



PSSAM
Public School Superintendents' Association
OF MARYLAND

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BILL: HB 1363

TITLE: Education - Public Schools - Asian American History Curriculum Requirement

DATE: February 28, 2024

POSITION: Unfavorable

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means

CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four public school superintendents, **opposes** House Bill 1363.

House Bill 1363 would require the Maryland State Board of Education (MSDE) to develop curriculum content standards for a unit of instruction on Asian American history in public schools in the State. Furthermore, this bill would require each county board of education to implement the developed Asian American history curriculum content standards beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, as well as ensure that a unit of instruction on Asian American history would be taught at least once during elementary school, once during middle school, and once in a history course required to graduate from high school.

PSSAM has a longstanding policy of opposing efforts by the General Assembly to codify curriculum standards, assessments, or graduation requirements. Local superintendents strongly believe that the role of curriculum development and implementation belongs solely to local boards of education in conjunction with MSDE. Rest assured, PSSAM's opposition to this bill does not rest on an evaluation of the merits of teaching any specified subject matter, but rather opposition to statutorily mandating revisions to content standards and curriculum.

The Maryland General Assembly, in creating the Maryland State Board of Education and local boards of education, has delegated to them the responsibility of delivering a high-quality statewide system of public education through State standards and accountability measures, as well as locally governed and administered curriculum. The State Board establishes State content frameworks, state assessment standards, and minimum state graduation requirements, while each

local board and school system implement locally-developed curriculum to ensure that the state content frameworks are followed, student performance standards are met, and students are prepared to meet graduation requirements.

In the context of educational programming proposed by House Bill 1363, PSSAM emphasizes that many local school systems already incorporate age-appropriate units of instruction on topics such as Asian American history into a comprehensive social studies curriculum. Superintendents are committed to providing students with a comprehensive, well-rounded education through history curriculum that is implemented after proper stakeholder input is received and review processes are completed in each individual system. However, seeing as though this bill would require all local systems to expend additional funds in curriculum and assessment creation that are not provided under the bill's current language, this bill serves as an unfunded mandate for all twenty-four local systems.

Again, PSSAM's opposition to this bill does not rest on the merits of instruction pertaining to Asian American history. Rather, it rests on the implications of curricular mandates on local school systems. House Bill 1363, alongside similar bills which seek to interject or extract piecemeal segments of the curriculum, only serve to weaken the effectiveness of the overall educational curriculum.

For these reasons, PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 1363 and urges an unfavorable report.