

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2022 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 888 (Senator Lee)
 Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**Education - American Studies and Social Equity Standards Advisory Board -
 Academic Standards and Model Policy**

This bill establishes the American Studies and Social Equity Standards Advisory Board within the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). By April 30, 2024, the advisory board must submit, as specified, (1) recommended American Studies academic standards; (2) recommended additional American Studies content, as specified; and (3) a model policy on Ethnic and Social Equity in Schools. By May 31, 2025, the State Board of Education (SBE) must adopt American Studies academic standards for each grade level. By the 2025-2026 school year, each local board must (1) adopt a policy that takes into consideration the model policy and (2) implement a curriculum based on the standards adopted by SBE. By December 31, 2025, MSDE must report on the standards and the implementation of the standards and the ethnic and social equity policies. MSDE must provide staff for the board. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2022, and terminates June 30, 2026.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$48,000 in FY 2023. Future years reflect annualization, and the termination of the contractual position in FY 2026. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	48,000	51,200	52,900	23,000	0
Net Effect	(\$48,000)	(\$51,200)	(\$52,900)	(\$23,000)	\$0

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

Local Effect: Local school system expenditures increase in FY 2024 and 2025 to train teachers and purchase resources and materials in alignment with the content standards by the 2025-2026 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 advisory board must:

- identify existing State academic standards in U.S. History that do not incorporate the history, contributions, and perspectives of ethnic groups and social groups;
- develop American Studies academic standards for students at each grade level as specified;
- recommend content and instructional methods that enable students to safely explore questions of identity, race, equality, and racism in American Studies courses; and
- recommend basic curriculum and extracurricular programs that may be offered in school that are welcoming to all students and take into account parental concerns about religion or culture.

The model policy on Ethnic and Social Equity in Schools developed by the advisory board must include minimum standards for a school environment. The standards must address specified topics, including prohibiting conduct based on racism, sexism, ablism, and other social biases, and specify the appropriate manner to address alleged misconduct, including disciplinary action, if appropriate.

By April 30, 2024, the advisory board must submit the model policy to SBE and each local board of education. The advisory must also report specified information to MSDE by that date.

The bill establishes the advisory board's membership. MSDE, in consultation with the Maryland Boards of Education, must develop an application process for individuals seeking appointment to the advisory board as a representative of an ethnic or social group. At least 80% of the members representing specified groups must meet specified geographic and advocacy experience requirements. A vacancy must be filled in the same manner the vacated member was appointed or selected. The member filling a vacancy must represent

the same ethnic or social group. The advisory board must select a chair from among its members.

A member of the board may not receive compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for expenses.

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.

Educational Equity and Excellence

According to regulations, MSDE must establish systems of structure and support for school systems, students, teachers, and other stakeholders that ensure educational equity and excellence. Each local school system must develop an educational equity policy and regulations, to be reviewed every three years, with the goal of providing educational equity to all students. The policy and regulations must meet specified requirements, including being designed to create and maintain environments that are equitable, fair, safe, diverse, and inclusive.

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 which 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: According to MDSE, the most recent [State Standards and Frameworks in Social Studies](#), which were published in June 2020, address the requirements of the American Studies academic standards that must be developed by the advisory board. However, under the bill the advisory board must still meet and develop the model policy and academic standards.

Therefore, MSDE advises that to support the advisory board in the development of the model standard and the developing recommendations for the academic content standards, content, basic curriculum, and extracurricular programs, additional staffing is required. Thus, general fund expenditures increase by \$47,967 in fiscal 2023, which accounts for a 90-day start-up delay from the bill’s July 1, 2022 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one half-time contractual education program specialist to staff the advisory board. It includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Contractual Position	0.5
Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$41,021
One-time Start-up Costs	6,548
Operating Expenses	<u>398</u>
Total FY 2023 Expenditures	\$47,967

Future year expenditures reflect half-time salary with annual increases and employee turnover as well as annual increases in ongoing operating expenses and the termination of the contractual position on December 31, 2025, when the implementation report is complete.

This estimate does not include any health insurance costs that could be incurred for specified contractual employees under the State’s implementation of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

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

Local Expenditures: By the 2025-2026 school year (fiscal 2025), each local school system must (1) adopt a policy on Ethnic and Social Equity in Schools that takes into

consideration the model policy and (2) implement a curriculum based on the American Studies academic standards adopted by SBE. Therefore, by the beginning of the 2025-2026 school year, each local school system must train teachers in the new policy and curriculum and purchase resources and material in alignment with the new content standards.

The advisory board must submit the model policy to SBE and each local board by April 30, 2024; thus, local school systems will have approximately 15 months to develop and implement a local Ethnic and Social Equity in Schools that takes into consideration the model policy. SBE must adopt American Students academic standards by May 31, 2025; thus, local school systems will have approximately two months to implement the standards. Therefore, local school system expenditures increase in portions of fiscal 2024 and 2025. Due to the short timeframe to implement the curriculum, expenditures may increase significantly in fiscal 2025. Actual costs will depend on the model policy developed by the advisory board and the standards adopted by SBE.

To the extent that local policies, curriculums, and materials already meet the requirements of the model policy and content standards developed under the bill, costs for those local school systems may be less. However, any cost savings cannot be estimated until the model policy and content standards are adopted.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: HB 352 (Delegate Qi, *et al.*) - Ways and Means.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; Prince George's County Public Schools; St. Mary's County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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