



Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of the Governor

Executive Order

NUMBER THIRTY-NINE (2019)

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMISSION ON AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY EDUCATION IN THE COMMONWEALTH

Importance of the Issue

The history of African Americans in Virginia, and our nation, is difficult, complex, and often untold. A robust understanding of this important history and its continuous influence on our communities today should be an essential component of the knowledge gained by every Virginia student. The Commonwealth has long been known for its rigorous academic standards, including its history and social science standards of learning, first established in 1995. Since that time, the standards have been routinely updated based on feedback from practitioners, historians, and stakeholders. Virginia's standards must be inclusive of African American history and provide opportunities for students to engage deeply, drawing connections to its relevance in our contemporary communities. A review of this content, instructional practices, and resources currently used to teach African American history in the Commonwealth will help ensure all Virginia students develop a comprehensive understanding of the African American voices that contribute to Virginia's story.

Establishment of the Commission

Accordingly, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor under Article V of the Constitution of Virginia and §§ 2.2-134 and 2.2-135 of the *Code of Virginia*, and subject to my continuing and ultimate authority and responsibility to act in such matters, I hereby establish the Commission on African American History Education in the Commonwealth (Commission). The Commission will examine the current ways that African American history is described in the standards of learning and curriculum framework, and how that content is taught in classrooms.

Composition and Support of the Commission

The Commission's chair(s) and members will be appointed by the Governor. The Governor will select historians, teachers, school administrators, experts and community leaders with experience and expertise in African American history, policy, and civil rights. The

Governor may appoint other members as necessary to carry out the functions of the Commission.

Staff support for the Commission will be provided by the Office of the Secretary of Education, the Virginia Department of Education, and external partners as requested. An estimated 200 hours of staff time will be required to support the work of the Commission. The Commission will serve in an advisory role and the members will serve without compensation, in accordance with § 2.2-2100 of the *Code of Virginia*. The Commission will meet upon the call of the chair(s) at least quarterly over the coming year, and the meetings should be held in different regions of the state, providing robust opportunity for public feedback and input.

Duties of the Commission

The Commission will issue a report with its findings and recommendations no later than July 1, 2020, and issue any additional reports and recommendations as necessary or as requested by the Governor.

The Commission will make recommendations for improving the student experience, including but not limited to:

1. Technical edits to and recommendations for enriched standards related to African American history;
2. Broader considerations for the full history and social studies standards review process; and
3. Necessary professional development and instructional supports for teachers to ensure culturally competent instruction.

Effective Date of the Executive Order

This Executive Order shall be effective upon its signing and shall remain in full force and effect for a year from its signing.

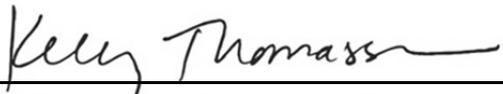
Given under my hand and under the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia, this 24th day of August, 2019.





Ralph S. Northam, Governor

Attest:



Kelly Thomasson, Secretary of Commonwealth