
TO: House Ways and Means Committee

BILL: House Bill (HB) 1363 - Education - Public Schools - Asian American History Curriculum Requirement

DATE: February 28, 2024

POSITION: Oppose

Chair Atterbeary and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) respectfully oppose **HB 1363**, which would require MSDE to develop content standards for units on Asian American History to be implemented by public schools by the 2025-2026 school years in at least one elementary school course, one middle school course, and a required high school history course.

The State Board and MSDE are supportive of many of the fundamental principles outlined in the requirements of this bill, and both entities are strident in ensuring that the development of curricular standards reflect these shared priorities. We do not oppose the bill based on the merits of the proposed subject matter but on the grounds that the legislative requirement would run counter to the process that is entrusted to the State Board and MSDE.

To be included in this process is the MSDE proposed “Standards and Frameworks Review Committee” (SFRC), which will address the concerns of **HB 1363** by enhancing the process’s mechanism for responding to emergent standards, framework, and curricular resource needs. The SFRC shall be comprised of no more than ten educators (such as teachers, administrators, and/or content supervisors), two parents of Maryland Public School students, two community members (such as University scholars and/or associated content experts) as well as a chairperson selected by MSDE. All members of the SFRC shall undergo a rigorous application and selection process along with training in MSDE protocol. The objective and scope of the SFRC shall be to improve student outcomes by ensuring the alignment of standards and frameworks to emergent needs as identified by MSDE.

Separate processes and timelines for the review and approval of standards, frameworks, and curricular resources could be counterproductive to both MSDE and to local education agencies. Additionally, **HB 1363** would allow for a short timeline for LEAs to complete the required curricular resource development, training, and procurement of new materials.

LEAs will be required to:

- Rewrite curriculum guides, including writing, review, and piloting;
- Procure new instructional materials aligned to the revised standards and curriculum; and
- Train teachers in appropriate teaching pedagogy, implementation of the new curriculum, and implementation of the new instructional materials.

Beyond this, COMAR 13A.04.08.01 mandates that LEAS offer social studies from prekindergarten to twelfth grade which “shall provide for the diversity of student needs, abilities, and interests at the early, middle, and high school learning years” as the State Board and MSDE share in the belief that social studies coursework can and should be leveraged to build tolerance and understanding amongst our students.

Working to this end, MSDE has included numerous objectives related to Asian American History within the [Maryland Social Studies State Frameworks](#). MSDE additionally began convening the Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) stakeholder workgroup in July 2022 with the goal of exploring issues impacting the AAPI students’ academic experiences in Maryland schools; providing recommendations to enhance the learning experiences for AAPI students; and increasing opportunities for all students to gain an understanding of AAPI history and culture. The group met during the 2022-2023 school year and submitted recommendations in September 2023. MSDE is convening the group again in March 2024 to synthesize the recommendations and identify potential needs for Maryland Social Studies State Frameworks revisions.

Further, the changes required by this bill to the [Maryland Social Studies Standards](#) would alter the national best practices aligned inquiry statement structure by shifting to a content-specific structure. This change would require substantial revision beyond the inclusion of the content required by **HB 1363** to ensure that the standards reflect an accurate, equitable representation of content and topics.

MSDE, in partnership with teachers, supervisors, parents, institutes of higher education, and other stakeholders will continue to undertake significant reviews of state standards and frameworks. In this process, MSDE will be certain to include our critical partners in the General Assembly.

The State Board requests that the committee consider this information on **HB 1363**. Please contact Dr. Akilah Alleyne, Executive Director of Government Affairs, Education Policy, and Government Relations, at Akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov or at 410-767-0504 or Zach Hands, Executive Director of the State Board, at Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov or at 443-915-6094, if you would like any additional information.