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FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 416 (Senator Kramer, *et al.*)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Education - Curriculum - Holocaust and Genocide Unit (Lessons of the
Holocaust and Genocide Act)

This bill requires each public middle school or high school and each nonpublic middle or high school that participates in State-funded education programs to include in the curriculum a unit of instruction, consistent with guidelines developed by the State Board of Education, on the Holocaust and other historic and contemporary acts of genocide. By January 1, 2020, the State Board of Education must develop guidelines for instructional content that meets specified guidelines. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2019.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) can develop the required guidelines using existing resources; however, resources may be temporarily redirected from other projects.

Local Effect: To the extent that additional materials and professional development are required, local school system expenditures may increase minimally; however, it is assumed that any costs can be absorbed in most, if not all, local school system budgets.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: It is the intent of the General Assembly that lessons of the Holocaust and genocide be taught to the students of Maryland to ensure that the unique tragedy that is the holocaust as well as other genocides that have occurred throughout the world are never forgotten and that individuals better understand how to prevent these types of events in the future.

A nonpublic middle or high school that does *not* participate in State-funded education programs is *encouraged* to include in the curriculum a unit of instruction on the Holocaust and other historic and contemporary acts of genocide consistent with guidelines developed by the State board.

Current Law: With the advice of the State Superintendent of Schools, the State Board of Education 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 the State Board of Education, 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 the State Board of Education.

“State-funded education programs” is not defined in statute. The State provides aid to eligible nonpublic schools in the operating budget including funding for textbooks and technology and the Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today program. Capital funding is also provided to eligible nonpublic schools.

Background:

Holocaust and other Historic and Contemporary Acts of Genocide

As stated in the preamble, the Holocaust was a historical event that resulted in the systematic state-sponsored mass murder of 6 million Jews and millions of other people by Nazi Germany in the name of racial purity. According to a [survey](#) commissioned by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, it was found that 22% of survey respondents between 18 and 34 said they had not heard of, or were unsure if they had heard of, the Holocaust. However, the same survey also found that the majority (58%) believed that something like the Holocaust could happen again.

Genocide is a term used to describe violence against members of a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group with the intent to destroy the entire group. The word came into general usage only after World War II, when the full extent of the atrocities committed by the Nazi regime against European Jews during that conflict became known. In 1948, the United Nations declared genocide to be an international crime; the term would later be applied to the horrific acts of violence committed during conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and in the African country of Rwanda in the 1990s.

There is no comprehensive list of historical and contemporary acts of genocide, and there is often debate about which events qualify as genocide. The [Genocide Education Project](#) list includes the genocide in the Darfur region of western Sudan, the Cambodian genocide by Pol Pot’s Khmer Rouge, the Armenian genocide by the government of the Ottoman

Empire, the genocide of peoples indigenous to the U.S. portion of North America, and the transatlantic slave trade. Other lists include other historical and contemporary acts.

Current Statewide Requirements

MSDE develops State standards and frameworks from which local curriculum is developed. Additionally, MSDE has not provided guidelines for nonpublic schools for the development of their independent curriculum.

State standards and frameworks are a list of required content topics, with indicators and objectives. Local school systems then develop their own curriculums based on the State standards and frameworks. Curriculums are more detailed than the State standards and frameworks and may include details such as required readings or lessons. However, the level of detail varies, from fully scripted lessons to more general suggestions to be more fully developed by the teachers. They can be locally developed by local administrators or teachers or purchased from a vendor.

Curriculum are often divided into units of study. There is no State definition for what constitutes a unit of study in terms of time or content. However, units generally range for two to six weeks, although they could be shorter.

MSDE advises that much of the proposed content required by the bill is currently addressed or alluded to in the [Maryland Social Studies State Standards and Frameworks](#), specifically, High School Modern World History, High School United States History, and the Social Studies Standards and Framework for Grades 6-8.

The [High School Modern World History framework](#) requires in the Crisis and Global Acceleration, 1890-1994 unit, for students to analyze the global scope and human cost of World War II by analyzing the systematic and state-sponsored atrocities perpetrated by governments in Europe and Asia during World War II. The [High School United States History framework](#) requires in the United State in a Time of Crisis, 1929-1945 unit, for students to analyze the causes of World War II in Europe and the Pacific and the involvement of the United States in the war. One of the objectives in that unit is for students to investigate the response of the United States government to the discovery of the Holocaust and immigration policies with respect to refugees.

The [Social Studies Standards and Framework for Grades 6-8](#) has two units in the grade 6 Peoples of the Nation and World standard related to the issue: the Conflict and Compromise Unit and the Cultural Diffusion Unit. The Conflict and Compromise Unit requires students to analyze major sources of tension, cooperation, and conflict in the world, and the efforts that have been made to address them by evaluating causes of conflict in the global community, such as apartheid, the acquisition of natural resources, the decline

of communism, ethnic persecution, and domestic and international terrorism. The Cultural Diffusion Unit requires students to examine how increasing diversity in global societies results from immigration, settlement, and economic development. Two of the objects for the unit are to (1) examine policies related to human rights, such as foreign aid, subsidies to developing countries, ethnic persecution, and economic sanctions and (2) examine contemporary worldwide concerns that affect international relationships, such as world health, nation building, national security, and human rights.

State Fiscal Effect: In addition to current job functions, one of the two staff members in the MSDE Social Studies Office would need to develop guidelines for instructional content on the Holocaust and other historic and contemporary acts of genocide that is age-appropriate, interdisciplinary, and consistent with other required grade level instruction. This can be done with existing resources; however, resources may be temporarily diverted from existing projects.

Local Expenditures: Actual local costs are difficult to determine prior to the development of the guidelines by the State board. A survey of three local school systems by MSDE estimated implementation costs of \$150,000. However, it is assumed that the State board takes cost into consideration when developing the required guidelines. In addition, local school systems will likely have the flexibility to implement the guidelines developed by the State board in the manner that best uses the resources available for their schools. Further, to the extent that local school systems' current curriculum align with the guidelines developed by the State board, implementation costs are less. Finally, some costs may be diverted from current curricular costs to the extent that current topics and units are removed to make room for the curriculum unit required by the bill. Therefore, accounting for all those factors, it is assumed any costs associated with implementing the curriculum developed by the State board can be absorbed in most, if not all, local school system budgets.

Additional Comments: A nonpublic middle or high school that receives State funds must also include in the curriculum a unit of instruction on the Holocaust and other historic and contemporary acts of genocide. As for the local school systems, actual costs will depend on the actual curriculum developed by the State board. Since nonpublic middle and high schools are not currently required to teach any information about the Holocaust and other historic and contemporary acts of genocide, and the schools do not benefit from economy of scale, the ability to absorb the costs, at least initially, may be less.

A nonpublic middle or high school that does *not* receive State funds is *encouraged* to include in the curriculum a unit of instruction on the required material.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, Inc.; The Genocide Education Project; Department of Legislative Services

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