

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2025 Session

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

Senate Bill 916 (Senator Kramer)  
Education, Energy, and the Environment

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**Education - Curriculum Standards - Requirements (Educate to Stop the Hate Act)**

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This bill (1) establishes new statutory requirements and timelines for the development of curriculum and content standards in all subject areas by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE); (2) by January 1, 2026, requires MSDE to review, revise, and adopt new social studies curriculum standards to include antihate education, as specified; (3) requires each local board of education to establish curriculum guides and courses of study aligned with the content standards developed by MSDE; and (4) authorizes the State Superintendent to withhold State funds from a local school system if the local board of education fails to establish curriculum resources and courses of study aligned with the content standard and curriculum standards developed by MSDE. Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, it is the intent of the General Assembly that public and specified nonpublic schools align their curricula with content and curriculum standards developed by MSDE, and other nonpublic schools are encouraged to incorporate related instruction. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.**

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Due to much of the work being underway since 2019, MSDE can adopt social studies curriculum standards with antihate education using existing resources by January 1, 2026, as explained below. Further, much of the other requirements of the bill reflect current practice. Revenues are not affected.

**Local Effect:** Local school system expenditures increase, potentially meaningfully, in FY 2026 and 2027 to develop new curriculum guides and courses based on the updated content standards and curriculum standards (and implement the new standards) and to provide training for teachers. In future years, the impact on expenditures may be minimal, as discussed below. Revenues are likely not materially affected; however, to the extent that local school systems do not implement the curriculum, State funds may be withheld. **This bill may impose a mandate on a unit of local government.**

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## **Analysis**

**Bill Summary:** “Content standards” means the statements for the program of instruction that describe the knowledge and skills students are expected to attain for each content area and grade level. “Curriculum resources” means guidance documents and frameworks used by a local school system to develop curricula to implement content standards. “Curriculum standards” means the statements that outline approaches to learning for each content area across grade levels.

The content standards, curriculum standards, and curriculum resources developed by MSDE for core subjects must (1) include evidence-based practices and the science of instruction to ensure that all students meet their full potential; (2) consider the impact on all students with a strategic focus on marginalized student groups; and (3) reflect the history of marginalized groups with particular consideration of the associated historical context and root causes. MSDE must review the content and curriculum standards at least every eight years and establish a process for maintaining stakeholder engagement during the review and development processes.

### *Antihate Curriculum Standards and Content Standards*

By January 1, 2026, the State Board of Education (SBE) must (1) review, revise, and adopt social studies curriculum standards for the State’s comprehensive instructional program to include antihate education based on historical contexts of racism and prejudice; (2) develop and adopt interdisciplinary curriculum resources for antihate education using similar historical contexts; and (3) develop or revise and adopt specified social studies curriculum and content standards for different grade levels.

It is the intent of the General Assembly that, beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, all local boards of education and all nonpublic schools that hold a Certificate of Approval issued by SBE establish curriculum resources aligned with the content standards and curriculum standards established by SBE. Other nonpublic schools are *encouraged* to include in the school’s social studies and history curriculum at least a unit of instruction on the topics described.

**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.

A local board of education must provide copies of curriculum guides and courses of study to any teacher or interested citizen.

### *Curriculum Standards for Core Subjects*

MSDE must, in consultation with experienced and highly effective teachers, including teachers on the career ladder, develop curriculum standards and curriculum resources for each subject at each grade level. The standards and resources must build on one another in logical sequence in core subjects so that they may be used by local school systems and public school teachers.

The purpose of the curriculum standards and curriculum resources is to provide local school boards with technical assistance to inform high-quality instruction that will ultimately result in students meeting the college and career readiness standards established by MSDE. The curriculum resources developed for each core subject and grade level must include course syllabi, sample lessons, proficient student work examples with explanations for standards met, and curriculum units matching the syllabi. In creating these resources, MSDE can reference courses or units by teachers from within or outside the State, ensuring these models meet high-quality standards verified by EdReports or the Every Student Succeeds Act's evidence criteria. These curriculum units must be organized to form complete courses, ensuring a student who follows the sequence can meet the college and career readiness standards by the end of grade 10.

MSDE must submit curriculum resources and curriculum standards to SBE for adoption. SBE must establish a system of assessments to ensure that students are acquiring the knowledge contained in the curriculum standards in English, mathematics, science, and history or social studies.

Using the assessments, MSDE must identify low-performing schools. An Expert Review Team, under the supervision of MSDE, must visit schools identified as low performing. If MSDE, based on a recommendation of an Expert Review Team, determines that a school's low performance on assessments is, largely due to curricular problems, the school must adopt the curriculum resources developed by MSDE. Otherwise, these provisions do not require a public school or local board of education to adopt MSDE's curriculum standards and curriculum resources and may not be construed to restrict a local board's authority to adopt curricula.

### *State-funded Education Programs*

“State-funded education programs” is not defined in statute. The State provides aid to eligible nonpublic schools in the operating budget including funding for textbooks and technology and the Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today program. Capital funding is also provided to eligible nonpublic schools.

**State Expenditures:** MSDE advises that it has already completed most of the work required by the Educate to Stop the Hate Act, a process that has been underway since 2019. As part of this effort, MSDE reviewed the State Frameworks to assess the inclusion of Holocaust education objectives. Based on this review, the objectives in High School United States History and Modern World History were further strengthened to emphasize the significance of teaching the Holocaust in these courses.

Building on this work, MSDE and SBE have established a process for reviewing, revising, and adopting standards, frameworks, and curricular resources. This process, initiated on January 23, 2024, involves collaboration among SBE, MSDE, local school systems, and community members through the formation of a Standards and Frameworks Validation Committee.

Other requirements of the bill, such as reviewing the content and curriculum standards for core subjects every eight years generally reflects current practice, and thus can be accomplished using existing resources. It is assumed that local school systems establish the required curriculum resources and courses of study and thus, it is unlikely that funds will need to be withheld. Moreover, this requirement can be met with the resources already available.

**Local Fiscal Effect:** Under the bill, local school systems must establish curriculum resources and courses of study aligned with the content and curriculum standards developed by MSDE. If a local board fails to meet this requirement, the State Superintendent of Schools may withhold funds. The bill does not specify a deadline for compliance beyond its effective date of July 1, 2025. Therefore, it is assumed that local school systems must implement the comprehensive social studies curriculum beginning in the 2026-2027 school year (fiscal 2027). As a result, local school system expenditures are expected to increase, potentially significantly, in fiscal 2026 and 2027 to develop curriculum based on the revised standards.

Due to MSDE’s ongoing revision of content standards, many local school systems may have already planned to update their curricula within the timeframe implied by the bill. However, some may need to accelerate revisions to comply with the bill’s requirements, and the mandated alignment with state-developed standards may necessitate a more rigorous review process than originally anticipated.

For example, Anne Arundel County Public Schools estimates one-time costs of \$56,400 for fiscal 2026. Similarly, Frederick County Public Schools anticipates \$38,300 in initial curriculum audit and revision costs, with ongoing expenses of \$7,000 annually. Montgomery County Public Schools currently teaches the Holocaust in grade 6 World Studies, grade 9 U.S. History, and grade 11 Modern World History, following United States Holocaust Memorial Museum guidance that Holocaust education is most appropriate at the middle school level. The bill's requirement to introduce Holocaust instruction in grade 5 necessitates curriculum revisions and teacher training, with estimated costs exceeding \$282,000 in fiscal 2026 to train 136 fifth grade teachers, with costs increasing annually. Baltimore City Public Schools estimates a broad cost range, from tens of thousands of dollars for minor curriculum adjustments to more than \$1 million for a full curriculum overhaul if required under the bill.

The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) advises that future year impacts on curriculum development and training are expected to be minimal beyond fiscal 2027 because MSDE's ongoing cycle of revisions to State standards already requires local school boards to adopt changes. However, if funding is available, school systems may enhance annual training efforts.

It is assumed that local school systems establish curriculum resources and courses of study aligned with the content and curriculum standards developed by MSDE. Therefore, local school system revenues are unlikely to be affected. However, if a school system fails to meet the specified requirements of the bill, its revenues may decrease due to withheld funds.

**Additional Comments:** Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, a nonpublic school that holds a Certificate of Approval must establish curriculum resources aligned with the content standards and curriculum standards established by SBE by January 1, 2026. Nonpublic schools operated by registered *bona fide* church organizations are encouraged to include at least a unit of instruction on specific topics within the school's social studies and history curriculum. As a result, nonpublic school expenditures are likely to increase in fiscal 2026 and 2027 to develop and implement the content and curriculum standards for comprehensive instruction in social studies as required by the bill. However, a cost estimate cannot be reliably determined. Costs in future years are likely to be minimal.

The bill may conflict with provisions of current law discussed above. The bill allows the State Superintendent of Schools to withhold State funds if a local board of education fails to establish curriculum resources and courses of study aligned with the content standards and curriculum standards developed by MSDE. However, according to current law, a public school or local board of education is not required to adopt MSDE's curriculum standards and curriculum resources, and current law may not be construed to restrict a local board's authority to adopt curricula, unless MSDE, based on the recommendation of an

Expert Review Team, determines that a school's low performance on State assessments is largely due to curricula problems. These restrictions on MSDE's authority are not repealed by the bill.

Baltimore County Public Schools advises that the bill's requirements may be inconsistent with the federal [Ending Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schooling Executive Order](#) issued January 29, 2025. DLS is unable to make a determination on this matter at this time.

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### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See SB 1058 and HB 1181 of 2024.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education; Baltimore City Public Schools; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Baltimore County Public Schools; Frederick 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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