
TO: Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

BILL: Senate Bill (SB) 189 – Public Schools – Inclusive and Diverse English Language Arts – Development of Content Standards and Implementation

DATE: January 17, 2024

POSITION: Oppose

Chair Feldman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) respectfully oppose **SB 189**, which would require the State Board to develop content standards for inclusive and diverse English language arts to be implemented in all public schools by the 2026-2027 school year.

We do not oppose the bill based on the merits of the proposed subject matter but on the grounds that the legislative requirement would run counter to the process that is entrusted to the State Board and MSDE.

While the State Board and MSDE are supportive of many of the fundamental principles outlined in the requirements of the bill, both entities are strident in ensuring that the development of curricular standards and frameworks be conducted through the longstanding collaborative process between the State Board, MSDE, local school systems, and stakeholders.

Both the State Board and MSDE are in the process of comprehensively developing a timeline to review and revise a series of existing standards and frameworks. Additionally, MSDE is already required by the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future to revise the ELA Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards (MCCRS) for alignment to the new College and Career Readiness Standard that the State Board is currently considering for final adoption.

Education Article § 7-202.1, which is part of the Blueprint, requires MSDE to develop, and for the State Board of Education to adopt, a fully aligned instructional system that includes high quality curriculum frameworks. However, the timeline for the revision of all content standards does not align with the new deadline established in SB 189.

Separate processes and timelines for the completion of standards and curriculum revisions that are similar to Blueprint requirements could be counterproductive both to MSDE and to local education agencies. SB 189 would allow for a short timeline for local education agencies to complete the required curriculum development, training, and procurement of new materials.

They will be required to:

- rewrite curriculum guides, including writing, reviewing, and piloting;
- procure new instructional materials aligned to the revised standards and curriculum; and
- train teachers in appropriate teaching pedagogy, implementation of the new curriculum, and implementation of new instructional materials.

MSDE, in partnership with teachers, supervisors, parents, institutes of higher education, and other stakeholders, will continue to undertake significant review of state standards and frameworks. In this process, MSDE will be certain to include our critical partners in the General Assembly.

The State Board requests that the committee consider this information on **SB 189**. Please contact Dr. Akilah Alleyne, Executive Director of Government Affairs, Education Policy, and Government Relations, at Akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov or at 410-767-0504 or Zach Hands, Executive Director of the State Board, at Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov or at 443-915-6094, if you would like any additional information.