

# SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE

**BILL NO.** Senate Bill 1157

**PRINTER NO.** 1536

**AMOUNT**

See Fiscal Impact

**FUND**

General Fund

**DATE INTRODUCED**

April 22, 2024

**PRIME SPONSOR**

Senator Argall

**DESCRIPTION**

Senate Bill 1157 establishes a new Section 1330.1 (Exception from Compulsory Education for Certain Children with Disabilities) to allow the parent or guardian of a child that is six years of age and clinically diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder to apply to the Department of Education (department) for a one-year waiver from the compulsory attendance requirement.

The legislation requires the application for the waiver made by a parent or guardian to include an assessment by a medical professional within the last six months recommending the child continue to receive intensive early intervention services and proof from the parent or guardian that the early intervention services will be provided for the term of the waiver.

The legislation requires the department to notify the school district of residence upon receipt of the waiver request, approve the waiver for up to one year if the requirements for the student to receive the waiver are met and send an approval letter to the parent or guardian and the school district of residence.

The legislation provides that the parent or guardian of a child that receives a waiver may enroll the child in the school district of residence at any point during the school year and may enroll the child in kindergarten or first grade the following school year.

The legislation prohibits the parent or guardian of a child that receives a waiver from being eligible for compensatory education for the time the child is not enrolled in the school district of residence during the waiver period.

The legislation provides that a child that receives a waiver is to be considered an "eligible young child" under the Early Intervention Services System Act and thus eligible to receive early intervention services.

The legislation requires the department to issue guidelines to implement the provisions of the legislation within 30 days of its effective date.

The legislation is scheduled to take effect immediately.

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## FISCAL NOTE

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

To the extent that parents and guardians choose to seek waivers for their children from compulsory education as allowed under Senate Bill 1157 and the waivers are approved by the Department of Education, the Commonwealth will incur additional costs to provide early intervention services to those children. While the cost of early intervention services varies by student depending on the intensity of services provided, the average cost to the Commonwealth during the 2023-24 fiscal year is estimated to be \$5,665 per student.