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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anthony Portantino, Chair  
2021 - 2022 Regular Session

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### **AB 1039 (Nguyen) - Model curricula: Vietnamese American refugee experience, the Cambodian genocide, and Hmong history and cultural studies**

**Version:** June 15, 2021

**Urgency:** No

**Hearing Date:** July 5, 2021

**Policy Vote:** ED. 7 - 0

**Mandate:** No

**Consultant:** Lenin Del Castillo

**Bill Summary:** This bill extends the deadlines for the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) to develop and submit, and for the State Board of Education (SBE) to adopt, modify, or revise, three model curricula relative to: (1) the Vietnamese American refugee experience, (2) the Cambodian genocide, and (3) Hmong history and cultural studies.

#### **Fiscal Impact:**

- The California Department of Education (CDE) estimates General Fund costs of about \$3.1 million to develop the three model curricula as prescribed by this bill. These costs would support two positions, a model curriculum writer contract, and curriculum advisory committee meetings over a three-year period for each model curriculum project.
- There could be local cost pressure for schools to provide courses based on the model curricula required by the bill. To implement additional courses, school districts would have to purchase instructional materials and either hire appropriate teachers or provide professional development for existing teachers. These costs would not be reimbursable by the state.

**Background:** Academic content standards define the knowledge, concepts, and skills that students should acquire at each grade level. Curricular frameworks are the blueprint for implementing the standards, and include criteria by which instructional materials are evaluated.

Existing law requires the IQC to develop and submit to the SBE, and requires the SBE to adopt, modify, or revise, the following model curricula relative to: (1) the Vietnamese American refugee experience that includes, but is not limited to, curriculum on the fall of Saigon in 1975, (2) the Cambodian genocide, and (3) Hmong history and cultural studies. It also requires the IQC to submit model curriculum in Hmong history and cultural studies to the SBE by December 31, 2022, and requires the SBE to adopt, modify, or reject the model curriculum before March 31, 2023.

Existing law 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. It also

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.

**Proposed Law:** This bill extends the deadlines for the IQC develop and submit the three model curricula from December 31, 2022, to December 31, 2026, and also extends the deadlines for the SBE to adopt, modify, or reject the three model curricula from March 31, 2023 to March 31, 2027.

**Related Legislation:** AB 1393 (Weber, 2019) would have added Laotian history and cultural studies to the forthcoming model curriculum in Hmong history and cultural studies. AB 1393 was vetoed by Governor Newsom, who stated:

***This bill requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to add Laotian history and cultural studies to the Hmong model curriculum that the Instructional Quality Commission developed and the SBE was required to adopt, by Senate Bill 895 (Chapter 686, Statutes of 2018).***

***While I appreciate the interest in addressing a gap in prior legislation, I remain concerned that the current process is piecemeal and fragmented, as the adoption of the ethnic studies model has displayed. Before we move forward with additional model curricula, I believe a review of the existing process is necessary to support reforms needed so that our schools can provide instruction in a manner that reflects and honors the experiences of all Californians.***

SB 895 (Nguyen, Chapter 686, Statutes of 2018) 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.

**Staff Comments:** According to CDE, the revised timeline proposed by this measure would overlap with the schedules for a number of major projects, including the English Language Arts/English Language Development Adoption and the development of the new history–social science framework and subsequent adoption, which are typically among the most contentious and time-intensive projects. Because of this, developing these model curricula would require additional positions and funding to complete each project; they could not be completed with existing resources. Additionally, the bill would require CDE to develop the three model curriculum documents simultaneously and it would include collaboration with advisory committees of community groups, individuals who experienced the Vietnam War and the Cambodian genocide, and classroom teachers. Consequently, CDE indicates it would not be possible to consolidate the work under one project team. There would be three advisory committees, three writing teams, three sets of public hearings, etc.