondary funded salary rate. There is currently no mechanism in place to alter the compensation for speech language pathologists only. Such a change to the SOQ funding model would require several months of programming and testing by DOE staff.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: Board of Education, Department of Education, local school divisions

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No

11. Other Comments: None