

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Education

BILL: SB 1450

INTRODUCER: Senator Rodriguez

SUBJECT: Civic Education Curriculum

DATE: March 8, 2021

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Brick	Bouck	ED	Favorable
2.			AED	
3.			AP	

I. Summary:

SB 1450 requires the Florida Department of Education (DOE) to develop or approve an integrated civic education curriculum for public school students in kindergarten through grade 12. The bill provides requirements for the civic education curriculum to aid in students’ development of civic responsibility and knowledge.

The bill also establishes the “Portraits in Patriotism Act,” which integrates into the civics education curriculum personal stories of diverse individuals who demonstrate civic-minded qualities, including first-person accounts of victims of other nations’ governing philosophies who can compare those philosophies with the philosophies of the United States.

The bill provides that the United States Government course that is required to earn a standard high school diploma include a comparative discussion of political ideologies that conflict with the principles of freedom and democracy in the nation’s founding principles.

The bill has an effective date of July 1, 2021.

II. Present Situation:

The priorities of Florida’s K-20 education system include civic literacy and to prepare students to become civically engaged and knowledgeable adults who positively contribute to their communities.¹

Instruction in Patriotism

Florida law requires each district school board to provide instruction on the history, significance, and principles of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, flag

¹ Section 1000.03(5)(c), F.S.

education, and civil government.² District school boards must also provide instruction on the contributions of African Americans, Hispanics, and women to the United States.³

District school boards are required to provide a character-development program for students in kindergarten through grade 12.⁴ Each district school board must develop or adopt a curriculum for its K-12 character-development program and submit it to the Florida Department of Education (DOE) for approval.⁵ The character development curriculum must “stress the qualities of patriotism; responsibility; citizenship; kindness; respect for authority, life, liberty, and personal property; honesty; charity; self-control; racial, ethnic, and religious tolerance; and cooperation.”⁶

To encourage patriotism, district school boards are required to provide instruction on the sacrifices made by veterans and Medal of Honor recipients while serving the country and protecting democratic values worldwide.⁷ A district school board may also adopt rules requiring patriotic programs in schools that encourage respect for the government of the United States and its national anthem and flag.⁸ Teachers or administrators in the schools may read or post historic material such as the Constitution of the United States, the Bill of Rights, and other foundational materials.⁹ Public schools are encouraged to coordinate instruction relating to the nation’s founding fathers with “American Founders’ Month” in September.¹⁰

Instruction in Civics

Currently, Florida’s Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for social studies include civics and government content in kindergarten through grade 12.¹¹ A student must successfully complete three middle school or higher courses in social studies in order to be promoted to high school.¹² One of the three courses must be a civics education course that includes the roles and responsibilities of federal, state, and local governments; the structures and functions of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches; and the meaning and significance of documents such as the Articles of Confederation, Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution of the United States.¹³

At the high school level, 24 credits are required for a standard high school diploma.¹⁴ Three credits must be in social studies, including one credit each in United States History and World History; one-half credit in economics; and one-half credit in United States Government.¹⁵ Course

² Section 1003.42(2)(a)-(e), F.S.

³ Ss. 1003.42(2)(h) and (p)-(q), F.S.

⁴ Section 1003.42(2)(s), F.S.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Section 1003.42(2)(t), F.S.

⁸ Section 1003.44(1), F.S.

⁹ Section 1003.44(2), F.S.

¹⁰ Section 1003.44(3), F.S. and s. 683.1455, F.S.

¹¹ See CPALMS, *Browse and Search Standards*, <http://www.cpalms.org/Public/search/Standard> (last visited Mar. 4, 2021) (providing the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for each subject area, by grade level).

¹² Section 1003.4156(1)(c), F.S.

¹³ Section 1003.4156(1)(c), F.S.

¹⁴ Section 1003.4282(1)(a), F.S.

¹⁵ Section 1003.4282(3)(d), F.S.

standards for United States Government include evaluating and defending positions on the founding ideals and principles of American government, explaining how nations are governed differently, and comparing indicators of democratization in other countries.¹⁶

Students in the middle grades civics course and the high school United States History course must take an end-of-course assessment¹⁷ that constitutes 30 percent of the student's final course grade.¹⁸

Review of Civic Education

To further address civic education in Florida, Governor DeSantis issued Executive Order 19-32 in January 2019, directing the Commissioner of Education (commissioner) to review Florida's K-12 academic standards and identify opportunities to prepare high school graduates to be knowledgeable citizens, particularly in the principles of the United States Constitution.¹⁹

Additionally, in 2019, the Legislature established a requirement for the commissioner, in consultation with specified organizations and stakeholders, to review the state-approved middle grades civics education course instructional materials and the test specifications for the statewide, standardized civics end-of-course assessment.²⁰ Recommendations for improvements to the materials and test specifications were provided to the Governor and Legislature on December 31, 2019.²¹

The DOE began a review of the statewide civic education course standards on January 1, 2020.²² The State Board of Education is expected to adopt revisions to standards by the summer of 2021, and the approval of new course descriptions, with revised standards, is expected by the fall.²³

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill modifies s. 1003.4282, F.S., to revise the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards social studies credit requirement for high school graduation. The bill requires instruction in United States Government to include a comparative discussion of political ideologies, such as communism and totalitarianism, that conflict with the principles of freedom and democracy essential to the founding principles of the United States.

To assist in preparing students to be civically responsible and knowledgeable adults, the bill adds to s. 1003.44, F.S., to require the Department of Education (DOE) to develop or approve an

¹⁶ See CPALMS, *United States Government Course Standards*, <https://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewCourse/Preview/633> (last visited Mar. 4, 2021).

¹⁷ Section 1008.22(3)(b)1., F.S.

¹⁸ Section 1003.4156(1)(c), F.S. and s. 1003.4282(3)(d), F.S.

¹⁹ Office of the Governor, Executive Order Number 19-32, Jan. 31, 2019 (Commitment to Eliminating Common Core, Ensuring High-Quality Academic Standards and Raising the Bar for Civic Literacy).

²⁰ Chapter 19-150, L.O.F.; Section 1003.4156(1)(c), F.S. See also Florida Department of Education, *Civics Review*, <http://www.fldoe.org/civicsreview/> (last visited Mar. 4, 2021).

²¹ Memorandum re Committee Substitute for (CS/HB) 807- Civics Education Report (Dec. 31, 2019), available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7749/urlt/HB807Report.pdf> (last visited Mar. 4, 2021).

²² *Id.* See also Florida Department of Education, *Civics Review*, <http://www.fldoe.org/civicsreview/> (last visited Mar. 4, 2021).

²³ *Id.*

integrated civic education curriculum for students in kindergarten through grade 12. District school boards and charter schools must incorporate the curriculum as part of students' regular school work. The DOE must approve integrated civic education curricula submitted by district school boards and charter schools that assist students in developing:

- An understanding of their rights and responsibilities as residents of Florida and of the founding principles of the United States as described in ss. 1003.42(2)(a)-(c), F.S.²⁴
- A sense of civic pride and desire to participate regularly in government.
- An understanding of the process for effectively advocating before government bodies and officials.
- An understanding of the civic-minded expectations, developed by the State Board of Education, of an upright and desirable citizenry that recognizes and accepts responsibility for preserving and defending the blessings of liberty inherited from prior generations and secured by the United States Constitution.

The bill also requires the DOE to curate oral history resources for use with the civic education curriculum. Designated as the "Portraits in Patriotism Act," the bill provides that these resources will be based on the personal stories of diverse individuals who demonstrate civic-minded qualities. The stories may include first-person accounts of victims of other nations' governing philosophies who can compare those philosophies with the philosophies of the United States.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

²⁴ Sections 1003.42(a)-(c), F.S. require district school boards to provide instruction on the history and content of the Declaration of Independence, the meaning and significance of the United States Constitution and its amendments, and the arguments supporting a republican form of government as advocated in the Federalist Papers.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 1003.4282, 1003.44.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.