

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2023 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 149 (Senator Salling)
Education, Energy, and the Environment

Education - Curriculum - Unit of Instruction on September 11, 2001, Terrorist Attacks

This bill requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to develop, by January 1, 2024, contents standards for instructional content on the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks that is age-appropriate, interdisciplinary, and consistent with other required grade-level instruction. Beginning with the 2024-2025 school year, each public school and each nonpublic school that participates in State-funded education programs must include in the curriculum a unit of instruction on the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. A nonpublic school that does not participate in State-funded education programs is encouraged to include the instruction. **The bill takes effect on July 1, 2023.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) can develop the required standards using existing resources, although resources may be temporarily diverted from other projects. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: Local school system expenditures may increase in FY 2024 and 2025 to train teachers and purchase resources and materials in alignment with the content standards by the 2024-2025 school year. Revenues are not affected. **This bill may impose a mandate on a unit of local government.**

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

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.

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 the [State Standards and Frameworks in Social Studies](#) provide several opportunities for local systems to teach students about the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. One example of an opportunity is Unit 5: Globalization, Terrorism, and Political Polarization in the high school [U.S. history framework and content standards](#).

To develop and implement new content standards specifically in alignment with the bill would take a minimum of three years to complete, according to MSDE. The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) advises that the bill requires the content standards to be developed by January 1, 2024, which is six months following the bill's July 1, 2023 effective date. DLS also advises that given the existing teaching opportunities in the existing State framework MSDE can develop the standards during the required timeframe using existing resources; however, resources may be temporarily diverted from other projects, including the existing content revisions.

MSDE is responsible for the approval and oversight of approximately 1,300 nonpublic and registered church exempt schools, of which approximately 400 are nursery schools. The staff of MSDE's Textbook and Technology program can ensure compliance of nonpublic schools subject to the bill's requirements using existing resources.

Local Expenditures: By the 2024-2025 school year (fiscal 2025), each local school system *may* need to train teachers in the new curriculum and purchase resources and materials in alignment with the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks content standards. It is assumed that these tasks occur in portions of fiscal 2024 and 2025. Actual costs will depend on the standards developed by MSDE and the extent to which local school systems already cover the required material.

Depending on the content standards developed by MSDE, expenditures may be absorbable by most, if not all local school systems given the limited scope of the topic. However, if

the content standards require extensive materials or teacher training, the costs may not be absorbable. Most costs are in fiscal 2024 and 2025 during the implementation of the new content standards. Costs for fiscal 2026 and beyond are likely minimal.

Additional Comments: A nonpublic school that receives State funds must also include in the curriculum a unit of instruction on the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. As with the local school systems, actual costs will depend on the actual content standards developed by the State board. Since nonpublic schools are not currently required to teach any information about the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, and the schools do not benefit from economy of scale, the ability to absorb the costs, at least initially, may be less.

A nonpublic 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: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See SB 237 of 2022.

Designated Cross File: None.

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

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