



130th MAINE LEGISLATURE

LD 1632

LR 586(03)

An Act To Update the Laws Regarding the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf

**Fiscal Note for Bill as Engrossed with:
C "A" (H-995)
Committee: Education and Cultural Affairs**

Fiscal Note

Current biennium cost increase - local school administrative units
Potential future biennium cost increase - General Fund

Fiscal Detail and Notes

This bill shifts responsibility for tuition costs for deaf and hard-of-hearing students to receive site-based services at a host school from the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf (MECDHH/GBSD) to the school administrative unit (SAU) that sends the student to the host school. This will increase costs to the sending SAU's until the student count is reflected in the sending SAU's subsidy calculation under the essential programs and services funding model. The bill also shifts the responsibility for the transportation costs to allow deaf and hard-of-hearing students to attend extracurricular events held at the center from the MECDHH/GBSD to the sending school. While the tuition costs will be included in the calculation of state subsidy to the affected SAU's beginning in fiscal year 2023-24, the costs associated with transportation to extracurricular events will be fully borne by the sending school.

This legislation also redefines statewide outreach services required to be provided by MECDHH/GBSD to SAU's that serve children who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families. To the extent that the new definition expands outreach services beyond what the center is currently required to provide, there may be increased costs to the center. State funding for the center is included in the annual General Fund appropriation for GPA within the Department of Education as part of the targeted education funds. If additional funds are required in order for the MECDHH/GBSD to fulfill the requirements related to outreach services as defined in this bill, the center may include a request for additional funding as part of its budget submission to the Commissioner of Education for the 2024-2025 biennial budget pursuant to Title 20-A MRSA, section 7407, subsection 4-B. A portion of the increased cost to the center may be offset by any savings from the shifting of tuition and transportation costs described above.