



HB11 PUBLIC SCHOOLS - AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY - DEVELOPMENT OF CONTENT STANDARDS AND IMPLEMENTATION

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WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) supports with amendments **HB11 Public Schools - African American History - Development of Content Standards and Implementation**. This bill requires the State Board of Education to develop content standards for African American history to be included in the State Standards and Frameworks in social studies by December 1, 2021. Each local board of education must develop and implement age-appropriate curriculum guides based on the content standards developed by the State Board of Education. Beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, each public school must include African American history in the social studies curriculum. By December 1, 2021, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must report on the content standards, including the content standards for each grade level.

AACPS generally opposes efforts by the General Assembly to legislate local public school curriculum or assessments. The authority to establish curriculum and assessments is the domain of the State Board of Education and the local boards of education, the same entities charged with the responsibility to research, investigate, and evaluate both curriculum and assessments. Maintaining this authority with the State Board and local boards allows local boards of education to collaborate with the State and stakeholders to ensure that all students, schools, and school systems are held accountable.

However, we do support this legislation with amendments. First, HB11 places the responsibility for the development of content standards for African American history where it belongs – with the State Board of Education. It is time for Maryland to ensure that every public school student in the State receive accurate and thorough education about the extraordinary contributions of African Americans have made in Maryland and across the nation. Failure to require the State Board of Education to develop such content standards has resulted in local school systems not educating Maryland students on comprehensive African American history. All children from all walks of life should have access to a rich education about African American history as it is the fabric of who we are as a nation – it is American history.

The AACPS grade 4, grade 5, grade 8 and grade 9 United States History courses are being audited and rewritten to align to the new frameworks and with a specific focus of including more diverse and inclusive histories. Special attention is being placed on local and state level African American History. The AACPS Social Studies Office is currently engaged in a local history project with the Office of Equity and Accelerated Student Achievement to establish connections and provide a streamline of materials to integrate into K-12 curriculum related to local African American History. AACPS also has an African American History elective course offered at the high school level and we are looking to make this one-semester course into a two-semester offering with a greater depth of national and local African American History.

While we support the goal and intent of this bill, AACPS requests two amendments to HB11. First, we respectfully request that the bill include language requiring MSDE and the State Board of Education to conduct a gap analysis of current State curriculum content standards to determine what African American history and contributions content standards are already being required by the State in order to determine the best manner in which to implement the proposed legislation. Second, we request that the State Board of Education conduct a gap analysis across all public school curriculum content as the contributions of African Americans and social justice issues encompass all facets of American life such as the sciences, the arts, and literature. We also have concerns that, as drafted, the legislation may limit local school systems from educating their students about local African American history and contributions. As such, we request that the Committee ensures that there is no language limiting such local education.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report with the proposed amendments on HB11.