

Commission on Local Government

Estimate of Local Fiscal Impact

2022 General Assembly Session

Bill: SB 156

Special Session:

Patron: Hashmi

Date: 1/19/2022

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:

Public schools; English language learners. Requires state funding to be provided to support new divisionwide ratios of English learner students in average daily membership to full-time equivalent teaching positions, as follows: (i) for each English language learner identified as proficiency level one, one position per 25 students; (ii) for each English language learner identified as proficiency level two, one position per 30 students; (iii) for each English language learner identified as proficiency level three, one position per 40 students; and (iv) for all other English language learners, one position per 50 students. Under the bill, in order to provide additional support for instruction of English language learners, \$150 shall be appropriated in year one to divisions for each English learner student to support professional development of instructional and support staff, purchase resources developed for students learning English, and offer grants to community-based organizations that offer support services to English language learners in school settings.

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### Executive Summary:

Localities have evaluated a negative fiscal impact ranging from \$0 - \$3.4 million.

Some localities would not incur a fiscal impact, as they are already staffing ESL teachers at or above the ratios described in the bill. Further, the additional per pupil funding for ESL students would diminish the fiscal impact on many localities.

However, other localities would incur a fiscal impact, due to additional salary costs from hiring ESL teachers. Although the bill does not require a local match to receive the state SOQ funding, one locality noted that many school divisions must fund their teacher salaries above the SOQ minimums, leading to the increased fiscal impact. The locality also noted the demand for ESL teachers would rise due to the bill, increasing competition and thereby salaries for the positions.

The precise fiscal impacts scale with the size of the school division; localities with more students reported greater fiscal impacts than localities with fewer. The proposed legislation impacts cities and counties only, as schools are not a function of towns.

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### Local Analysis:

**Locality:** City of Danville

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$0.00

SB 156 will reduce the English Learner teacher-student ratio. Currently, the SOQ ratio is 20 teachers per 1,000 English Learners. The additional funding to provide training and resources will align and support Danville Public Schools' strategic plan initiative of inclusive practices for English Learners professional development and evidence-based resources.

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Locality: City of Harrisonburg

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$750,000.00

The school system projects that it would need to hire 10 additional ESL teachers.

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**Locality:** City of Manassas

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$3,376,000.00

This legislation would require the City of Manassas Public Schools (MCPS) to hire an additional 31 English Language Learner (ELL) teachers to meet these revised ratios. Instructionally, this would be extremely beneficial for our students who are learning English and content material concurrently. The decreased ratios/ increased staff would allow MCPS to better meet the needs of our multi-lingual learners. This will be a heavy burden on human resources to recruit and hire this many ELL teachers. MCPS competes for teaching/ staff positions within Region 4, which has the highest concentration of EL students within the Commonwealth of Virginia, and as a school division, may not be able to fulfill the ratio obligation. Although the bill states that state funding for these positions is required, the City of Manassas must supplement the salaries much above what the Commonwealth allocates because of the higher cost of living and competition for teachers in this region. In fact, the City of Manassas provides more in local funding than the Commonwealth provides in state funding to support MCPS and this bill will cause this imbalance to increase.

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Locality: City of Roanoke

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

The amendments to the Standards of Quality as proposed in Senate Bill #156 state that "This appropriation shall be amended into the Standards of Quality but shall not require a local match." As a result, this bill if passed would provide more state funding for teachers of English Learners and would not require a local share to match that, so we could provide more teachers for students for whom English is not their first language, which is a population that is growing in Roanoke, so this would be of significant benefit to Roanoke City Public Schools.

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**Locality:** City of Winchester

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$140,000.00

This amount represents 2 additional ESL teachers.

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Locality: County of Albemarle

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$194,550.00

Based on 2020-2021 school year demographic data filed with VA DOE, Albemarle enrolled 1,297 English language learners. \$150 per ELL equates to \$194,550.

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**Locality:** Fairfax County

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$2,800,000.00

Excluding kindergarten would require 906.1 positions, or 26.3 additional positions at an estimated cost of \$2.8 million. Including kindergarteners as level 3 (Fairfax County Public Schools' staffing practice) would require 1,204.3 positions, or 324.5 additional positions, at an estimated cost of \$34.5 million.

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Locality: Norfolk

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

Currently aiming to staff at this rate

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**Locality:** Town of Chincoteague, Inc

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$0.00

The Town does not directly fund Schools.

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Locality: Town of Leesburg

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

Schools are provided by the County so the Town does not support any of the school costs except SROs unaffected by this legislation.

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**Locality:** Town of Marion.

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$0.00

No impact on town - county function

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Locality: Wise County

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

Due to our low number of students in this category this bill will have little impact on our division.

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