

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2024 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

Senate Bill 189 (Senator Ellis)  
Education, Energy, and the Environment

---

**Public Schools - Inclusive and Diverse English Language Arts - Development of  
Content Standards and Implementation**

---

This bill requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to develop content standards for inclusive and diverse English language arts (ELA) to be included in the State Standards and Frameworks in ELA by December 1, 2025. By December 15, 2025, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must report on the content standards by grade level. Each local board of education must develop and implement age-appropriate curriculum guides based on the content standards developed by the State board. Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, each public school must include inclusive and diverse ELA in the ELA curriculum. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2024.**

---

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** MSDE can develop the content standards and report required by the bill using existing resources; however, resources may need to be directed from existing priorities, as explained below. Revenues are not affected.

**Local Effect:** Local school system expenditures increase, potentially significantly, in FY 2026 and 2027 to develop the required curriculum guides, train teachers in the new curriculum, and purchase resources and materials in alignment with the new ELA content standards by the 2026-2027 school year. Revenues are not affected.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

---

## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The ELA content standards developed must:

- highlight and promote diversity, including economic diversity, equity, inclusion, tolerance, and belonging;
- examine the impact that unconscious bias and economic disparities have at both an individual and societal level; and
- encourage safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental and physical disability, and religious beliefs.

**Current Law:** With the advice of the State Superintendent of Schools, SBE establishes basic policies 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.

**State Expenditures:** MSDE advises that it is in the process of revising the ELA Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards 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 that the draft framework has an entire section devoted to the analysis of curricula and its inclusion of key criteria within culturally responsive-sustaining and language-affirming instruction. The key criteria that are used to determine the quality of the curriculum are evidence of the curriculum including instructional opportunities for affirming and centering students, using literacy as a tool for civic engagement, connecting ELA instruction to the real world, as well as evidence of the inclusion of instructional materials that support multilingualism.

Thus, although the timeline of the bill and the timeline of the revision of the ELA standards for alignment with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future are not fully aligned, MSDE can meet the requirements of the bill using existing resources. However, resources may need to be temporarily diverted from existing priorities to meet the bill's deadlines.

**Local Expenditures:** By the 2026-2027 school year (fiscal 2027), each local school system must develop curriculum guides, train teachers in the new curriculum, and purchase resources and materials in alignment with the new inclusive and diverse ELA content standards adopted by December 1, 2025. The timeframe allowed by the bill to complete these tasks is approximately eight months spanning portions of fiscal 2026 and 2027. Thus, local school system expenditures increase, potentially significantly, in fiscal 2026 and

2027. Anne Arundel County Public Schools estimates these costs to total \$5.5 million; however, other local school systems advise costs are minimal due to continually updating curriculum.

To the extent that local curriculum and materials already meet the requirements of the new ELA content standards adopted by SBE by December 1, 2025, 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**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See SB 116 of 2022.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 15, 2024  
km/mcr

---

Analysis by: Caroline L. Boice

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510