

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2022 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 304 (Senators Lam and Lee)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Education - Public Schools - Asian American History Curriculum Requirement

This bill requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to develop curriculum content standards that include specified elements for a unit of instruction on Asian American history for public schools. Beginning in the 2023-2024 school year, each local board of education must implement the Asian American history curriculum content standards such that a unit of instruction is taught at least once, as specified, in elementary, middle, and high school. A local board may develop an online course to satisfy the requirements of the bill. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2022.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) can develop the content standards using existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: Local school system expenditures increase in FY 2023 and 2024 to train teachers and purchase resources and materials in alignment with the content standards by the 2023-2024 school year. Revenues are not affected. **This bill may impose a mandate on a unit of local government.**

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The Asian American history curriculum content standards must enable students to respect the dignity of all races and all peoples. The standards must require age-appropriate instruction on the following topics:

- the events of Asian American history;
- Asian American history in Maryland and the mid-Atlantic region; and
- contributions made by Asian Americans, including those specified.

SBE may prepare and make available instructional materials, including the Public Broadcasting Service's instructional materials on Asian Americans, that may be used as a guide for the development of the standards.

Each local board of education must determine the appropriate amount of instructional time necessary to satisfy the requirement for a unit of instruction on Asian American history.

Each local superintendent must ensure compliance with the requirements of the bill. SBE may adopt regulations to carry out the bill.

Current Law: 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.

The curriculum is 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.

State Expenditures: MSDE advises that it is in the process of revising the Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards (MCCRS) for alignment with the grade 10 College and Career Readiness standards required by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Chapters 36 and 55 of 2021). MSDE advises it can develop the content standards and report required by the bill using existing resources.

While MSDE notes that there is no timeframe given for the completion of the standards, the Department of Legislative Services advises that presumably the standards must be completed in time for local school systems to prepare to implement the standards for the 2023-2024 school year. For purposes of this estimate, it is assumed that the standards are completed in six months from the July 1, 2022 effective date of the bill, which is January 1, 2023. Although six months is a much shorter period than the typical period (three years it typically takes to revise content standards), the assumption allows approximately seven months for local school systems to implement the standards as discussed below.

Local Expenditures: By the 2023-2024 school year (fiscal 2024), each local school system must train teachers in the new curriculum and purchase resources and materials in alignment with the Asian American content standards developed under the bill. Assuming that the new content standards are developed by January 1, 2023, the timeframe to complete these tasks is approximately seven months spanning portions of fiscal 2023 and 2024. Thus, local school system expenditures increase, potentially significantly, in fiscal 2023 and 2024. Baltimore City Public Schools advises that it needs to develop approximately 30 lessons at an estimated cost of \$16,500. These costs do not include any materials or teacher training.

It is assumed that local school systems will use the most cost-effective way to implement the bill's requirements. Under the bill, local school systems may meet the requirement by developing online courses. The costs to develop an online course for one unit are unknown; however, the development of a half-credit course in financial literacy cost MSDE \$250,000.

It is assumed that the content standards developed by MSDE will dictate the approximate length of the units required.

To the extent that local curriculum and materials already meet the requirements of the new English Language Arts content standards adopted by SBE by January 1, 2023, costs for those local school systems may be less. However, any cost savings cannot be estimated until the new content standards are adopted.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Baltimore City Public Schools; Prince George's County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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