| **Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item** | **Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia** |
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# Agenda Item: H

## Date: April 22, 2021

### Title: First Review of *Interim Guidelines for the African American History Requirement for Individuals Seeking an Initial License or License Renewal with an Endorsement in History and Social Sciences* (HB1904/SB1196)

#### Presenters: Mrs. Patty S. Pitts, Assistant Superintendent for Teacher Education and Licensure

#### Ms. Christonya Brown, Coordinator of History and Social Science Education

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## Purpose of Presentation:

Action required by state or federal law or regulation.

Executive Summary:
The [Culturally Competent Virginia Educators Bill](https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?212+ful+CHAP0023) ([SB 1196](https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?211+sum+SB1196) and [HB 1904](https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?211+sum+HB1904)), passed by the 2021 General Assembly, was signed into law by the Governor and goes into effect on July 1, 2021. The bill, in part, requires the following:

*Every person seeking initial licensure or renewal of a license with an endorsement in history and social sciences shall complete instruction in African American history, as prescribed by the Board.*

This licensure requirement becomes effective on July 1, 2021; therefore, the Board of Education must prescribe guidelines for the instruction in African American history that every person seeking an initial license or license renewal with an endorsement in history and social sciences must complete.

The Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure held a called meeting on April 12, 2021. The Advisory Board considered the attached proposed *Interim Guidelines for the African American History Requirement for Individuals Seeking an Initial License or License Renewal with an Endorsement in History and Social Sciences*. Ms. Christonya Brown, Coordinator of History and Social Science Education, Department of Education, participated in the meeting.

The Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure unanimously approved a motion to recommend to the Board of Education to approve the proposed *Interim Guidelines for the African American History Requirement for Individuals Seeking an Initial License or License Renewal with an Endorsement in History and Social Sciences*. In addition, the Advisory Board unanimously approved a motion to recommend strongly that the Virginia Department of Education and the Virginia Board of Education consider minimizing costs associated to the individual and the school division when new licensure training programs are required.

The guidelines support the priorities of the Board of Education’s Comprehensive Plan to

(1) advance policies that encourage and support the recruitment, development, and retention of well-prepared and skilled teachers and school leaders and (2) provide high-quality, effective learning environments for all students.

## Action Requested:

Other. Specify below:

The Board is requested to waive first review and approve.

## Superintendent’s Recommendation:

## The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends the Board of Education waive first review and approve the *Interim Guidelines for the African American History Requirement for Individuals Seeking an Initial License or License Renewal with an Endorsement in History and Social Sciences* and allow the Department of Education to make technical edits to the document.

## Rationale for Action:

The legislation ([SB 1196](https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?211+sum+SB1196) and [HB 1904](https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?211+sum+HB1904)), approved by the 2021 General Assembly and signed by the Governor, will become effective July 1, 2021. To provide timely guidance to individuals seeking an initial license or license renewal with an endorsement in history and social sciences who need to complete instruction in African American history, the Board is requested to waive first review and approve the *Interim Guidelines for the African American History Requirement for Individuals Seeking an Initial License or License Renewal with an Endorsement in History and Social Sciences.*

## Previous Review or Action:

No previous review or action.

Background Information and Statutory Authority:
On August 24, 2019, at Old Point Comfort, the site where the first enslaved Africans arrived on Virginia shores 400 years earlier, Governor Ralph Northam signed [Executive Order Thirty Nine](https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/executive-actions/EO-39-Establishment-of-the-Commission-on-African-American-History-Education-in-the-Commonwealth.pdf) and announced the establishment of the Virginia [African American History Education Commission](https://www.education.virginia.gov/initiatives/aahec/). The Governor charged the Commission with thoroughly examining the Commonwealth’s K-12 curricula, professional development practices, and instructional support to make recommendations for improving the way African American history is taught in Virginia schools. Governor Northam appointed a diverse, talented, and vibrant group of individuals to serve on this Commission including educators, historians, museum curators, school board members, faith leaders, school administrators, and citizens across the Commonwealth.

Even though Virginia led the nation in developing high quality content standards more than 25 years ago, the standards presented a master narrative that marginalized or did not recognize the presence of non-Europeans as a part of the American landscape. These historical silences skew our perspective of the past, erasing people of color, and supplanting them with false narratives that ignore the diverse cultural underpinnings in American society. While revised regularly by historians and experts, Virginia’s History and Social Science Standards of Learning continue to be incomplete with regards to incorporating African American history into the larger narrative. Therefore, the Governor's Commission on African American History Education in Virginia was tasked with making recommendations to ensure that the standards are more inclusive of African American history and provide opportunities for students to engage the content deeply, drawing connections to its relevance in our contemporary communities.

Understanding history imbues citizens with a deep and complex knowledge about their community and their nation. An effort to change the way citizens of Virginia are educated about history, with a special emphasis on incorporating African American history into the larger narrative, has never been more important.

In the [final report](https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/secretary-of-education/pdf/AAHEC-Report-Final_version2.pdf), the Commission offers extensive recommendations to ensure that content in Virginia schools is accurate, inclusive, and relatable, and to equip educators with the skills necessary to teach in a culturally responsive manner. In order to ensure accuracy, inclusivity, and relevance, the 2021 Virginia General Assembly passed legislation that further supports the recommendations of the Commission to enable all Virginia students to develop a comprehensive understanding of the African American voices that contribute to Virginia’s story.

The [Culturally Competent Virginia Educators Bill](https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?212+ful+CHAP0023) ([SB 1196](https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?211+sum+SB1196) and [HB 1904](https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?211+sum+HB1904)), passed by the 2021 General Assembly, was signed into law by the Governor and goes into effect on July 1, 2021. The bill, in part, requires the following:

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This interim guidance will be effective following approval from the Board and the public comment process on Town Hall. The guidelines will remain in effect until revision by the Board of Education.

Timetable for Further Review/Action:
Upon Board approval, the *Interim Guidelines for the African American History Requirement for Individuals Seeking an Initial License or License Renewal with an Endorsement in History and Social Sciences* will be posted in Town Hall for a 30-day public comment period pursuant to the Administrative Process Act.

## Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:

The Virginia Department of Education’s existing resources will support the implementation of the *Interim Guidelines for the African American History Requirement for Individuals Seeking an Initial License or License Renewal with an Endorsement in History and Social Sciences.*