

Date of Hearing: April 10, 2019

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Patrick O'Donnell, Chair
AB 1393 (Weber) – As Introduced February 22, 2019

SUBJECT: Pupil instruction: model curriculum: Laotian history and cultural studies

SUMMARY: Requires the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) to develop and submit to the State Board of Education (SBE) a model curriculum relative to the history and cultural study of Laotian refugees. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires, on or before December 31, 2022, the IQC to develop and submit to the SBE a model curriculum relative to the history and cultural study of Laotian refugees. Requires the model curriculum to include, but not be limited to, the Lao, Iu Mien, Khmu, Phutai, Tai Lue, Tai Dam, and Tai Deng ethnic groups.
- 2) Requires that the model curriculum be developed with participation from Laotian American cultural centers and community groups located in California, surviving members of the Royal Lao Army and descendants of those members, Laotian American refugees and descendants of the those refugees, faculty of Laotian studies programs at universities and colleges, and a group of representatives of local educational agencies (LEAs), a majority of whom are kindergarten through 12th grade teachers who have relevant experience or educational backgrounds in the study and teaching of Laotian American history and culture.
- 3) Requires that the curriculum identify the ways in which the model curriculum aligns with, and is supportive of, the common core academic content standards and of the goals of the curriculum framework in history-social science adopted by the SBE in 2016.
- 4) Requires that the model curriculum include curriculum appropriate for use in elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools.
- 5) Requires that the model curriculum developed for use in high schools include examples of courses offered by local educational agencies that have been approved as meeting the A–G admissions requirements of the University of California and the California State University, including, to the extent possible, course outlines for those courses.
- 6) Requires that the model curriculum address, but not necessarily be limited to, all of the following:
 - a) The history of Laos in the 14th century at the time of the Lan Xang Kingdom, which means the “Land of a Million Elephants,” under King Fa Ngum, and the history of the Laotian people who lived in Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, and China.
 - b) The history of war and conflict in Laos that led to the migration to the United States, which shall include, but not be limited to, the United States Secret War in Laos, the bombing missions to interdict supply lines along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and the unexploded ordnance, which not only pose an imminent and real threat to Laotians, but significantly impact quality of life for all Lao citizens.

- c) The contributions and sacrifices of the Laotian civilians and soldiers in the Royal Lao Army who fought in the Secret War.
 - d) The history of the Laotian migration to California and to other parts of the United States and the world, which shall include, but not be limited to, family separation, escape across the Mekong River, and life inside refugee camps.
 - e) The writings, oral testimonies, videos, documentaries, and other media that represent all perspectives of the Laotian refugee experience.
 - f) Unique cultural beliefs, practices, and traditions of Laotian Americans of the Lao, Iu Mien, Khmu, Phutai, Tai Lue, Tai Dam, and Tai Deng ethnic groups, including, but not limited to, new year festivals, traditional arts and music, food, and ceremonies for marriages, births, and funerals.
 - g) Assimilation to a new life in California and the United States, the generational issues, and the contributions of Laotian American communities to California and the United States.
- 7) Requires the IQC to hold a minimum of two public hearings, which shall be held pursuant to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act.
 - 8) Requires that the model curriculum be written as a guide to allow local educational agencies to adapt their courses to best meet the educational needs of their communities.
 - 9) Requires the SBE, or before March 31, 2023, to adopt, modify, or reject the model curriculum.
 - 10) Requires the IQC to provide a minimum of 45 days for public comment before submitting the model curriculum to the SBE.
 - 11) Requires that, if the SBE modifies the model curriculum submitted by the IQC, the SBE explain, in writing, the reasons for the modifications to the Governor and the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature, and provide that written explanation in a meeting conducted pursuant to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act.
 - 12) Prohibits the SBE from adopting the model curriculum at the same meeting at which it provides its written explanation, but, instead, adopt the modifications at a subsequent meeting conducted no later than July 31, 2023.
 - 13) Requires that, if the SBE rejects the model curriculum, it transmit to the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), the Governor, and the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature a specific written explanation of the reasons for the rejection of the model curriculum.
 - 14) Requires that, following the adoption of the model curriculum, the SPI post the model curriculum on the California Department of Education's (CDE's) internet website for use on a voluntary basis by educators.

- 15) Encourages, beginning in the school year following the adoption of the model curriculum, LEAs to use the model curriculum to provide instruction in kindergarten and grades 1 to 8.
- 16) Requires, beginning in the school year following the adoption of the model curriculum, an LEA that maintains any of grades 9 to 12, inclusive, that does not otherwise offer a standards-based Laotian studies curriculum is encouraged to offer to all otherwise qualified pupils a course of study in Laotian studies based on the model curriculum.
- 17) Requires, for an LEA in which the Laotian pupil population consists of 3.5 percent or more of the total pupil population of the local educational agency, a meeting of the governing board or body of the local educational agency to decide whether or not to adopt the model curriculum shall be conducted pursuant to the Ralph M. Brown Act.
- 18) Requires an LEA that decides not to adopt the model curriculum to articulate and record the reasons for not adopting the model curriculum, and to maintain those records for a minimum of 10 years.
- 19) Defines “Laotian” to mean a person who has at least one ancestor who was part of an ethnic group from Laos, including, but not limited to, Lao, Iu Mien, Khmu, Phutai, Tai Lue, Tai Dam, and Tai Deng. States that, for purposes of the model curriculum, “Laotian” does not include the ethnic group included in the model curriculum developed in Hmong studies.
- 20) Defines LEA to mean a school district, county office of education, or charter school.
- 21) Makes implementation of the act subject to the receipt of grants, donations, or other financial support from private or public sources for its purposes, including an appropriation in the annual Budget Act or another statute.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Requires the IQC to develop and submit to the SBE, and requires the SBE to adopt, modify, or revise, the following model curricula: (1) relative to the Vietnamese American refugee experience that includes, but is not limited to, curriculum on the fall of Saigon in 1975, (2) relative to the Cambodian genocide, and (3) in Hmong history and cultural studies.
- 2) Encourages that instruction be provided on the Vietnam war, including the “Secret War” in Laos and the role of Southeast Asians in that war, and encourages that this instruction include a component drawn from personal testimony, especially in the form of oral or video history of Southeast Asians who were involved in the Vietnam war and those men and women who contributed to the war effort on the homefront.
- 3) Requires that the oral histories used as a part of the instruction regarding the role of Southeast Asians in the Vietnam war and the “Secret War” in Laos exemplify the personal sacrifice and courage of the wide range of ordinary citizens who were called upon to participate and provide intelligence for the United States.
- 4) Requires that the oral histories contain the views and comments of their subjects regarding the reasons for their participation in the war.

- 5) Requires that the oral histories solicit comments from their subjects regarding the aftermath of the war and the immigration of Southeast Asians to the United States.
- 6) Requires the IQC to develop, and the SBE to adopt, modify, or revise, a model curriculum in ethnic studies, and requires that the model curriculum be written as a guide to allow school districts to adapt their courses to reflect the student demographics in their communities, and include examples of courses offered by LEAs that have been approved as meeting A-G admissions requirements including, to the extent possible, course outlines for those courses. (EC 51226.7)
- 7) Requires that, by December 31, 2019, the IQC to submit the model curriculum to the SBE for adoption, and the SBE to adopt the model curriculum by March 31, 2020.
- 8) Requires a school district or charter school that elects to offer a course of study in ethnic studies to offer the course as an elective in the social sciences or English language arts and to make the course available in at least one year during a student's enrollment in grades 9 to 12.
- 9) Requires the development of a model curriculum in Native American studies, and requires school districts which elect to offer one course in Native American studies to make the course available in at least one year during a student's enrollment in grades 9-12.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. The author states, "Through the passage of SB 895 (Nguyen, 2018) the Instructional Quality Commission is required to develop and submit to the State Board of Education a model curriculum relative to the Vietnamese American refugee experience, a model curriculum relative to the Cambodian genocide, and a model curriculum in Hmong history and cultural studies. The history of Laotian refugees and the country of Laos, which is inseparable from the history of the Vietnam War, was not included in SB 895.

While existing law encourages instruction in the area of social sciences that may include instruction on the Vietnam War, including a component drawn from personal testimony of Southeast Asians who were involved in the war, such curriculum does not include the experience and testimony of Laotian refugees who were involved and affected by the war. It is important to teach students the complete and accurate history of the Vietnam War, also known as the Second Indochina War, which took place in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. The history and experience of refugees from these countries need to all be included in the model curricula.

Based on the 2010 census, California is home to the largest Laotian population outside of Laos, with over 69,000 people of Laotian background. For the past 40 years, Laotian American refugees have enriched the social, cultural, and economic landscape of California. However, little is known about the history of Laotian refugees, culture, and community. There is a growing body of academic research that shows the importance of culturally meaningful and relevant curriculum, which positively impact student educational achievement."

Committee Policy. This Committee has adopted a policy strongly discouraging members from introducing measures that create new model curricula. **Staff recommends that the bill be amended** to require that the requirements of this bill be added to the existing requirement to develop a model curriculum in Hmong studies.

Adoption of a model curriculum. This bill requires, for an LEA in which the Laotian pupil population consists of 3.5 percent or more of the total pupil population of the LEA, a meeting of the governing board or body to decide whether or not to adopt the model curriculum be conducted pursuant to the Ralph M. Brown Act. Model curricula are developed for voluntary use by educators, and are not adopted by school districts. **Staff recommends that the bill be amended** to strike this provision.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Advocates For Iu Mien - California
 Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs Association
 Bay Area Lao Organization
 California Association of Human Relations Organizations
 Center for Lao Studies
 Eric Guerra, Vice Mayor, City of Sacramento
 Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries
 Iu Mien Community Services
 Khmu National Federation, Inc.
 Lao American Advancement Organization
 Lao American Cultural Center
 Lao Lanexang Association Of Northern California
 Laos Angeles, LLC
 Lao Advocacy Organization of San Diego
 Lao American Coalition
 Lao Community Cultural Center of Fresno
 Lao Community Cultural Center of San Diego
 Laotian American Community of Fresno
 Legacies of War
 Pheuane Khrou Lao Organization
 Teada Productions
 Progressive Vietnamese American Organization
 Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
 The Fresno Center
 Vietnamese Youth Development Center

Opposition

None on file

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