

HOUSE BILL 1202

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By: **Delegates Acevero, Alston, Lewis, Martinez, Stinnett, Woods, and Young**

Introduced and read first time: February 11, 2026

Assigned to: Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Public Schools – Content Standards, Curriculum, and Bullying Policies –**
3 **Culture and History of Palestine**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring the State Board of Education to develop certain content
5 standards regarding the culture and history of Palestine to be included in certain
6 State standards for social studies; requiring the Department, in collaboration with
7 certain stakeholders, to develop certain curriculum guides and instructional
8 resources regarding the culture and history of Palestine in alignment with certain
9 content standards; requiring each county board of education to develop, in
10 collaboration with certain stakeholders, certain curriculum guides; requiring each
11 public school to include Palestinian culture and history in the social studies
12 curriculum beginning in a certain school year; altering the requirements for a certain
13 model policy regarding bullying, harassment, or intimidation to expressly require
14 the inclusion of conduct motivated by an anti-Palestinian bias; requiring the
15 Department to review certain content standards and frameworks in social studies to
16 make a certain determination for a certain purpose; and generally relating to the
17 Palestinian culture and history education and content and curriculum standards.

18 BY adding to

19 Article – Education

20 Section 4–111.5

21 Annotated Code of Maryland

22 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

23 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

24 Article – Education

25 Section 7–424(a)(1) and (2) and 7–424.1(a) and (c)

26 Annotated Code of Maryland

27 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

28 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 Article – Education
2 Section 7–424.1(b)
3 Annotated Code of Maryland
4 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

5 Preamble

6 WHEREAS, Public schools in the State have a duty to provide inclusive, accurate,
7 and age–appropriate education that promotes cultural understanding, critical thinking,
8 and respect for human dignity; and

9 WHEREAS, Incidents of anti–Palestinian bias, harassment, intimidation, and
10 hate–motivated conduct have occurred in Maryland schools, undermining student safety,
11 student mental health, and equal access to education; and

12 WHEREAS, The absence of foundational cultural and historical literacy regarding
13 Palestine and Palestinian identity contributes to stereotyping, misinformation, and the
14 dehumanization of students and communities; and

15 WHEREAS, Educational approaches grounded in cultural literacy reduce bias,
16 prevent hate–based conduct, and improve school climates when implemented in a factual,
17 nonpartisan, and educational manner; now, therefore,

18 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
19 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

20 Article – Education

21 4–111.5.

22 (A) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS THAT ENACTING THESE STANDARDS
23 ON THE HISTORY OF PALESTINE IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF:

24 (1) ADDRESSING ANTI–PALESTINIAN HATE AND DISCRIMINATION
25 THROUGH EDUCATION AND PREVENTION;

26 (2) ENSURING STUDENTS RECEIVE ACCURATE, BALANCED, AND
27 HISTORICALLY GROUNDED INSTRUCTION REGARDING PALESTINIAN CULTURE,
28 HISTORY, AND IDENTITY;

29 (3) PROMOTING STUDENT SAFETY, INCLUSION, AND DIGNITY; AND

30 (4) STRENGTHENING EXISTING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND
31 ANTIDISCRIMINATION FRAMEWORKS IN THE STATE’S PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

1 **(B) (1) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 1, 2026, THE STATE BOARD SHALL**
2 **DEVELOP CONTENT STANDARDS REGARDING THE CULTURE AND HISTORY OF**
3 **PALESTINE TO BE INCLUDED IN THE STATE STANDARDS AND FRAMEWORKS IN**
4 **SOCIAL STUDIES.**

5 **(2) THE CONTENT STANDARDS FOR PALESTINIAN CULTURE AND**
6 **HISTORY SHALL INCLUDE INSTRUCTION ON:**

7 **(I) THE HISTORICAL PRESENCE OF PALESTINIANS IN THE**
8 **REGION OF PALESTINE;**

9 **(II) PALESTINIAN CULTURAL, RELIGIOUS, LINGUISTIC, AND**
10 **SOCIAL TRADITIONS;**

11 **(III) THE IMPACT OF DISPLACEMENT, STATELESSNESS, AND**
12 **CONFLICT ON PALESTINIANS, PARTICULARLY THE CIVILIAN POPULATION;**

13 **(IV) DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS, POLITICAL**
14 **MOVEMENTS, AND CIVILIAN POPULATIONS;**

15 **(V) PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS FOR**
16 **CIVILIAN POPULATIONS; AND**

17 **(VI) RECOGNITION OF PALESTINIAN IDENTITY AS A DISTINCT**
18 **ETHNIC AND CULTURAL IDENTITY.**

19 **(3) THE CONTENT STANDARDS DEVELOPED UNDER THIS SUBSECTION**
20 **SHALL:**

21 **(I) BE FACTUAL, HISTORICALLY GROUNDED, AND**
22 **NONPARTISAN;**

23 **(II) EMPHASIZE CRITICAL THINKING, MEDIA LITERACY, AND**
24 **RESPECTFUL DIALOGUE;**

25 **(III) AVOID POLITICAL ADVOCACY OR ENDORSEMENT OF A**
26 **PARTICULAR GOVERNMENT OR POLITICAL MOVEMENT; AND**

27 **(IV) RESPECT ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND THE ASSOCIATED**
28 **CONSTITUTIONAL PROTECTIONS AFFORDED TO TEACHERS AND STUDENTS.**

29 **(C) THE DEPARTMENT, IN COLLABORATION WITH TEACHERS, HISTORIANS,**
30 **CIVIL RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS, SHALL DEVELOP:**

1 **(1) MODEL CURRICULUM GUIDES AND INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES**
2 **REGARDING THE CULTURE AND HISTORY OF PALESTINE IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE**
3 **CONTENT STANDARDS DEVELOPED UNDER SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION; AND**

4 **(2) OPTIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES FOR**
5 **TEACHERS ON CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE INSTRUCTION AND TEACHING SENSITIVE**
6 **HISTORICAL TOPICS.**

7 **(D) EACH COUNTY BOARD, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE LOCAL SCHOOL**
8 **SYSTEM, SHALL DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT AGE- AND**
9 **DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE CURRICULUM GUIDES REGARDING THE**
10 **CULTURE AND HISTORY OF PALESTINE ALIGNED WITH THE CONTENT STANDARDS**
11 **DEVELOPED UNDER SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION.**

12 **(E) BEGINNING IN THE 2027–2028 SCHOOL YEAR, EACH PUBLIC SCHOOL IN**
13 **THE STATE SHALL INCLUDE PALESTINIAN CULTURE AND HISTORY IN THE SOCIAL**
14 **STUDIES CURRICULUM.**

15 **(F) NOTHING IN THIS SECTION MAY BE CONSTRUED TO:**

16 **(1) REQUIRE POLITICAL ADVOCACY OR IDEOLOGICAL INSTRUCTION**
17 **FAVORABLE TO PALESTINE;**

18 **(2) LIMIT DISCUSSION OF MULTIPLE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES;**

19 **(3) SUPERSEDE EXISTING CONTENT STANDARDS, UNLESS THERE IS**
20 **AN IRRECONCILABLE CONFLICT; OR**

21 **(4) INFRINGE ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS OF TEACHERS OR**
22 **STUDENTS.**

23 7–424.

24 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

25 (2) “Bullying, harassment, or intimidation” means intentional conduct,
26 including verbal, physical, or written conduct, or an intentional electronic communication,
27 that:

28 (i) Creates a hostile educational environment by substantially
29 interfering with a student’s educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a
30 student’s physical or psychological well-being and is:

1 1. Motivated by an actual or a perceived personal
2 characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation,
3 gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial
4 status, or physical or mental ability or disability;

5 2. Sexual in nature, including descriptions or depictions of a
6 student with the student's intimate parts exposed or while engaged in an act of sexual
7 contact; or

8 3. Threatening or seriously intimidating; and

9 (ii) 1. Occurs on school property, at a school activity or event, or
10 on a school bus; or

11 2. Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school.

12 7-424.1.

13 (a) In this section, "bullying, harassment, or intimidation" has the meaning
14 stated in § 7-424 of this subtitle.

15 (b) (1) [By March 31, 2009, the] **THE** State Board, after consultation with and
16 input from local school systems, shall develop a model policy prohibiting bullying,
17 harassment, or intimidation in schools.

18 (2) The model policy developed under paragraph (1) of this subsection shall
19 include:

20 (i) A statement prohibiting bullying, harassment, and intimidation
21 in schools;

22 (ii) A statement prohibiting reprisal or retaliation against
23 individuals who report acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation;

24 (iii) A definition of bullying, harassment, or intimidation that is
25 either the same as set forth in subsection (a) of this section or a definition that is not less
26 inclusive than that definition;

27 **(IV) A DEFINITION OF BULLYING, HARASSMENT, OR**
28 **INTIMIDATION THAT EXPRESSLY INCLUDES CONDUCT MOTIVATED BY AN**
29 **ANTI-PALESTINIAN BIAS;**

30 [(iv)] **(V)** Standard consequences and remedial actions for persons
31 committing acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation and for persons engaged in
32 reprisal or retaliation;

1 ~~[(v)]~~ **(VI)** Standard consequences and remedial actions for persons
2 found to have made false accusations;

3 ~~[(vi)]~~ **(VII)** Model procedures for reporting acts of bullying,
4 harassment, and intimidation;

5 ~~[(vii)]~~ **(VIII)** Model procedures for providing notice of an act of bullying,
6 harassment, or intimidation to:

7 1. A parent or guardian of the alleged victim, within 3
8 business days after the date the act is reported; and

9 2. A parent or guardian of the alleged perpetrator, within 5
10 business days after the date the act is reported;

11 ~~[(viii)]~~ **(IX)** Model procedures for the prompt investigation of acts of
12 bullying, harassment, and intimidation;

13 ~~[(ix)]~~ **(X)** Information about the types of support services available
14 to the student bully, victim, and any bystanders;

15 ~~[(x)]~~ **(XI)** Information regarding the availability and use of the
16 bullying, harassment, or intimidation form under § 7–424 of this subtitle; and

17 ~~[(xi)]~~ **(XII)** Information regarding the availability and use of an
18 anonymous two–way electronic tip program established under § 7–424 of this subtitle.

19 (3) By September 1, 2016, and every 5 years thereafter, the State Board,
20 after consultation with local school systems, shall update the model policy required under
21 paragraph (1) of this subsection.

22 (c) (1) Each county board shall establish a policy prohibiting bullying,
23 harassment, or intimidation at school based on the model policy.

24 (2) The policy shall address the components of the model policy specified in
25 subsection (b)(2) of this section.

26 (3) A county board shall develop the policy in consultation with
27 representatives of the following groups:

28 (i) Parents or guardians of students;

29 (ii) School employees and administrators;

30 (iii) School volunteers;

1 (iv) Students; and

2 (v) Members of the community.

3 (4) By January 1, 2017, and every 5 years thereafter, each county board
4 shall update its policy based on the State Board's update of the model policy under
5 subsection (b)(3) of this section.

6 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:

7 (a) The State Department of Education shall review the State Standards and
8 Frameworks in Social Studies of the Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards to
9 determine the appropriate placement for instruction on the culture and history of Palestine.

10 (b) On or before December 1, 2027, the State Department of Education shall
11 report to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government
12 Article, on:

13 (1) the review conducted under subsection (a) of this section;

14 (2) the status of the Department's development of the content standards
15 required under § 4–111.5 of the Education Article, as enacted by Section 1 of this Act;

16 (3) summarize the plans that local school systems have regarding
17 implementation of the culture and history of Palestine curriculum aligned with the revised
18 social studies content standards;

19 (4) plans for curriculum resources;

20 (5) plans for teacher professional development resources; and

21 (6) any recommendations for improving cultural literacy or bias
22 prevention.

23 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
24 1, 2026.