**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**SENATOR NEWMAN, CHAIR**

**2023-24 SESSION**

**Committee Policy On: BILLS RELATING TO CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS, CURRICULUM MANDATES, AND MODEL CURRICULA**

**Policy:** Measures which propose to require, or require consideration of, modifications to state curriculum frameworks, to require that specified content be taught, or to require the development of new model curricula, must comply with requirements set forth in this policy.

The Committee strongly discourages the introduction of measures which require, or require consideration of, modifications to state curriculum through changes to the curriculum frameworks which require that specific curriculum be taught, or which require the development of new model curricula.

The Committee encourages Members to engage in the existing administrative processes for modifying state curricula. Members may wish, for example, to provide written comments or public testimony to the Instructional Quality Commission, the State Board of Education, or the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Committee staff can share a model letter to the Instructional Quality Commission. Members may also wish to engage in the Legislature’s oversight or appointment processes for this purpose.

 Upon exhausting all administrative processes without success, a Member wishes to a measure to modify state curriculum, it must meet all of the following requirements:

1. . Members may introduce resolutions requesting that the Instructional Quality Commission include specified content at the next revision of a curriculum framework or encouraging local educational agencies to instruct students in specified content.
2. Bills proposing changes to the curriculum frameworks shall either request or require that the Instructional Quality Committee consider including content not already included in the existing or draft curriculum frameworks or model curricula to be added in the next regularly scheduled revision of a framework.
3. For both resolutions and bills, the author must identifyby page number, and include in the Committee background sheet, all existing content in the current curriculum framework for that subject.

**Rationale:**

The Legislature has vested the Instructional Quality Commission and the State Board of Education with the authority to develop and adopt state curriculum and instructional materials. The Instructional Quality Commission develops curriculum frameworks by convening expert panels, developing drafts, and holding public hearings to solicit input. Changes are frequently made in response to public comment. The frameworks are then adopted by the State Board of Education in a public meeting. The State Board of Education also adopts, in a public process, instructional materials aligned to those frameworks for grades K-8. School district governing boards and charter schools then adopt instructional materials aligned to these standards and frameworks. This process occurs on a regular schedule which gives schools a predictable timetable to plan and budget for changes to the curriculum. Local adoption of new curricula involves significant local cost and investment of resources professional development.

These existing processes involve practitioners and experts who have in-depth understanding of curriculum and instruction, including the full scope and sequence of the curriculum in each subject and at each grade level, constraints on instructional time and resources, and the relationship of curriculum to state assessments and other measures of student progress. This Committee does not have the capacity or mandate to conduct this kind of review.

Legislation requiring the curriculum frameworks to contain specific content overrides this careful and deliberate process. Because legislation forces the inclusion of content without the benefit of thorough review and benefit of context, it can also inadvertently displace other important content in the curriculum.

Model curricula were first developed in the 1990’s in order to provide educators the means to teach about a topic in an in depth manner, on a voluntary basis. At that time, there were few resources available for this purpose on the Internet. Until 2016, only two model curricula were required to be developed. According to the California Department of Education, those curricula are rarely accessed. This may be due to the fact that there is now a vast array of curriculum resources available on the Internet, much of it available at no cost.

Recent legislation has required the development of numerous model curricula. In 2021, the state changed the process for the development of model curricula. County offices of education are now responsible for developing model curricula, in the form of open source, accessible resources available to California schools. The state no longer develops or approves model curricula. Finally, state mandates on school districts to instruct students in specific content circumvents the state’s process of developing content standards and curriculum frameworks, and can be highly disruptive to local curriculum and instructional materials adoption processes.

The Committee encourages Members to engage the Commission’s administrative process to ensure that the subject matter of concern is included in the revised frameworks.

It is therefore the policy of the Committee to discourage the introduction of legislation which requires, or requires consideration of, modifications to state curriculumframeworks, that requires specific content be taught or that requires the development of new model curricula, and instead encourages Members to engage in existing administrative processes as delineated above.