

House Bill 11/Public Schools - African American History - Development of Content Standards and Implementation
Ways and Means
January 27, 2021

Skills and Processes - Students will inquire about civics, geography, economics, history, and people and nations of the world using disciplinary literacy skills and processes to critically evaluate content through a variety of source materials across disciplines and use reading, writing, and other forms of communication to develop, defend, and critique arguments in order to take informed action.

State Supporting Documents, including State Frameworks, provide guidance for implementing the standards adopted by the State Board of Education. They serve as guides for school systems as they develop local curricula. Traditionally, the State Frameworks have not been legislatively designed or reviewed. As defined by COMAR, State Supporting Documents are developed, reviewed, and revised by teams of Maryland educators, with guidance from local school system (LSS) Social Studies offices, and national models. The development of State Frameworks is typically a two-year process.

From 2015-2020 the Modern World History, American Government, Middle School United States History, and Elementary Social Studies PreK – Grade 5 State Frameworks were revised by Maryland educators. Grades 6 and 7 are currently under review, with a planned release in spring 2023. The topics identified in lines 1-14 on page 2 of HB11 are addressed in those newly revised State Frameworks. The content topics are introduced and/or reinforced in age-appropriate grade level Social Studies courses. The location of the indicators and objectives in the State Social Studies Frameworks that address the content topics HB11 can be found in **Attachment A**.

While much of the content identified in HB11 is included in the State Frameworks for Social Studies, that content is woven into the broader historical narrative of Social Studies courses in World History, World Cultures and Geography, United States History and American Government as well as the Social Studies courses offered at the elementary level. Although there is currently no State Framework which uniquely positions the African American story at the center of historical inquiry, nonetheless approximately 50% of Maryland's LSSs offer an elective course in African American History at the high school level. A State Framework in African American History as an elective course on the secondary level would improve consistency in expectations, organization, or content across local school systems, but will not address the difficulty that systems have in staffing elective courses.

Should the intent of HB11 be to support a statewide development of an African American History elective course, creating a State Framework within the six-month period provided by HB11 would require the reallocation of resources on the State level, and potential delay of current projects. Impacts could include: limiting the number summer professional development workshops offered by the Office of Social Studies, delay of the revisions to the Social Studies State Frameworks for Grades 6 and 7 (scheduled for January 2021- spring 2023), and assessment development activities for Social Studies grade 8 and American Government.

MSDE is dedicated to supporting the expansion of high-quality programs that prepare students with the knowledge and skills necessary to be empowered, informed, and socially responsible participants in our society.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **HB11**. For further information, please contact Zachary Hands, at 410-767-0504, or Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov.