

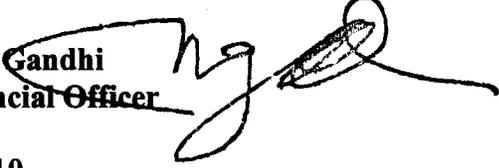
**Government of the District of Columbia
Office of the Chief Financial Officer**



Natwar M. Gandhi
Chief Financial Officer

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Vincent C. Gray
Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia

FROM: Natwar M. Gandhi 
Chief Financial Officer

DATE: July 13, 2010

SUBJECT: Fiscal Impact Statement – Amendment to “Safe Children and Safe
Neighborhoods Educational Neglect Mandatory Reporting
Amendment Act of 2010”

REFERENCE: Bill Number 18-529, Amendment 1, Shared with OCFO on
July 12, 2010

Conclusion

Funds are not sufficient in the FY 2010 through FY 2013 budget and financial plan to implement the provisions of the proposed amendment. Implementing this amendment is estimated to cost approximately \$26,000 in FY 2010 and \$500,000 over the budget and financial plan period.

Background

The proposed amendment would make the following changes to Bill 18-529, Safe Children and Safe Neighborhoods Educational Neglect Mandatory Reporting Amendment Act of 2010.¹ First, it would add a new subsection (a-2) that would:

- Require that each public, independent, private, or parochial school report to the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) any child who is age 5 through 13 and who has 10 or more days of unexcused absences within a school year;
- Stipulate that such a report not be considered a child abuse or neglect report requiring an investigation;²
- Provide that this reporting not supersede the current regulations regarding truancy,³ as detailed in Chapter 21 (Attendance and Transfers) of Title 5-E (Education) of the District

¹ Engrossed original.

² Pursuant to the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Act of 1977, approved September 23, 1977 (D.C. Law 2-22, D.C. Official Code §4-1301 *et seq.*).

³ These regulations state that all Local Education Agencies (LEAs) must refer students between the ages of 5 and 13 to CFSA after the accrual of 10 consecutive unexcused absences or 20 unexcused absences within one school year.

of Columbia Municipal Regulations and published as final by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education in November 2009. These regulations state that all Local Education Agencies (LEAs) must refer students between the ages of 5 and 13 to CFSA after the accrual of 10 consecutive unexcused absences or 20 unexcused absences within one school year; and

- Provide that the subsection would expire upon the effective date of subsection (a-1). In the current version of the bill, subsection (a-1) would require that any person required under current law to report abuse and neglect of children⁴ report to CFSA any child who is age 5 through 13 and who has 10 or more days of unexcused absences within a school year.⁵

Second, the proposed amendment would require that subsection (a-1) take effect subject to the inclusion of its fiscal effect in an approved budget and financial plan or a revised revenue estimate certified by the Chief Financial Officer.

In essence, this amendment would require—until subsection (a-1) were fully funded—that children ages 5 through 13 who have between 10 nonconsecutive and 20 unexcused absences be reported to CFSA and that CFSA not take any action regarding these cases. By keeping the current truancy regulations in place as well, it would also require that another report be made to CFSA if the child had 10 consecutive absences or accumulated 20 unexcused absences. At that time, CFSA would follow current operating procedures, including launching an investigation.

Financial Plan Impact

Funds are not sufficient in the FY 2010 through FY 2013 budget and financial plan to implement the provisions of the proposed amendment. Implementing this amendment is estimated to cost approximately \$26,000 in FY 2010 and \$500,000 over the budget and financial plan period. Requiring that all schools report to CFSA children who are age 5 through 13 and who have 10 or more days of unexcused absences within a school year would significantly increase the volume of calls received on the CFSA hotline. As such, CFSA would require two additional hotline workers to field these calls.

Estimated Negative Fiscal Impact FY 2010 through FY 2013					
	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	Four Year Total
Cost of 2 Hotline Workers	\$26,381	\$158,284	\$158,284	\$158,284	\$501,234

⁴ Pursuant to D.C. Official Code § 4-1321.02 (b). This includes CFSA employees, agents, and contractors, and every physician, psychologist, medical examiner, dentist, chiropractor, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, person involved in the care and treatment of patients, law-enforcement officer, humane officer of any agency charged with the enforcement of animal cruelty laws, school official, teacher, athletic coach, Department of Parks and Recreation employee, public housing resident manager, social service worker, day care worker, domestic violence counselor, and mental health professional.

⁵ As defined in section 1(4) of An Act To provide for compulsory school attendance, for the taking of a school census in the District of Columbia, and for other purposes, approved February 4, 1925 (43 Stat. 806; D.C. Official Code § 38-201(4)).

The Honorable Vincent C. Gray

FIS: B18-529, Amendment 1 to "Safe Children and Safe Neighborhoods Educational Neglect Mandatory Reporting Amendment Act of 2010"

Page 3 of 3

Assumptions

- Approximately 1,600 additional calls would be made to CFSA from September through June.
- Each Hotline Worker can handle 80-100 calls per month.
- Hotline workers begin in August 2010.