

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
 First Reader

House Bill 50 (Delegate Acevero)
 Ways and Means

Commission on History, Culture, and Civics in Education

This bill establishes the Commission on History, Culture, and Civics in Education to make recommendations to the State Board of Education (SBE) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to further the discovery, interpretation, and learning of the history, culture, and civics of the United States and Maryland. MSDE must staff the commission; members of the commission may not receive compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for expenses as provided in the State budget. By December 30 each year, beginning in 2024, the commission must report its findings and recommendations to SBE, the Governor, and the General Assembly. By July 1 each year, SBE must review the commission’s findings and recommendations and make any appropriate changes to the educational standards for prekindergarten through grade 12. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2024.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$51,000 in FY 2025 for staffing. Future years reflect ongoing costs and inflation. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	51,000	58,000	60,600	63,300	66,100
Net Effect	(\$51,000)	(\$58,000)	(\$60,600)	(\$63,300)	(\$66,100)

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease

Local Effect: To the extent education standards are changed, local school systems may need to update their social studies curriculums to meet the new standards. Any such changes or costs associated with those updates cannot be reliably estimated but may be meaningful. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The bill establishes the membership of the commission, which, to the extent practicable, must reflect the gender, racial, ethnic, and geographic diversity of the State. In addition, a majority of the members must have classroom experience or experience in developing education content standards. Members serve for four-year terms, staggered as specified. The commission must elect a chair from among the members.

The commission must:

- examine the history, culture, and civics of the United States and Maryland including the contributions of specified minority groups; and
- make recommendations to SBE regarding the adoption of standards and programs that accurately reflect the discovery, interpretation, and learning of the history, culture, and civics of the United States and Maryland.

The commission must make all of its activities and material available on MSDE's website, as specified. Further, the commission must use multiple communication methods to provide updates and announcements related to the commission.

Current Law:

General Requirements for Instruction

With the advice of the State Superintendent of Schools, SBE establishes basic policy and guidelines for the program of instruction for public schools. Subject to State law and the regulations, bylaws, policies, and guidelines established by SBE, each local board of education must establish the curriculum guides and courses of study for schools in its jurisdiction. Policies, rules, and regulations for the graduation of students from Maryland public schools are established by local boards of education and SBE.

SBE and the State Superintendent of Schools must assist each local board of education to establish educational goals and objectives that conform to statewide educational objectives for subject areas, including reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies. With the assistance of its local board, each public school must survey current student achievement in reading, language, mathematics, science, social studies, and other areas to assess its needs.

Social Studies Instruction and Topics

According to regulations, each local school system must provide an instructional program in social studies each year for all students, prekindergarten through grade 8, and a program

that enables students to meet graduation requirements and to select social studies electives in grades 9 through 12. These programs must at least meet the content standards in the regulations. In Maryland, among other required topics, regulations require that the social studies instructional program teach students about the peoples of the nation and the world. Specifically, students must inquire about the people of the United States and the world using a historically grounded, multidisciplinary approach in order to recognize multiple narratives and acknowledge the diversity and commonality of the human experience. Every five years, each local superintendent of schools must certify to the State Superintendent of Schools that the instructional programming for prekindergarten through grade 12 meets, at a minimum, all the requirements set forth in the regulations.

State Expenditures: MSDE advises that the agency can staff the commission, facilitate the reports, and facilitate changes to standards using existing resources. However, the Department of Legislative Services advises that this work may require additional, ongoing support.

Thus, general fund expenditures increase by \$50,955 in fiscal 2025 for MSDE to hire a half-time educational program specialist to staff the commission, facilitate the reports, and oversee changes to standards. The estimate assumes a 90-day start-up delay following the bill’s July 1, 2024 effective date (during the period in which commission members are appointed). It includes a half-time salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Position	0.5
Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$44,103
Operating Expenses	<u>6,852</u>
Total FY 2025 State Expenditures	\$50,955

As the commission is a permanent entity with ongoing review and recommendation duties, future year expenditures reflect a half-time salary with an annual increase and employee turnover and ongoing operating expenses.

Many of the [State Standards and Frameworks in Social Studies](#) have been revised to address the contributions of specified minority groups. The two remaining grades (6 and 7) are currently under review. Thus, to the extent that the commission’s recommendations align with existing revisions to the State Standards and Frameworks, the bill’s requirements may be met with existing resources. However, any alignment cannot be determined until the commission is appointed and makes recommendations.

Any expense reimbursements for commission members are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

Local Expenditures: It is assumed that local school systems can implement any new curriculum requirements as part of the regular curriculum update cycle, as there is no timeline established in the bill. Each local superintendent must certify to the State Superintendent of Schools every five years that their instructional programming meets the requirements set forth in regulations.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 890 of 2023, HB 489 of 2022 and HB 140 of 2021.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; University System of Maryland; Department of Legislative Services

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