

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1323 (Delegates Valderrama and Wu)
Ways and Means

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 2026-2027 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, 2025.**

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 2026 and 2027 to train teachers and purchase resources and materials in alignment with the content standards for the 2026-2027 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 (PBS) 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 from two to six weeks, although they can be shorter.

State Expenditures: MSDE advises it can develop the content standards required by the bill using existing resources; however, staff resources may be temporarily diverted from current projects.

SBE approved a new [Maryland Social Studies Framework](#) in January 2024, which includes objectives on the contributions made by Asian Americans in the advancement of the civil rights and shaping of modern judicial precedent. Specifically, the [framework](#) addresses or alludes to Asian American history in the Social Studies State Framework in grades 2, 3, 5, 8, and High School United States History. The update to the framework was informed by input from the Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) stakeholder workgroup. This group convened four times during the 2022-2023 school year to review the existing Social Studies State Frameworks and provide recommendations on how to enhance the inclusion of AAPI content.

Traditionally it has not been the role of MSDE to review and endorse curricular material produced outside of MSDE, such as instructional materials produced by PBS.

While MSDE noted, for a prior introduction of the bill, that there is no timeframe given for the completion of the standards, the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) assumes that the standards must be completed in time for local school systems to prepare to implement the standards for the 2026-2027 school year. For purposes of this estimate, it is assumed that the standards are completed six months after the July 1, 2025 effective date of the bill, which is January 1, 2026. Although six months is a much shorter period than the typical period (three years) it 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 2026-2027 school year (fiscal 2027), 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, 2026, the timeframe to complete these tasks is approximately seven months spanning portions of fiscal 2026 and 2027. Thus, local school system expenditures increase, potentially significantly, in fiscal 2026 and 2027. Several county school systems estimate curriculum development and instructional material costs in fiscal 2026, with lower costs in subsequent years. Anne Arundel County Public Schools projects \$237,300 (\$49,800 for curriculum development and \$187,500 for materials). Frederick County Public Schools estimates \$8,500 and notes the condensed course development timeline. Prince George's County Public Schools anticipates a one-time \$52,000 curriculum development cost, while St. Mary's County Public Schools projects \$14,700 in fiscal 2026 and \$19,000 in fiscal 2027.

On the other hand, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) anticipates no material costs as MCPS' elementary and secondary social studies curricula includes the history of Asians and Pacific Islanders and all high schools have access to offering the *elective* Asian, Pacific Islander, and Desi American Studies. DLS notes that under the bill a unit of instruction on Asian American history *must* be taught or included, as specified, at least once during elementary, middle *and* high school. Thus, it is unclear if MCPS' current curriculum offerings meet the requirements of the bill.

It is assumed that local school systems 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. A unit of instruction rather than a half-credit course may be less expensive.

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

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 1363 of 2024; HB 960 of 2023; and SB 304 and HB 922 of 2022.

Designated Cross File: None.

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

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Analysis by: Caroline L. Boice

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