

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2022 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 116 (Senator Ellis)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**Public Schools - Inclusive and Diverse English Language Arts - Development of
Content Standards and Implementation**

This bill requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to develop content standards for inclusive and diverse English language arts (ELA) to be included in the State Standards and Frameworks in ELA by December 1, 2022. By December 15, 2022, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must report on the content standards by grade level. Each local board of education must develop and implement age-appropriate curriculum guides based on the content standards developed by the State board. Beginning in the 2023-2024 school year, each public school must include inclusive and diverse ELA in the ELA curriculum. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2022.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MSDE can develop the content standards and report required by the bill using existing resources; however, the five-month revision period required by the bill overlaps with a broader revision of the ELA content standards, as explained below. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: Local school system expenditures increase, potentially significantly, in FY 2023 and 2024 to develop the required curriculum guides, train teachers in the new curriculum, and purchase resources and materials in alignment with the new ELA content standards by the 2023-2024 school year. Revenues are not affected. **This bill may impose a mandate on a unit of local government.**

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The ELA content standards developed must:

- highlight and promote diversity, including economic diversity, equity, inclusion, tolerance, and belonging;
- examine the impact that unconscious bias and economic disparities have at both an individual and societal level; and
- encourage safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental and physical disability, and religious beliefs.

Current Law: With the advice of the State Superintendent of Schools, SBE establishes basic policies and guidelines for the program of instruction for public schools. Subject to State law and the regulations, bylaws, policies, and guidelines established by SBE, each local board of education must establish the curriculum guides and courses of study for schools in its jurisdiction. Policies, rules, and regulations for the graduation of students from Maryland public schools are established by local boards of education and SBE.

State Expenditures: MSDE advises that it is in the process of revising the ELA Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards for alignment with the grade 10 College and Career Readiness standards required by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Chapters 36 and 55 of 2021). According to MSDE, the comprehensive review of the ELA standards, which will be undertaken in partnership with teachers, supervisors, parents, institutions of higher education, and other stakeholders, will include a review of inclusion and diversity as required by the bill.

Thus, MSDE advises it can develop the content standards and report required by the bill using existing resources. The five-month revision period to develop inclusive and diverse ELA content standards required by the bill overlaps with a broader revision of the ELA content standards.

Local Expenditures: By the 2023-2024 school year (fiscal 2024), each local school system must develop curriculum guides, train teachers in the new curriculum, and purchase resources and materials in alignment with the new inclusive and diverse ELA content standards adopted by December 1, 2022. The timeframe allowed by the bill to complete these tasks is approximately eight months spanning portions of fiscal 2023 and 2024. Thus, local school system expenditures increase, potentially significantly, in fiscal 2023 and 2024. Anne Arundel County Public Schools estimates these costs to total \$5.5 million.

To the extent that local curriculum and materials already meet the requirements of the new ELA content standards adopted by SBE by December 1, 2022, costs for those local school systems may be less. However, any cost savings cannot be estimated until the new content standards are adopted.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Baltimore City Public Schools; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; Prince George’s County Public Schools; St. Mary’s County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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